

# Summer Safe



When watching your children swim, make sure you are never more than an arm's length away



Children should always wear a helmet when riding a bike



Taking a few simple precautions can help protect your children for a fun summer

Summer is the perfect time for kids of all ages to enjoy the warm weather and participate in outdoor fun and activities. It can be dangerous for those who aren't aware of potential safety hazards, though. Whether your children are enjoying a day outside at the playground or at home learning to ride a bike, many injuries from play can be prevented by taking a few simple precautions.

## *Prevent Injuries on the Playground*

According to [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org), over 200,000 children are treated annually in hospital emergency rooms from playground-related injuries. While it is easy for parents to go to the park and let the kids run off their energy, adult supervision is important in preventing

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playground accidents. Make sure children properly use playground equipment and don't engage in unsafe behavior around it. When you arrive at the playground, take notice of the play surface. The surface under the playground equipment should be soft enough and thick enough to soften the impact of a child's fall. The website, [healthchildren.org](http://healthchildren.org), in conjunction with the American Academy of Pediatrics, recommends parents look for playgrounds with sand, wood chips, or rubberized material under equipment, instead of concrete or grass.

It's also important to check the design and spacing of the play equipment. In the safest playgrounds, play areas for younger children are separated from those meant for older kids. The AAP

# Play

## Keep Your Cy-Fair Cutie Safe While Having Summer Fun



Teach your child basic traffic rules and make sure they ride in safe places



When having fun at the playground, make sure kids use equipment the right way



Kids should only ride skateboards and bikes during the day while it's light outside

also recommends that parents closely supervise children under 4 who climb on jungle gyms or equipment taller than they are. When swinging, teach your child to sit in the middle with both hands grasping the chains. It's also important for them to learn not to walk in front of or behind other children who are swinging. Before using any type of metal equipment, such as slides, check the temperature to make sure it's not too hot before letting them play on it. The AAP also recommends checking for sharp edges, rust spots, or exposed bolts beforehand. Children should learn to always use the slide's ladder to get to the top, as well as to always slide down sitting up and feet first. You are your child's best resource for playground safety. Teach your kids to be safe and act responsibly on the playground.

### *Rules for Being on Wheels*

In many neighborhoods in Cy-Fair, you can find kids on bikes, in-line skates, skateboards, and scooters any time of the day during the summer. The very first rule and good habit you should insist on when your child is on wheels of any kind is to wear a bicycle helmet, as this will protect their head better than any other kind of helmet, such as a football helmet, according to the AAP. Make sure your child is using one that is properly fitted for his or her head. Studies show that 74% to 85% of head injuries could be prevented with the proper use of a helmet. If your child enjoys in-line skating, make sure they also wear knee and elbow pads and wrist guards.

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When riding a bike, it is important to buy a bike that is the correct size for your child. A proper fit allows your child to sit on the seat, with the balls of both feet on the ground and both hands on the handlebars, according to the AAP. The association advises against children riding at night and recommends parents teach their kids to pay attention to traffic signals, use hand signals when riding, and ride with traffic on the right side of the road. Always dress your children in bright colors as they bike, skate, or skateboard around. Tuck in their shoelaces and make sure they aren't wearing loose or baggy clothing. Most importantly, teach your child basic traffic rules and make sure they ride in safe places.

### *Keep Sandboxes Clean and Safe*

Most parents have enjoyed playing in a sandbox at some time or other in their childhood, and perhaps you've recently purchased one for your little one. Sandboxes aren't only a favorite of children, but also of animals that may get into your backyard at night. Your child could be exposed to parasitic problems such as roundworms or toxoplasmosis if sand gets into their mouth. As a simple solution, use a sandbox cover. It is also suggested to replace the sand in your sandbox every year. If your child happens to have a diaper accident in the sandbox, replace the sand immediately and give the box a good scrub.

### *Take Caution on Trampolines*

Most everyone has laughed at the trampoline videos on *America's Funniest Home Videos*, and while it looks like a lot of fun, injuries from backyard trampolines can include paralysis, neck injuries, and broken bones. With approximately 100,000 people a year injured on trampolines, the AAP recommends children only use them as part of a sports program, such as diving or gymnastics, under the supervision of a coach or professional.

### *Preparation Counts in Sports*

Sports are a great way to introduce kids to fun, physically challenging activities that can help promote teamwork and self esteem, but can sometimes lead to injuries. It's important for parents to provide the proper safety equipment for their children, such as helmets, protective eyewear, and mouth guards, according to kidshealth.com. In soccer, make sure goals are anchored properly. Homemade goals are not recommended as they may not be properly anchored or have safe counter balancing, according to kwikgoal.com. Before children begin games or practice for sports activities, playing surfaces should be checked for holes and sharp objects to ensure safety. Also, kidshealth.com advises parents to make sure children know all the rules of a game, have received plenty of training, and have properly warmed up so that they are fully prepared to play.

### *Teach Children to Be Water Wise*

Playing at the beach, at a water park, by a lake, or in a pool can be a great way to cool off on a hot day. Swimming is a lot of fun, but drowning is a real danger. Drowning is the second most common cause of death from injuries among kids under the age of 14 and can happen so fast that it leaves very little time for someone to help. Drowning can also occur in spas and hot tubs. Adult supervision is crucial in preventing accidents anytime a child swims, and you might consider taking a CPR class. Knowing how to perform it could mean saving a life. No matter where children swim, parents should teach them to always get out of the water during bad weather, according to kidshealth.com.

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Touch supervision is important when children swim – make sure you are never more than an arm’s length away, the AAP advises. When swimming in a pool at home, make sure to put all pool toys away, so children won’t be tempted to reach in for them. Any time your child is near the water, kidshealth.org advises parents to make sure they always wear life vests approved by the Coast Guard. When swimming in a lake or pond, children should never dive into the water, which may have varying depths and hidden rocks. At the beach, kidshealth.org advises children should not swim when there are undertows or waves, and parents should teach children to swim parallel to the shore or tread water and call for help if they find themselves in an undertow or rip current.

Cy-Fair is full of fun activities to fuel an enjoyable and memorable summer. By taking the right precautions and making the proper preparations, parents can help keep their children safe as they make the most of the warm, pleasant Cy-Fair weather. **CFM**

To keep sandboxes problem-free, use a cover and replace sand once a year



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