

Pre-schoolers: independent adventurers

3½ - 5 years

Skills Your Child is Learning

Your child is now becoming increasingly independent and adventurous. At this age your child has little understanding of danger. Favourite pastimes include climbing. The best injury prevention measure is adult supervision.

Common Causes of Injury

- The major causes of hospital-treated injuries are falls and being hit, struck or crushed by a person or object, followed by cuttings and piercings, animal related injuries, transport, burns and scalds and poisoning.
- Falls typically occur in the home, and from a bicycle, scooter, or play equipment.
- Children under five are particularly at risk of dog bites and often require hospital treatment.
- Drowning in backyard swimming pools, bathtubs and other sources of water in and around the home is the highest cause of death in children under five.
- Incidents often occur with children running across the road or playing near the road.

At Home

- Teach your child about safety around the home.
- Don't leave handbags and grocery shopping containing personal hygiene products, detergents and household cleaners lying around. These potential poisons are easily accessed by an inquisitive child.
- Keep medicines up high, out of reach and locked away. Medicines look like lollies to young children. They are colourful and appealing. Where possible, purchase medications with child resistant lids. However remember that these are child resistant, not child proof.
- Keep matches and cigarette lighters out of reach.
- Work out a fire escape plan in case of an emergency and practice it regularly.
- Teach your child how to **GET DOWN LOW** and **GO, GO, GO** if caught in a fire and how to **STOP, DROP** and **ROLL** if the child's clothes catch on fire.
- Use safety glass or shatter resistant film in low windows and doors, and place brightly coloured stickers at the child's head height so they can see there is glass in their path.
- Replace any broken glass panes with safety glass.



At Play

- Choose play equipment suitable for your child's age, size and stage of development, especially for bicycles, skateboards and scooters.
- Install playground equipment and cubbies away from hazards such as hard paths, garden edging and stakes. Place impact absorbing material underneath equipment and in the full fall zone.
- The fall height from play equipment (slides, climbing frames, horizontal and vertical ladders etc.) should be less than 1.5 metres.
- Trampolines can be dangerous. If purchasing a trampoline buy one that conforms to the new Australian Standard (AS4989-2006) or retrofit your trampoline with a frame padding system. Install in a pit surrounded by softfall or purchase an above-ground trampoline that has safety net 'walls'. **The rule is: 'One child at a time'.**
- Install gates to reduce the risk of your child running out onto a road.
- Never leave children alone with animals.
- Ensure your child always wears a helmet when skating or riding a bicycle, skateboard or scooter, and that the bicycle and helmet are the right size for your child. Children should also wear wrist guards, elbow and knee pads when skating.
- Provide an appropriately sized bike with two hand brakes.
- Supervise all bicycle, scooter and skating activities.
- Do not allow children to ride or skate on the road.
- Watch out for low branches at children's eye level from trees and bushes.



On the Street

- Always hold your child's hand when near the road and explain what your child should look for.
- Teach your child about **STOP, LOOK, LISTEN** and **THINK**.
- Never allow your child to skate or ride a bike, scooter or skateboard on the road.
- Children of this age should only ride in off street areas such as backyards and parks and should always be supervised.

Supported by:



Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development

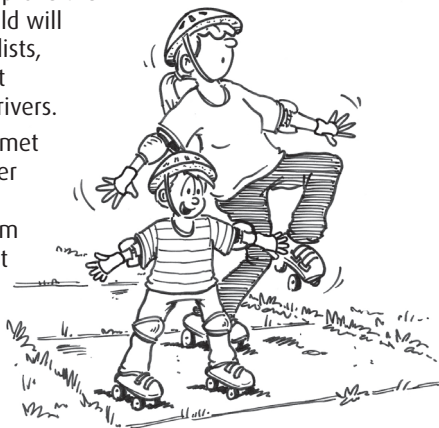
Helpful Tips on Buying a Bicycle Safety Helmet for Your Child

How do I know what size helmet suits my child?

- Use a tape to measure around your child's head just above the eyes and ears.
- If buying a helmet for skating and bicycling check that it conforms to the Australian Standard for bicycle helmets.
- Match this with the helmet sizes listed on the display box to find a helmet that covers this measurement.

What features should I look for in a child's bicycle helmet?

- Most importantly, look for the Australian/New Zealand Standard's label. This is usually displayed on the packaging and on the helmet. This label ensures that the helmet has passed through a rigorous testing regime and meets the stringent safety standard required by Australian state road laws. Not all helmets meet this standard!
- Very young children may not have enough strength in their neck muscles to support a helmet. Seek advice from a paediatrician.
- Bright colours will improve the chances that your child will be seen by other cyclists, pedestrians and most importantly, by car drivers.
- **IMPORTANT!** – No helmet can protect the wearer against all possible impacts. For maximum protection the helmet must be a good fit and securely fastened.
- Do not use a second hand helmet.



In the Car

- Never leave your child alone in the car. The temperature inside your car can increase by more than 30°C within fifteen minutes. When you leave your car, take your child with you - even for small errands.
- Use a properly fastened and adjusted approved forward-facing child restraint with inbuilt harness, or an approved booster seat with a properly fastened and adjusted seatbelt or safety harness.
- Ensure your child stays in their current restraint until they have outgrown it.
- Double check that the inbuilt harness of your child car seat fits your child. Lightweight summer clothing may require you to tighten the harness.
- Provide plenty of cool fluids regularly to avoid dehydration.
- Dress children appropriately to promote free air flow around their bodies.
- Ensure children are in the habit of entering and exiting the car on the kerb side to minimise their exposure to traffic.



General Tips on Safety

1. Teach your child basic water awareness and how to swim. Enrol them in professional swimming lessons.
2. Establish rules when in or around your pool.
3. Buy a helmet, elbow and knee pads and wrist guards to protect your child when riding bicycles, skateboards or scooters.
4. Start teaching them sound road safety practices and behaviour.
5. Enrol in one of the many Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade 'Fire Ed' programs.
6. Develop a family emergency plan in case of fire and practice this regularly with your child.
7. Ask your local council if your pool fence and self closing gate meet regulations.
8. Establish a rule that children are kept away from dogs when the dogs are being fed. Ensure they are always supervised when together.
9. Only buy toys that are suitable for the age and development of your child.

www.kidsafevic.com.au

For more information

Kidsafe Victoria	9251 7725
Maternal and Child Health Line 24 hours	13 22 29
Royal Children's Hospital Safety Centre for safety products	9345 5085
VicRoads for advice on choosing and using car restraints	1300 360 745
Consumer Affairs Victoria Toy and Nursery Safety Line	1300 364 894
Poisons Information Centre	13 11 26
St John Ambulance for First Aid courses	1300 360 455
Raising Children Network	www.raisingchildren.net.au
Parenting Hotline Vic	132 289

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