

The Online Parenting Newsletter vol.5 no.3 Mar, 2004:

## ACCIDENT PREVENTION

The leading cause of death in age groups from 1-4 to 25-34 is, you guessed it, accidental injury.

The automobile leads the way followed by falls. Mortality rates only tell part of the accident story; many more children are injured by accidents than are killed. For example, the estimated injury rate for falls in infants under a year of age is 3515/100,000 while the fatality rate is 0.4. Over 8 million emergency room visits annually are due to accidental injury in children under 15. Boys are 1½ times more likely than girls to suffer accidental trauma.

Some accidents don't seem preventable like a lightning strike or a tornado. But, although parents cannot control the weather, they can WATCH the weather and get their children indoors when a storm threatens.

Most accidents can be prevented, or injuries kept to a minimum, if parents develop the SAFETY HABIT. This means you UNDERSTAND WHY it is so important to childproof your house and buckle up everybody in the car (including yourself) before you turn the ignition key. And you ALWAYS DO IT.

Your children are protected in two ways. You actually do the buckling up in the car safety seats but your children also watch you buckle yourself in. You serve as both caring parents and careful role models.

The tricky part is to protect your kids without making them feel the world is a dangerous place full of hazards just waiting to get them. The best way to approach this is to be very matter-of-fact. We look both ways when we cross the street and we always wear bicycle helmets like we brush our teeth. It's just something people do.