



## Safety for special needs children

Kids with special needs often have special safety needs too. Below are some common risk areas that require additional safety planning.

**Falls.** Children with special needs who are minimally mobile but who are perceived as immobile by a caregiver might be at increased risk for falling from a bed or other elevated surface. The child might be left unattended and might roll or creep to the edge. Falls are the most commonly reported injury among wheelchair users. "Tips and falls" account for 42% of incidents, making falls the leading cause of rider injury.

**Motor vehicle safety.** Standard child restraint devices may be used for many children with special health care needs, and, whenever possible, a standard child restraint is the preferable choice. Car safety seats with five-point harnesses anchored at both shoulders, both hips, and between the legs, can be adjusted to provide good upper torso support for many children with special needs. Use of a "special" child restraint system for a child with health care needs often may be postponed until a child exceeds the physical limitations of a car safety seat. Any child with a medical problem should have a special care plan that includes what to do during transport if a medical emergency occurs.

**Fire.** For deaf and hard of hearing chil-

dren who are unable to rely on the life-saving warning sound of a working smoke alarm to alert them of fire, it is crucial that they have flashing or vibrating smoke alarms, as well as a proper escape plan. Caregivers should follow these precautionary steps:

- Install a flashing or vibrating smoke alarm on every level of your home. Test all smoke alarms months and change batteries at least once a year.
- Make sure a TTY/TDD or phone (if used) is next to your bed, within arm's reach. Keep emergency telephone numbers and hearing aids (if necessary) handy too.
- Be sure to inform family members, the building manager, or a neighbor of your fire safety plan and practice it with them. For children in wheelchairs, an accessible exit is critical.
- Contact your local fire department on a non-emergency telephone and explain your child's special needs.

Information courtesy of the  
National SAFE KIDS Campaign



### Toys: Features to look for

Toys for children with special needs should be safe, durable, versatile, challenging, and engaging. Below are some toy features to look for depending on the child's specific needs:

#### Physical limitations:

- Solid construction that supports the body
- Large buttons, levers, or handles that are easy
- Rubber, non-slide bottoms and other important safety features
- Easy operation, maneuverability

#### Hearing impairments:

- Amplified and/or adjustable volume
- Varying sounds and vibrations
- Lights and bold, contrasting colors
- Interesting textures
- Scented parts

#### Visual impairments:

- Large or raised parts
- Realistic and familiar sounds/objects
- Easy-to-activate components
- Different shapes and textures
- Bright or bold colors
- Distinct scents

## REPORTING ON CHILDHOOD INJURY

# Sports Injury

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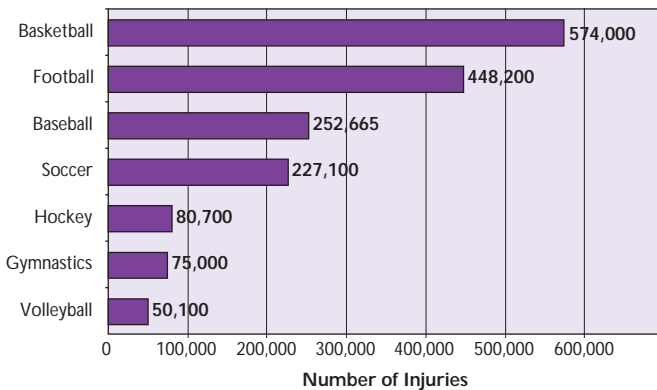


Each year, more than 3.5 million sports-related injuries in children under age 15 are treated in hospital emergency rooms in the United States. The bones, muscles, tendons, and ligaments of young athletes are still growing, which makes them more susceptible to injury. Growth plates — the areas of developing cartilage where bone growth occurs in youngsters — are weaker than the nearby ligaments and tendons. What is often a bruise or sprain in an adult can be a potentially serious growth plate injury in a young athlete. Young athletes of the same age can differ greatly in size and physical maturity. Some youngsters may be physically less mature than their peers and try to perform at levels for which they are not ready.

Parents and coaches can reduce sport injuries by encouraging children to:

- Be in proper physical condition to play a sport.
- Know and abide by the rules of the sport.
- Wear appropriate protective gear (for example, shin guards for soccer, a hard-shell helmet when facing a baseball pitcher, a helmet and body padding for ice hockey).
- Know how to use athletic equipment (for example, correctly adjusting the bindings on snow skis).
- Always warm up before playing.
- Avoid playing when very tired or in pain. •

Sport injuries, 5-14 years, U.S.



Keep informed of Connecticut SAFE KIDS happenings! Sign up for our listserve at [groups.yahoo.com/group/ctsafekids](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ctsafekids).

## Booster Seat Bill 2004

The booster seat bill, SB 410, is moving its way through the legislature. Below is the sticker that we booster seat advocates wore at the public hearing. If you would like one (or a bunch!) of these stickers, please contact Esther Schuman of New London County SAFE KIDS (860-442-0733) or contact CT SAFE KIDS. •



## Fire Safety Information

On April 4th, we start Daylight Saving Time, and of course, change the time, change our batteries (in both the smoke and carbon monoxide detectors). But there are lots of other good fire safety behaviors to promote as well. The U.S. Fire Administration has a great website where you can order lots of fun fire safety publications for kids, including a colorful door knob hanger picturing a three-story home with home fire safety tips. To order such information, please go to [www.usfa.fema.gov/public/index.shtm](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/public/index.shtm), then click on publications. (For the door knob hanger, continue clicking on "handout pamphlets" and then on "Is Your Home Fire Safe Door Knob Hanger"). •

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For more information, please contact:

**Connecticut SAFE KIDS** 860-545-9988

or your local SAFE KIDS Coalition

**Fairfield County SAFE KIDS** 203-853-7115

supported by Danbury Hospital and Greenwich Hospital

**New London County SAFE KIDS** 860-442-0733

supported by Lawrence & Memorial Hospital

**Valley Amity SAFE KIDS** 203-888-8843

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