

Houston Police Department

Summer Safety for Kids



**Public Affairs Division
Community Services Unit
713-308-3200**

Summer Safety for Kids

The Houston Police Department wants all children have a safe and enjoyable summer vacation while getting energized for the following school year. However, Child Safety starts with the Parents/Guardians. We all must teach our children to be safe and to follow our lead in personal safety. Take the time to talk with your children about personal safety. Don't assume your child knows what to do. Read each Safety Tip to them. Review each safety tip and get feedback about their concerns and questions.

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Swimming/Water Safety

- When choosing a swimming instructor for your child, choose only experienced qualified instructors.
- There should be continuous adult supervision any time your child is near water.
- Make sure there is a person trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on site at all times.
- Do not allow your child to engage in horse playing.
- Diving should not be allowed unless the depth of the water has been determined and there are no underwater hazards.
- Use only approved life preservers. Air mattresses, inner tubes or inflatable toys are not dependable life preservers. If these devices deflate, or your child slips off, he/she could be in serious trouble.
- Be extremely cautious while using spas and hot tubs. They can be dangerous for young children who can easily drown or become overheated during their use.
- Make sure you are always aware of the weather conditions and do not allow swimming during a lightning storm.
- If you have a backyard swimming pool it should be enclosed with high and locked fences on all sides. Check with the appropriate city or state agency to make sure you are following your jurisdiction's laws for the installation of a pool.
- If your pool has a cover, make sure it is completely removed before swimming. Your child may fall through the cover and become trapped underneath.
- A child should always wear a life jacket when riding in a boat. For more information, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department website has Boating Safety Tips, visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us/faq/learning/boater_education/.

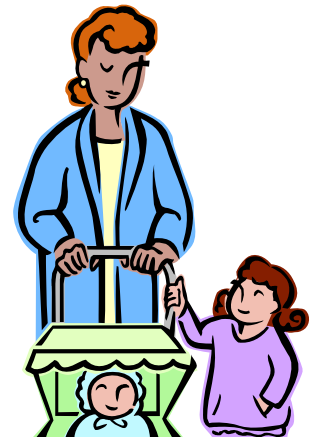


Finding a Babysitter

- Find a trusted family member/friend.
- Get recommendations from friends.
- Trade childcare with friends who have kids.
- Check the references given by the babysitter.
- Listen to your child's input about the babysitter.
- Try to choose only babysitters who are trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid.
- Observe how the babysitter interacts with your child/children.
- Check prospects on the Texas Department of Public Safety's website for the registered sex offender's database, visit [https://records.txdps.state.tx.us/DPS WEB/Sor/index.aspx](https://records.txdps.state.tx.us/DPS_WEB/Sor/index.aspx)

- Put together a detailed notebook and include the following items:
 - Parent's / Guardians names
 - Your home address
 - Parent's home and cellular phone numbers
 - **EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER (9-1-1)**
 - Name and phone number of family doctor/pediatrician
 - Name and phone numbers for neighbors and close relatives
 - **POISON CONTROL (1-800-222-1222)**
 - Location of exits
 - Location of door keys
 - Location of first aid supplies
 - Food and drug allergies
 - Special medical information
 - Children's bedtimes
 - Any food or drink to be given or not given to the children

- Meet with the sitter at least fifteen minutes prior to leaving home. Make sure you cover the following:
 - Your childcare expectations
 - Items listed in the recommended notebook from above
 - Your child's usual routine
 - Your location and how to reach you
 - How to calm your child if crying
 - How to handle misbehaviors
 - Any other special instructions unique to your situation



Guide for Teenagers Babysitting

- Only baby-sit for parents/guardians you and your parents know and trust.
- Make sure you have important phone numbers and instructions on how to care for the children written down.
- Keep all doors and windows locked at all times.
- DO NOT open the door for anyone unless you personally know the person.
- If at nighttime, turn on the porch and outside lights.
- If you must leave the house for any reason, take the kid(s) with you.
- Have a mental fire drill plan. Develop more than one way out of the house in case of a fire.
- In case of a fire:
 - Sound the alarm, yell FIRE as loud as possible.
 - If safe, close the door to the area where the fire is.
 - Get everyone out of the house as quickly as possible.
 - Keep all the children together and go to a meeting point outside.
 - Call 9-1-1.
- Put together a detailed notebook and include the following items:
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Be SAFE! Personal Safety for Kids

- Be alert and aware of people and their surroundings.
- Familiarize your child with your neighborhood.
- If your child is out, these are the places, *safe havens*, your child can go for safety: houses of neighbors you trust, stores, shops, police and fire stations, business offices.
- Walk/play with other children and try not to be alone. There is always safety in numbers.
- Stay in well-lighted areas.
- Teach your child to report suspicious persons to you, teachers, or police officers.
- If your child is approached or followed by a suspicious vehicle or person:
 - 1) Scream
 - 2) Run away in the opposite direction
 - 3) Run to a safe haven
 - 4) Call the police.
- Teach your child what to take notice of when they encounter a suspicious vehicle or person: Type and color of vehicle, license plate number, male/female, clothing description, and distinguishing marks.
- Never hitchhike.
- Talk to your child about their friends and get to know them.
- Let your child know that they can dial 9-1-1 from a public phone for free.
- Speak with your child/children about gun safety. If you have a gun in the home, make sure it has a gunlock on it or is locked in a safe. Teach your child that if they see a gun, they should never touch it. They should run away and tell an adult.



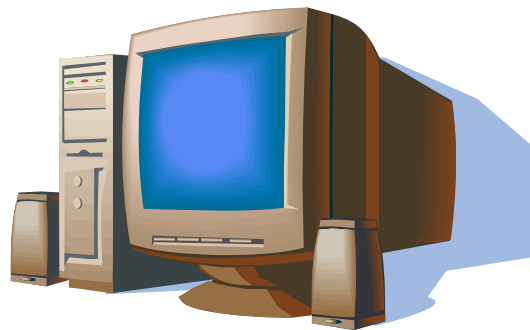
CyberSafety/Internet Safety for Kids

PARENTAL GUIDELINES

- Place the computer in an area that is accessible by the whole family.
- Subscribe to an online service that offers parental control features.
- Purchase blocking software that utilizes passwords and parental controls.
- Spend time with your child exploring the Internet.
- Tell your child that he/she can confide in you without the fear of being punished.
- Talk openly with your child about your suspicions and about online dangers.
- Review all content on your child's computer including email, browser history, etc.
- Use caller ID services to monitor who is calling.
- Monitor your child's access to the Internet including email, chat rooms, instant messengers, etc.

INSTRUCT YOUR CHILD TO:

- Always let you know immediately if they find something scary or threatening on the Internet.
- Never give out their name, address, telephone number, password, school name, parent's name, or any other personal information.
- Never meet face to face with someone they met online.
- Never respond to messages that have bad words or seem scary or weird.
- Never enter an area that charges for services without asking first.
- Never send your picture to anyone without your permission.



Bike Safety

- Bike helmets should have a sticker that says it meets standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).
- Bike helmets should fit properly and the straps should always be fastened.
- Make sure your seat, handlebars, and wheels fit tightly.
- Check and oil the chain regularly.
- Check the brakes to be sure that they are working and not sticking.
- Check the tires for right tire pressure.
- Wear bright colored clothes and place reflectors on your bike. This will help other people see you.
- Wear the right clothes and shoes that fit so that nothing gets caught in the bike chain.
- Avoid wearing headphones because the music can distract you and cause you not to notice potential hazards around you.
- To learn more about laws dealing with bicycle riding, please visit www.biketexas.org.



Home Alone

- Keep doors and windows locked at all times.
- Acknowledge all callers through a locked door.
- Never let anyone know you are alone.
- Answer all telephone calls and remember to not tell anyone you are home alone. Do tell the caller your parent is busy and will call back later.
- Post important telephone numbers near all phones in case of emergencies:
 - 9-1-1 for Police, Fire, Ambulance, And Poison Control.
 - Parent's/guardian's work and cellular phone numbers.
 - Neighbor's phone numbers.
- If a latch key child:
 - Check with parent/guardian or neighbor upon arrival at home.
 - Explain to the child the consequences of not making the call.
- Never display the house key around the home (keep the key concealed).
- No visitors are allowed while the parents/guardians are not at home.
- Never enter the house when you find the door ajar or a window open.

