



Keeping Your Child Safe This School Year!

September means it's time to go back to school! For most of us, that means getting your kids on and off the bus every day, for others, your children may walk or ride a bike to school every day. While you may already have the routine down, it never hurts to review some important safety tips with your kids. Regardless of how your child gets to and from school, it's important to make sure you review all safety tips with your child!

School Bus Safety:

Riding a school bus is the safest way for your child to get to and from school, but the "danger zone" of getting to the bus and getting off the bus poses the greatest risk to your child. Reviewing these safety tips can help remind your child how to be safe going to and from school.

- Do not wait at the bus stop alone – make sure there are other kids around
- Know which neighbor you can go to if you need help
- If someone approaches the bus stop who you do not know, go get an adult
- Do not approach or get on the bus until the driver tells you to
- Go directly to your seat and sit down facing the front of the bus
- When getting on and off the bus, always use the handrails
- Look around for cars and wait for the bus driver's signal before crossing the street
- If you drop something getting on and off the bus, ask the driver for help before picking anything up
- If you miss the bus, do not run after it

Walking to School:

If your child walks to school, it is still important to go over these basic safety rules with them since they will get on a school bus at some point during the year; whether it's for a field trip, or when going to a friend's house. For those kids who walk to school, it is important to review some safety rules to keep your child safe on their walk to and from school.

- Walk on the sidewalk
- Walk with at least one other person to school, like a sibling or neighbor
- When possible, walk with your family members – this is great exercise for both of you. When there is bad weather, get dropped off at school
- If walking in the dark, wear a bright colored jacket, and walk on a well-lit path (especially during winter months when leaving or getting home after dark)
- If someone you do not know approaches you, either on foot or in a car, do not talk to them. Keep walking, and if they continue to follow you, run and yell for help



Riding Your Bike:

Biking to school is a great choice for kids who live near their school. They can get exercise, while also getting to school quicker than if they were to walk. While “stranger danger” is a concern for most parents today, your child’s behavior while riding their bike to school is more of a risk. While there is no set age that your child is old enough to bike to school, it is important to decide when your child is mature enough to follow the rules of the road and safely bike to school. Review these bike safety rules to keep your kid safe while riding their bike to school.

- Always wear a helmet when riding a bike
- Find another friend or neighbor close by to bike to school with you
- Learn the basic rules of the road: how the road going to school operates, four-way stops, pedestrian crosswalks, and stop lights
- Plan what route you are going to take, and review traffic rules for that whole route with parents

Identifying and Discussing Threatening Situations with Your Child:

When a child gets abducted, most of the time it is by someone they know, rather than a stranger. It is important to talk to your child about safety in different situations, and identifying people in their lives who can help them if they are ever in a threatening situation.

- Talk to your child about who they can safely ask for help if you’re not around, like a trusted neighbor
- While some strangers may be dangerous, help them identify ones who are safe to talk to, like a uniformed police officer, a store clerk wearing a name tag, or parents who have other kids with them
- Make sure your child knows that they cannot go anywhere with someone without your permission – this includes family members, people they know, and strangers
- Create a “No Secret Policy” in your family – This way your child is already used to being open with you, and if they are in trouble or told to keep a secret, they know to talk to you about it
- Teach your child to say NO when they are uncomfortable or unsure in any situation
- If a stranger makes your child feel unsafe, they need to yell “Help” or “I Don’t Know You” – make sure they keep doing this until someone else steps in to help them
- Make your child memorize your phone number so they can easily call you from any phone

Tioga County Public Health wishes everyone a Safe, Healthy, and Happy 2017-2018 School Year!
Questions? Call us at 607-687-8600 or Like Us on Facebook for more information!

