

## Establishing Family Safety Rules

**Tip**—Develop in your children the habit of safety.

The vast majority of parents want their children to be happy and safe. Although some children seem to be born more cautious than others, all children can be taught to consider safety.



“Playing or working safely involves thinking about safety when you are about to do something new or dangerous,” says Elizabeth Crary, parent educator and author of *Pick Up Your Socks . . . and Other Skills Growing Children Need!*

Crary recommends playing the “What might happen if . . .?” game with your children. For example, if you were making a salad together, ask your child, “What might happen if I tried to talk on the phone at the same time as chopping carrots?” “Right – I could be distracted and cut my finger.”

Or, “What might happen if I ran out into the road after the ball? Could a car see me soon enough to stop?”

Or, “What might happen if you turned the hot water faucet on all the way?”

Asking these kinds of questions from time to time helps your children think about possible danger in different situations. It helps them to get in the habit of thinking about safety.

**Tools** – Another excellent way to teach children about safety is to establish family safety rules. These are standing rules you set down for your children and review frequently each year. Crary offers a collection of common safety rules in her book—outlined below. She invites parents to adopt or adapt any that fit with your particular value system.

## Sample Safety Rules:

- 1) Always wear your seat belt.
- 2) Don't go anywhere or with anyone without checking with a parent or sitter first.
- 3) If you get lost, meet me (parent) at the entrance gate or door where you came in.
- 4) If you get lost, ask a clerk for help. If you can't find one, ask a Mom with small children for help.
- 5) Know your first and last name. your parents' first and last names.
- 6) Don't climb on tree branches smaller than your wrist.
- 7) Hold sharp objects with points or blades pointed away from you as you walk.
- 8) When working with appliances (mixers, blenders) or machinery (shop machines, office printers, etc.) tie long hair back.
- 9) Don't poke anything into an electric socket, toaster, etc.
- 10) In case of fire, leave the house safely and meet at \_\_\_\_\_.
- 11) Don't walk or run while drinking or eating food. Always sit down to eat and drink.
- 12) Answer the door only when a grownup is home.
- 13) If you answer the phone when you are alone, say your mom/dad can't come to the phone right now. Don't say your parents are not home.



You'll find more practical tips you can use right now in *Pick Up Your Socks . . . and Other Skills Growing Children Need!* by Elizabeth Crary, M.S.