

Teaching Children Safety Skills

Tip – Teach children safety skills.

Background: Accidents are the leading cause of death for children ages one to 14. Knowing what to do when injured can dramatically increase a child's chance for recovery. Further, children (and teens) who know first aid skills are less likely to take risks that end with injury.



Tools – Here are three ways to encourage safe behavior and first aid knowledge:

1) Model thinking and acting safely. Children learn more from what you do than what you say. When you want your child to wear a life vest, wear one yourself. Talk aloud as you make safety decisions. For example, "Oh, darn. The bread is stuck in the toaster. If I use the fork to pull it out, I could get an electric shock. I had better unplug the toaster first."



2) Teach children first aid techniques.

- Introduce first aid skills when children have accidents. You can explain how to treat cuts, nose bleeds and insect stings as they happen.
- Read the book *Kids to the Rescue! First Aid Techniques for Kids* with your child. Kids to the Rescue describes situations and allows the child to think about what to do. On the following page it describes what actions the child can take in both simple language and pictures. If you read the book with pre-reading children, they can use the pictures to give appropriate care.

3) Play "What would you do if . . .?" Create both prevention and emergency situations out of your child's experience and interests. For example:

- **Preschooler** – "What would you do if . . . the wind blew your ball into the street?"
- **School age** – "What would you do if . . . your brother stuck a fork in the toaster?"
- **Teen** – "What would you do if . . . your friend jumped off the dock into the lake and cut her foot on some glass?"

You'll find more practical tips you can use in *Kids to the Rescue!*, by Maribeth & Darwin Boelts.