



# Safety Tips for Children who use Mobility Devices

These tips can help you keep your child safe and add to general safety advice for your child's stage of development. Adapt these tips to meet the needs of your child and family. What works now may change as your child grows and develops.

## Tips for Using This Flyer:

- Talk with your child's care team including your child's health care provider, school nurse, principal, teacher, school staff and other caregivers.
- Involve your child. Talk about the steps you'll take. Ask your child "what if" questions to help them learn to problem solve.
- Be a role model. Children will do what you do. If you wear your helmet, they will too.

## Fall Safety Equipment

- Does your child's adaptive equipment fit well? Do you have all the safety support gear that it needs such as brakes, belts, etc.?
- In the winter, you may want to carry rock salt in a backpack to throw on icy spots.

## At Home

- Do pathways provide clear access throughout your home? Are they cleared of throw rugs, worn carpet, low tables, and electric cords? (Electric cords can be taped to the floor).
- Items like handgrips, ramps, and padded furniture may make your home easier to navigate.
- Are play spaces easy to get to? Does your home have soft surface areas for play?
- You can secure or tape carpets and rugs to the floor and large furniture can be secured with furniture straps to the wall.
- Install a nonskid mat or no-slip strips and grab bars in the shower and bathroom. A shower or tub seat with a strap may be of help.
- Do you have no-slip surfaces or strips on stairs? Do your stairway railings extend beyond top and bottom steps?

## At School

- Talk with your child's teachers, school nurse and key staff about your child's needs. Discuss things like permission to use the elevator and other areas of the building. Include these in your child's IEP or IHP (Individualized Health Plan).

## Fire and Burn Safety

- Create a fire escape plan for your home. Include steps to assist your child and to transport any needed medical or mobility equipment. Talk about and practice your plan with the whole family. Include plans for school, places of worship, theaters, and stores.
- If you can, teach your child how to stop, drop and roll with their mobility device. If applicable, teach them how to use a blanket to put out a fire. Help your child practice getting from the wheelchair to the ground and then rolling.
- Do all adults and older children know where the fire extinguisher is and how to use it?
- Tell your local fire station about your child's evacuation needs and medical equipment.
- Teach your child to stay low in smoke. If your child is not able to lower themselves to the ground, teach family members how to help them get to the floor and onto a blanket. Use the blanket to pull your child away from a fire. Practice this with your family. Include going up and down stairs or all levels of your home. If your child cannot use their arms, a plastic sled can give the upper body more support for going down stairs in an evacuation.
- Include a special meeting place outside your home in your plan where all family members can meet in case of fire

## Water Safety

- Find the right life jacket for your child's needs. There are many kinds of adaptable life jackets available. Have your child try them on to see what works best. For information on adaptive life jackets visit <http://www.pfd-a.com/index.html>.
- Depending on their skill level in the water, some children should always have an adult within arms' reach in the water (even if there is a lifeguard on duty). Check with your child's health care provider about your child's level of water safety skills (i.e., can swim independently, can right himself, knows about deep water, can blow bubbles, etc).

## In the Bath

- Mounted grab bars may provide extra support when getting in and out of the tub.
  - Learn how to safely put your child in the tub without hurting your back.
-

## Car Safety Resources

- Car Seat Guide for Children with Special Needs*, American Academy of Pediatrics: provides information on child restraint options for children with special needs, how to use the seats, transporting older children, premature babies, and children with casts or that use wheelchairs. [http://www.aap.org/publiced/BR\\_SpNeedsCarSeats.htm](http://www.aap.org/publiced/BR_SpNeedsCarSeats.htm).
- Vehicle safety for people who use wheelchairs, [www.travelsafer.org/](http://www.travelsafer.org/)
- Transporting Children with Special Health Care Needs*, American Academy of Pediatrics, <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;104/4/988>
- E-Z-On Products, Inc. of Florida 1-800-323-6598, [www.ezonpro.com/products.shtml](http://www.ezonpro.com/products.shtml)
- Adapting Motor Vehicles for People with Disabilities*, U S Department of Transportation. 1-888-DASH-2-DOT or [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/adaptive/brochure/brochure.html](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/adaptive/brochure/brochure.html)

## Bike Safety

- Find a bicycle or tricycle that meets your child's needs. There are many styles of adapted bikes and trikes that your child can try. Visit Adapted Bicycle Product List for Persons with Special Needs at, <http://rileychildrenshospital.com/document.jsp?locid=1416>

## For More Information:

- Keeping Children with Special Needs Safe in the Home* from Safe Kids and the MetLife Foundation. A series of safety videos highlighting how you can take precautions in your home to help prevent injuries to children with physical, developmental or cognitive disabilities <http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/special-needs/>

Adapted in part from the Diagnosis Related Injury Prevention Suggestions developed by the Ohio Dept. of Health. Revised with permission by the Center for Children with Special Needs, Seattle Children's Hospital.