

The Office of the Child Advocate would like to remind families and caregivers about important information that will help keep young children safe this summer.

Infants, toddlers and young children (ages 0-5 years) are generally not aware of dangers around them and depend on adults to keep them safe.

During warm weather, take steps to prevent falls from windows and encourage water safety, especially around pools, and in cars. Simple safety steps can **prevent injury**.



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## Summertime Safety Tips To Keep Kids Safe

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## Water and Pool Safety

Drowning is a leading cause of death among young children, both nationally and in Massachusetts. To help prevent water-related injury and drowning:



- \* Designate a responsible adult to watch young children while in the bath and all children swimming or playing in or around water at all times.
  - Whenever infants and toddlers are in or around water, an adult should be within an arm's length at all times providing "touch supervision."
  - Adults should not be involved in any other distracting activity while supervising children, *not even for a moment*.
  - Do not drink alcohol while supervising children.
- \* Learn to swim. But, remember, constant, careful supervision and barriers such as pool fencing are necessary even when children have completed swimming classes.
- \* Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). For information on classes, visit [www.redcross.org/en/takeaclass](http://www.redcross.org/en/takeaclass).
- \* Do not use air-filled or foam toys, such as "water wings," "noodles," or inner-tubes, in place of life jackets. These toys are not designed to keep swimmers safe.
- \* Remove floats, balls and other toys from the pool after use so that children are not tempted to reach for them.
- \* When swimming at a public pool or beach:
  - Swim only in designated swimming areas
  - Everyone should always swim with a buddy
  - Select swimming sites that have lifeguards.
- \* When a child is missing, check the water first.

## If you Have a Swimming Pool at Home

Children have a natural curiosity and attraction to water. Preventing access to swimming pools for small children is essential.

- \* Install a four-sided pool fence that completely separates the house and play area of the yard from the pool area. The fence should be at least four feet high. Use self-closing and self-latching gates that open outward with latches that are out of reach of children.
- \* After the children are done swimming, secure the pool so they can't get back into it.
- \* Consider additional barriers such as automatic door locks or alarms.
- \* Keep rescue equipment (such as a shepherd's hook or life preserver) and a telephone by the pool.

## Window Safety

Window falls are preventable.

- \* **Screens do not protect children from falling out of windows.** Install quick release window guards. You can buy them in most hardware stores.
- \* Keep beds, furniture and anything a child can climb on away from windows.
- \* Open windows from the top, not the bottom, when possible.
- \* Lock all unopened doors and windows.
- \* Be sure children are always supervised.



## Car Safety

Cars can be unsafe - and not just because of car crashes. Children left in a hot car can die from overheating. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that a closed car, sitting in the summer sun, quickly turns into an oven, with temperatures rising from 78 degrees to 100 degrees in just three minutes and to 125 degrees in six to eight minutes. In addition, children can be injured while getting out of moving cars or be run or backed over by motor vehicles. To assist in keeping your young children safe in and around cars:



- \* Never leave children alone in a parked vehicle, even when they are asleep or restrained, and even if the windows are open.
- \* Always lock your car and keep the keys out of children's reach. Make a habit of looking in the vehicle - front and back - before locking the door and walking away.
- \* Ensure adequate supervision when children are playing in areas near parked motor vehicles.
- \* Ask your childcare provider to call you if your child does not show up for childcare.
- \* Do things to remind yourself that a child is in the vehicle, such as placing your purse, briefcase or something else you need in the back seat so that you will have to check the back seat when you leave the vehicle.

**If you see a child alone in a hot vehicle, call the police. If they are in distress due to heat, get them out as quickly as possible. Cool the child rapidly. Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.**

Please remember all children ages 12 and younger should ride in the back seat. Be sure they are properly restrained every time they ride with you—even during those quick trips to the corner market.