

Back to School

You've packed the lunches, bought the notebooks and zipped up the backpacks, anxious for the first day back at school. But before that first bell rings, make sure safety is a priority for your family.

Whether it's educating your children on the basics of crossing the street or how to prevent injuries on the playground, send them back to school this season knowing that they are prepared to safely navigate through their day.

The wheels on the bus: safety on and around school buses

School buses are the safest mode of transportation for your children. In fact, according to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, students are about 50 times more likely to arrive at school alive if they take the bus than if they drive themselves or ride with friends, and eight times safer than with their own parents and guardians in the car. School buses are inherently crafted with safety on the forefront: bright colors, cross-view mirrors and trained drivers.

Even though the safety features are impressive, it's still crucial to make sure your children know how to behave on and around the bus. Share these tips*:

- When the bus arrives, stand at least three giant steps (6 feet) away from the curb.
- Never walk behind the bus. If you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver. Never try to pick it up first because the driver may not be able to see you.
- When on the bus, find a seat and stay seated throughout the ride.
- Keep your head, arms and hands inside the bus at all times.
- Clear aisles of books or bags, as they are tripping hazards and block the way in an emergency.
- When you reach your exit, wait for the bus to stop completely before getting up from your seat, and use the handrail down the stairs.
- If you meet your child at the bus stop, make sure you wait on the same side of the street where he/she will be dropped off.

Take the load off: preventing backpack injuries

Did you know that one of the most common school supplies can also be one of the most dangerous? Backpacks cause more than 7,300 injuries annually, according to an estimate from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Injuries can range in intensity from small bruises on the shoulders to back strains and fractures.

A backpack should weigh no more than 10 to 20 percent of the child's body weight. Warning signs that may indicate your child's backpack is too heavy include: pain or tingling, changing posture or red marks. If you notice any of these symptoms, you may want to consult your child's physician or consider buying a backpack better suited for their needs. Here are some quick tips for buying a backpack before you hit the store:

- Look for a padded back to help reduce pressure and enhance comfort.
- Multiple pockets can help evenly distribute weight between the back, shoulders and torso.
- Try finding one that has compression straps on the sides or bottom - this helps keep contents closer to the back.
- Consider reflective material so your child can be seen by motorists.



BACK to SCHOOL
Be SAFE Be SMART

- Watch for school zones
- Put your phone away – don't get distracted
- Drop off and pick up in designated areas
- Carpool so there are less vehicles on the road
- Watch for children around parked cars
- Stop for buses loading or unloading students
- Watch for warning signs and signals

For more Back to School Safety Tips go to:
<https://www.nhtsa.gov/back-school-safety>

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