



## Integrated Casework Practice Model

# tipsheet

### Summer Safety Tips

**Summer is coming and NOW** is a great time to remind all the caregivers in your life about keeping young children safe this summer. Infants, toddlers and young children (ages 0-5 years) are less aware of dangers around them and depend on adults to keep them safe. During warm weather, take steps to **prevent falls from windows**, **keep children safe in cars** and **encourage water safety**, especially around pools.

### Window Safety

Falls are the leading cause of injury to children, and falls from windows involving young children are especially serious. Window falls are preventable. In order to prevent window falls, parents and caregivers should:

- Keep low 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.
- Install quick release window guards; screens do not protect children from falling out of windows. You can buy quick-release window guards in most hardware stores.

### Water and Pool Safety <sup>1, 2</sup>

Children have a natural curiosity and attraction to water. However, drowning is a leading cause of death among young children, both nationally and in Massachusetts.

Backyard pools, whether inground or above ground are the highest risk for children under the age of 5. To help prevent water-related injury and drowning:

- Children should be supervised in and around water at all times.
- Designate an adult "water watcher." When it is your turn as "water watcher" you should not be involved in any other distracting activity, including talking on the phone, not even for a moment.
- Whenever infants and toddlers are in or around water, including the bathtub, an adult should be within an arm's length at all times providing "touch supervision."
- Do not drink alcohol while supervising children.
- Install a four-sided pool fence that completely separates the house and play area of the yard from the pool area.
- After the children are done swimming, secure the pool so they cannot get back in.
- Consider additional barriers such as automatic door locks or alarms to prevent access or notify you if someone enters the pool area.
- Remove floats, balls and other toys from the pool after use so that children are not tempted to reach for them.
- Keep rescue equipment (such as a shepherd's hook or life preserver) and a telephone by the pool.
- For children who cannot swim, use Coast Guard approved life jackets. 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.
- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). The Red Cross offers a wide selection of CPR/AED, first aid, lifeguarding, swimming and water safety, caregiving, disaster response and emergency preparedness training. For information on classes, visit [www.bostonredcross.org](http://www.bostonredcross.org).

Additionally, when swimming in public swimming areas:

- Select swimming sites that have lifeguards, whenever possible.
- Swim only in designated swimming areas.
- Do not use air-filled or foam toys, such as "water wings," "noodles" or inner-tubes, in place of life jackets (personal flotation devices). These toys are not designed to keep swimmers safe.
- Always swim with a buddy.

Teach your children to swim. Although swimming classes are not a primary means of drowning prevention, teaching children to swim can provide important protection as well as a fun way to exercise.

## Car Safety <sup>3</sup>

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.
- Make a habit of looking in the vehicle - front and back - before locking the door and walking away.
- If a child is missing, check the vehicle first, including the trunk.
- 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.
- Always lock your car and keep the keys out of children's reach.
- Ensure adequate supervision when children are playing in areas near parked motor vehicles.
- Ask your child care provider to call you if your child does not show up for child care.

**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. Infants and toddlers should remain in rear-facing car seats until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car safety seat's manufacturer. At a minimum, children should ride rear-facing until they have reached at least one year of age *and* weigh at least 20 pounds.

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### References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Water-related Injuries: Fact Sheet. Accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.htm>.
2. American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Injury, Violence, and Poison Prevention, Policy Statement Prevention of Drowning in Infants, Children, and Adolescents, PEDIATRICS Vol. 112 No. 2 August 2003, pp. 437-439.
3. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Keeping Kids Safe, Hyperthermia and Heat Stroke. [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/portal/site/nhtsa](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/portal/site/nhtsa). Accessed June 18, 2009.