

Creating a Safe and Healthy Home

About this Course

Preschool children are curious by nature and they enjoy exploring their surroundings. Keeping your child healthy and safe at home requires creating an environment free from potential hazards. This course provides tips on creating a healthy and safe home so that your child remains safe from harm.

You will learn tips on how to minimize exposure to lead and secondhand smoke. You will learn what to do in case of a fire and how to provide first aid in an emergency. You will also learn how to create a safe sleep environment for infants and how to keep your child safe in the car, when playing outdoors and around water.

Creating a Safe and Healthy Home Environment

The first step in creating a safe home environment is to be aware of your surroundings. Survey your house and determine what areas can be potential risks to your child's safety, paying close attention to any environmental hazards. Let's tour an average home to help you recognize potential risks and safety hazards that can be avoided to ensure your child's safety.

Fire Safety

Let's start with fire safety at home. Smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms should be installed outside sleeping areas and bedrooms on every floor of the house. Both should be tested at least once a month and their batteries replaced at least twice a year. A tip to remember to change the batteries is to do it with each time change, in the fall or the spring.

Fire extinguishers should be kept in the kitchen and accessible on each floor of your house. Adults in the house should know how to operate the fire extinguisher. Don't forget to check the expiration date on the extinguisher to make sure it is current.

Work together as a family to create a fire escape plan. Identify at least two ways to escape from each room and identify a place outside to meet after exiting the house. Discuss with your child that once he or she is safely outside, to never run back into the house. Do a mock fire drill at least twice a year to practice your fire escape plan. You may want to consider practicing the drills on the same day that you replace the batteries of your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms so that you remember!

There are other fire safety precautionary steps that you can take at home. Here are a few.

When buying pajamas for your child, choose those that fit snugly or that are labeled "flame resistant."

If your house has multiple stories, or if you live on the second floor of an apartment, have an emergency fire escape ladder available for use.

Food should not be left unattended on the stove, and dish towels and wooden utensils should be kept away from the stove to avoid a fire.

Matches and lighters should be stored in a secure location and out of the reach of children. Talk to your child about never playing with fire.

Portable space heaters should be kept a minimum of 3 feet away from flammable materials, such as beds, blankets, curtains, furniture, etc. When in use, space heaters should never be left unattended.

Leaving burning candles unattended is a potential hazard. Always place lit candles out of the child's reach, and blow them out when you leave the room or house, and before going to bed.

Replace damaged electrical cords and do not overload outlets with multiple electrical items.

Annually inspect and service your heating system prior to the start of winter.

The chimney or fireplace should also be inspected annually for cleaning or repairs. Always supervise your children when burning a fire in the fireplace. Use a fireplace screen, and consider installing a sturdy safety gate to keep children away.

Store gasoline and other combustible liquids in approved safety containers away from heat sources and out of reach of children.

Poison Prevention

Because preschool children are curious by nature, keep all poisonous or potentially harmful chemicals locked up and out of their reach. Potentially hazardous chemicals include: household cleaners, laundry detergent and dish washer pods. Pods can cause serious harmful effects if a child bites into them. It also includes pesticides and lawn chemicals, antifreeze, oil, gasoline, windshield wiper solution, and paint thinners

Potentially hazardous chemicals should be clearly labeled and stored away from food and medicine. Store chemicals in their original containers and never in water bottles or milk containers. Explain to your child that these items are dangerous and they should never drink, eat, or play with them.

Use caution with items that contain button batteries, such as remote controls, watches, and cameras. Keep the battery compartment securely fastened and spare batteries out of your child's reach. If swallowed, button batteries can cause severe medical consequences and can potentially result in death. If you suspect that your child has swallowed a button battery, seek immediate medical attention!

If your child is exposed to a hazardous chemical, call Poison Control immediately for guidance on how to handle the situation. Poison Control is staffed by certified specialists 24/7 that provide free, confidential guidance on any type of poison exposure, such as household chemicals, cosmetics, medications, alcohol, pesticides, plants, and even insect stings.

Consider posting their number on your refrigerator or somewhere easily accessible. You may want to program the number into your mobile phone in case of an emergency when away from home.

The Poison Control website has steps for first aid that should be taken immediately if your child has been exposed to hazardous materials.

Find additional information about poison control in the Resource tab.

Medication Safety

Medication should be kept in a secure location. Avoid storing medication on your bathroom or kitchen counter and in your purse or briefcase where it can be easily accessed. When at the pharmacy, request child-proof lids for pill containers. Use caution as your child may still be able to open these bottles. Talk to your child about never taking medicine without an adult present. If administering prescribed medications, follow the pediatrician's guidelines and never share medication between family members. Before administering any medication, carefully check that the bottle is the correct medication. Never give medication to your child in the dark where you cannot clearly see the bottle or the amount being administered. Try not to convince your child to take a medication by calling it candy or a treat and do not self-medicate your child.

Over-the-counter medications must also be administered carefully. Make sure to read and follow the instructions on the label. Consider keeping a medicine log when your child is ill. On the log note the type of medicine, the time it was administered, the amount, and how your child was feeling at the time, such as feverish, nauseas, etc. These detailed records can be helpful to your physician if the child remains ill.

Dangers of Secondhand Smoke

Secondhand smoke is the smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, cigar, or pipe that is passively breathed in by those around the person actively smoking. The smoke exhaled by the smoker is also considered secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, the same dangerous chemicals found in tobacco products. Many of these cause cancer and have numerous negative effects on health. There is no safe amount of breathing in secondhand smoke. Exposure even to small amounts can negatively impact your health and that of your children.

For children with asthma, secondhand smoke can trigger severe asthma attacks. Children who are exposed to secondhand smoke get sick more frequently, develop ear and respiratory infections like bronchitis and pneumonia, and can suffer from other respiratory symptoms like wheezing, coughing, and shortness of breath.

Women who smoke while pregnant are more likely to have babies with lower birth weight. Furthermore, secondhand smoke is a known cause of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or SIDS.

Here are some ways you can protect your children from secondhand smoke. Make your house and car smoke-free areas. Do not smoke or allow babysitters, friends, or relatives to smoke around your child. Opening the windows or using an air filter does not protect your child from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke. Avoid taking your child to establishments that allow smoking and make sure the day care you choose is also smoke free. If you or someone you know need to quit smoking, access additional resources in the Resource tab.

Dangers of Lead Exposure

Lead is a naturally occurring metal found in small amounts deep in the ground. Lead is poisonous to humans and exposure to it can result in life-long health concerns. In the past, lead was used in paint, pipes, ceramics, and even makeup. However, current safety regulations have greatly reduced the amount of lead in these items.

Lead can get into the body when a child consumes lead-contaminated dust, soil, or paint chips from a toy he or she puts in the mouth. Lead dust can cover a cooking surface which can be easily transferred to food. Of particular concern is when lead dust is breathed. When a house that has been painted with lead-containing paint is renovated, lead dust particles are released into the air and can be breathed in by those in proximity.

Protecting from exposure to lead is important for your child's overall health and well-being. Exposure to lead can impair growth and development in children, cause damage to the brain and nervous system, and result in difficulties with hearing and speech. It can lead to difficulty with learning and paying attention, and a lower IQ.

Children under the age of 6 are at a higher risk of lead poisoning because they are rapidly developing and can absorb lead more easily than an adult. Young children frequently put their hands, toys, and other items in their mouths, which increases their risk of lead exposure. No amount of lead exposure is considered safe.

Federal regulations banned the use of lead-based paint in 1978. Houses or buildings built prior to 1978 are likely to have been painted using lead-based paint. Lead-based paint is a danger when it starts to peel, crack, or chip, as this increases the risk of exposure to lead contaminated dust and children eating the paint chips. Closely inspect windowsills, door frames, or other areas where the paint has deteriorated that your child can reach.

The soil in yards and playgrounds can also become contaminated with lead. To help protect your children, make sure they wash their hands and wipe their shoes on mats after playing outside.

Pay particular attention to old toys that have been passed down from parents or grandparents and toys imported from other countries as they may contain lead. Toy costume jewelry, such as those bought from vending machines; imported candies containing chili powder or tamarind; and imported clay pottery and ceramic dishes can potentially be contaminated with lead. Old playground equipment may also pose a risk if the equipment was painted with a lead-based paint.

Water may become contaminated with lead due to the corrosion of water pipes and solder containing lead. Using cold water from the tap can help reduce potential exposure since hot water is more likely to be contaminated.

Most children that have been exposed to lead show no signs or symptoms. If you suspect your child has been exposed, contact your pediatrician. A blood test is used to measure the amount of lead in the blood. Your pediatrician can determine the appropriate treatment and can help identify areas in the child's environment where lead can be found.

The Environmental Protection Agency has placed regulations to control the exposure of lead in drinking water; however, homes built prior to 1986 may still have lead pipes and water fixtures installed. On its website, the United State Consumer Product Safety Commission provides information on recalls of toys and household products containing lead and other safety hazards. Access information about lead exposure in water and soil in the Resource tab.

Safety Steps

Here are some additional steps for a safe and healthy home environment. In a safe and healthy home,

- Electrical outlets are covered with child safety plugs.
- Furniture and bookshelves are secured to the wall so they cannot tip over if climbed on.
- Flat screen TVs are mounted securely to the wall.
- Large tube TVs are placed on appropriately designed TV stands that support the weight of the TV.
- Window blinds are cordless or the cords are tied up and out of reach of children.
- Childproof latches and locks are installed on all cabinets that contain hazardous items.
- The hot water temperature for the house should be set no higher than 120 degrees F.
- Guns are unloaded, and stored in a locked cabinet or gun safe separate from the ammunition.
- When at home, doors to the exterior are locked. Children are trained not to answer the door without an adult.
- Watch for moldy areas as mold is a known asthma trigger.
- The house is well ventilated and air filters are replaced according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Leaky faucets or broken plumbing are repaired immediately.
- The home is free of insects, rodents, and other pests! Pesticides are used according to manufacturer's instructions, and stored out of reach of children.
- Food is not left out and is stored in airtight containers.
- Lawns are maintained and there is no standing or stagnant water outside where mosquitos can spread.

Preparing for Emergencies

First aid is medical help provided to an injured person immediately after the injury occurs. One important step parents can take to ensure the safety and well-being of their children is to become trained in CPR, AED, and First Aid. Being prepared to act in an emergency situation can make the difference between life and death. Find information on certification training in your area in the Resource tab.

The first step to being prepared for an emergency is having a well-stocked first aid kit ready to go. Since emergencies can occur at any time anywhere, keep a first aid kit at home and a second one in your car. First aid kits can be purchased or easily assembled. Here is a list of items to include in your first aid kit.

Find a container. Consider using a tackle box, plastic box with a lid, lunchbox, backpack or any bag that zips closed. Clearly label the container “First Aid Kit.” You will need a First Aid instruction manual, a list of emergency phone numbers, a small flashlight, scissors, tweezers, safety pins, a pair of disposable gloves, hand sanitizer, antiseptic wipes, band-aids or adhesive bandages in assorted sizes, triangular bandages, some adhesive tape, elastic wraps, sterile gauze pads in assorted sizes, a gauze bandage roll, antibiotic ointment, hydrocortisone cream, and a blanket

Use re-sealable plastic bags to store a few of each item in the kit and replenish as needed. Label the bags with the item it contains. Since some of the items have expiration dates, check the kit occasionally and replace the item as necessary. Check the batteries in the flashlight to see if they still work.

Store the kit in an accessible location, but out of the reach of children. Teach your children where it is located so they can show an adult in the event of an emergency.

In a situation where you have to provide first aid, make sure you protect yourself first. Follow these precautionary steps when you are in a situation to provide first aid:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water before and after providing first aid care. Follow these steps for proper hand washing:
 - Wet hands with warm water.
 - Apply soap
 - Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds
 - Rinse your hands well in warm water.
 - Dry your hands using a disposable paper towel.
2. Wear disposable gloves when you might come in contact with blood or body fluids. Wash your hands with soap and water after removing your gloves.
3. Clean and disinfect any surface that came in contact with blood or bodily fluids.
4. Dispose of all contaminated material and gloves appropriately.

Providing First Aid

Nose bleeds are a fairly common occurrence in children. Cold dry air and nose-picking can make a child susceptible to frequent nose bleeds. When a nose bleed occurs, remain calm and keep the child calm. Seeing blood can be frightening to a child, so staying calm is important.

Most nose bleeds can be controlled by following these steps:

- Have the child sit-up straight with his or her head leaning slightly forward. Children with a nose bleed should not tilt their heads backward, or lay down, as this may cause the child to swallow the blood, and then cough or gag on it.
- Squeeze the soft part of the lower nose together and against the bony center bridge of the nose to apply pressure.
- Instruct the child to breathe through his or her mouth, as the child may be fearful about not being able to breathe.
- Apply pressure for about 10 minutes. If the nose continues to bleed, reapply pressure for another 10 minutes.

- Seek medical help if the bleeding does not stop after re-applying pressure.
- If the child has an object stuck in the nose, seek medical care for assistance to remove it.

Responding quickly to a dental emergency can decrease the risk of infection and improves the chance of a positive outcome. When a dental emergency occurs, call your pediatric dentist as quickly as possible to seek guidance on how to best handle the situation.

Keep the pediatric dentist's phone number handy at home. You may want to program the number into your mobile phone to have it available in the event of an emergency.

When a tooth is knocked out, different measures are taken depending on whether the tooth is a baby tooth or a permanent tooth.

If the tooth is a baby tooth:

- Call your pediatric dentist.
- Rinse the child's mouth with cold water, and apply a cold compress to the mouth.
- Do not place the tooth back into the tooth socket as this may lead to infection and damage the underlying permanent tooth.

If the tooth is a permanent tooth:

- Call your pediatric dentist immediately. If the dental office is closed, call the office's emergency number.
- Find the tooth and pick it up by the crown, the top of the tooth, trying not to touch the roots of the tooth.
- Gently rinse the tooth in cold water.
- Do **not** use soap, scrub the tooth, or dry the tooth.
- If possible, replace the tooth in its socket and hold it in place with a clean cloth or gauze.
- If the tooth cannot be placed back into its socket, place the tooth in a clean container filled with cold milk, which will help preserve the tooth. If milk is not available, use the child's saliva.
- Do not leave the tooth in a dry condition, do not wrap it in a napkin or cloth, and do not place the tooth in water.
- Immediately take your child and the tooth to the pediatric dentist. Immediate care is important in order to successfully replant the tooth.

For more information, visit the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry website. The website is provided in the Resource tab.

Preventing Falls

Taking steps to prevent your preschool child from serious falls is another important safety measure. If your child falls, call 911 immediately if the injury is to the head, back, neck, or hips. Do not move a child if

- you suspect an injury to the neck or back, or a broken bone,
- the child is having a seizure,

- the child is unconscious, or if
- the child is having difficulty breathing,

After a fall, closely monitor your child for signs of a concussion for the next 24 hours. Signs of a concussion can include: trouble focusing, sleeping problems, vomiting, dizziness, off-balance, and irritability. If you suspect a concussion, take your child to the doctor for further evaluation.

For minor bumps and bruises, elevate the injured area and apply ice wrapped in a damp towel to the area for about 15-20 minutes. Avoid putting the ice directly on the skin. Repeat as needed a couple of times every hour. Seek medical attention if the swelling increases or the pain does not subside.

Find information about concussions in the Resource tab.

Here are a few precautionary steps that parents and guardians can take to avoid children falling.

- Safety gates are installed at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Stairs, halls, and walkways are kept clear of items.
- Handrails are installed on both sides of stairways and steps, indoors or outdoors.
- Spilled liquids are cleaned off the floor immediately.
- Night lights are installed in the hallways or paths children walk at night.
- Children are never left unattended on any raised place (i.e. countertop).
- Children are not allowed to jump on beds or furniture.
- Walkways are kept clear of cords.
- Area rugs are secured and loose floor boards are repaired.
- Children are secured with safety straps when on highchairs, strollers, or shopping carts.

Choking

Young children, especially those under the age of 4, are at an increased risk of choking. Children can choke on a variety of foods, especially if they are hard, sticky, small, round or circular in shape. Avoid feeding young children the following foods.

Hard foods like nuts and seeds, chips and pretzels, hard candy, carrots and raw vegetables, dried fruit and raisins, apple slices, and tough pieces of meat.

Sticky foods like marshmallows, peanut butter, taffy and sticky candy

Small food items like popcorn, whole kernel corn, whole beans and peas

Foods that are round or circular in shape like grapes, hotdog slices, and cherry tomatoes.

Foods that are easily swallowed like hot dogs or chewing gum.

To reduce the risk of choking, closely monitor your children while eating. Chop the food into small, edible pieces. Encourage them to eat slowly and chew their food completely and limit distractions while eating by turning off the television.

The Basics of Calling 911

Teaching your child to call 911 during an emergency is an important skill that could save a life. When talking to your child about calling 911, discuss which situations are emergencies and which are not emergencies.

An emergency can be

- a fire that breaks out
- a parent who is hurt and needs assistance
- an unconscious person is not responding
- a house break in
- or a car accident

Situations that are not an emergency are when

- he or she is sent to timeout
- the dog runs outside
- a sibling takes away a toy

Discuss with your child the information that the 911 operator will ask. For example their name, location or address, the type of emergency, and if there is someone hurt and needs help

Tell your child that it is important to remain calm, and to speak loud and clear so the 911 operator can understand. Instruct your child not to hang the phone up until the 911 operator tells him or her to do so.

Show your child how to dial 911 from your house and mobile phones and then have your child practice going over the 9-1-1 keys.

Review this with your child on a regular basis.

Safe Sleep Environment

Take preventative steps and create a safe-sleep environment for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related death. A safe-sleep environment should be created every time your infant naps or goes to sleep at night. Discuss safe sleep conditions with anyone who cares for your infant.

Follow these steps to create a safe sleep environment for your infant.

- Put your infant to sleep on his or her back. Sleeping on the back is the safest sleeping position for infants. During playtime, tummy time is important for infants to develop neck and shoulder muscles, however, infants should never be allowed to sleep on their stomach.
- Infants should sleep on a firm surface, such as in a crib or bassinet with a firm mattress covered with a tightly-fitted bottom sheet.
- Infants should not sleep on a couch, futon, in a chair, bean bag, on top of a pillow or blanket, or in an adult bed. Infants should not be put to sleep in a baby swing, bouncer, rocker, car seat, or infant carrier.

- The crib or sleeping area must not have any pillows, blankets, loose sheets, stuffed animals, toys, or crib bumper pads. If your child falls asleep while playing, make sure to move the child to a safe sleeping area away from pillows, blankets, and stuffed animals.
- Infants should sleep alone and never co-sleep with an adult or another child, even during naptime. Your infant can sleep in his or her crib in your room where you can frequently check on him or her throughout the night. If you nurse, feed, or change your child during the night, make sure to return the infant back to his or her crib or bassinet.
- Dress your infant lightly for sleep, in a one-piece sleeper or infant sleep clothing where he or she will not get too hot at night. Do not dress your child in multiple layers or cover with blankets or other bedding.
- Allowing the infant to have a dry pacifier that is not attached to a string or stuffed-animal is a safe practice and may help to reduce the risk of SIDS. However, if the infant does not want the pacifier you do not need to make the child use it. Find more information on safe sleep in the Resource tab.

Car Safety

Having your child properly restrained when riding in a vehicle is critical for your child's safety in the event of an accident. The American Academy of Pediatrics developed guidelines to assist parents with determining when their child is ready to advance to the next level of car seat or safety restraint. Here are some best practice recommendations.

- Rear facing: Infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car seat until the age of two or older until the child reaches the maximum height and weight specifications of the car seat.
- Forward facing: The child should ride in a forward-facing car seat as long as possible until the child reaches the maximum height and weight specifications of the car seat, usually from 40 to 80 or more pounds.
- After the age of 4 and when the child weighs more than 40 pounds, the child should ride in a booster seat with the adult shoulder and lap safety belts firmly secured. Booster seats ensure proper placement of the car's seatbelt on the child. Booster seats must be used with both the lap and shoulder safety belts. The lap belt should fit snugly around your child's hips and upper thighs. The shoulder belt should cross the middle of the child's shoulder and chest, away from the child's neck and face.
- Behavior maturity is required for your child to safely ride in a booster seat. For example, your child must know not to unbuckle or remove the seat belt, to move the arm out from under the shoulder strap, and to sit still, not lean forward or try to pick items up off the floorboard.

The backseat is the safest place for a child to ride in a vehicle. Children younger than 13 years old should ride properly restrained in the back seat.

Texas law requires that all children under the age of 8 years old, unless taller than 4'9", be restrained in a proper child safety seat when riding in a passenger vehicle. This means, that once

your child turns 8 years old, it is legal for the child to ride in a vehicle using only the adult safety belt.

However, if your child is 8 years old but not yet 4'9" the safest option would be for your child to continue riding in the child safety seat, as the adult seat belt is designed to fit individuals who are at least 4'9" in height.

Drivers and all passengers, whether in the front or back seats, are required by law to wear a seatbelt. Individuals of all ages not wearing seatbelts are breaking the law and can receive a ticket. Texas law also addresses riding without a booster seat.

As a parent, be a good role model and always wear a seatbelt when riding in a vehicle. Find information on Child Passenger Safety in the Resource tab.

Heatstroke

Children left alone in a car can suffer heatstroke, which can have fatal consequences. A car's interior can heat up quickly. In only 10 minutes, the temperature of a car's interior can increase up to 20 degrees. Even on overcast, cool days with temperatures in the 60s, a car's interior can exceed 100 degrees. Leaving a window cracked open does little to reduce the high temperature in a car's interior. Because children's body overheat 3-5 times faster than adults, this makes children more susceptible to suffering from heatstroke. If you ever see a child left unattended in a car, call 911 immediately!

Follow these tips to keep your child safe.

- Never leave your child unattended in a car, not even for a couple of minutes while you run an errand.
- Keep car keys out of reach and never let your child play in a parked car. Talk with your child about why playing in a parked car is dangerous.
- Keep the doors and trunk of your car locked at all times, even when parked inside your garage.
- Check the back seat of your car every time you get out to make sure everyone is out of the vehicle. Unfortunately, incidents have occurred where children have been left in the back seat of the car accidentally. Consider placing something you need, such as your purse, briefcase, or cell phone, in the back seat as a reminder that a child is in the back seat of the car. If someone else is dropping your child off, call to verify that your child has arrived safely at the destination.
- If your child is in daycare, request that the day care call you if your child does not arrive during the normal drop off time.

Outdoor Safety

Children should be encouraged to be physically active for at least 60 minutes every day. Playing outside and enjoying nature should also be encouraged. However, it is important to keep your child safe when playing outdoors. When outdoors, children should be supervised by an adult at all times.

Make sure that your child wears a safety helmet and appropriate protective gear when riding a bicycle, skateboard, scooter, or roller skating,

Teach your child not to play in the street but rather on the driveway and sidewalk. Tell your child not to go after the ball or toy if it rolls into the street but to ask an adult to retrieve it. Finally, talk to your children about strangers and what to do if a stranger approaches them.

Playing at a playground poses other safety risks. Teach your child to keep these situations in mind when at the playground.

- The child should be careful not to walk in front or behind swings that are in use.
- When sliding down the slide, the child should face forward on his or her bottom and not go down the slide backwards or head first.
- Children should play only on the equipment that is appropriate for their age.
- Children should learn the importance of taking turns and sharing with other children in the playground.
- Children should watch out for hot playground equipment during the summer since metal heats up quickly in the sun.

Finally, if you have playground equipment in your yard, regularly check it to see if it is stable and free from sharp edges or broken parts.

Physical activity, especially in a hot environment, can greatly increase a child's needs for fluids. Preschool children should always have water available to consume throughout the day. Encourage your child to take a water break every 15-20 minutes of play, especially important when playing in hot or humid environments. Consider offering snacks that have a high water content, such as watermelon, strawberries, or orange slices. This is a yummy way for your child to stay hydrated.

Adults should watch their children closely during activity for signs of dehydration. Children wearing protective equipment or heavy clothes have a reduced ability to dissipate heat due to the additional clothing. Watch closely for these signs of dehydration.

- Feeling thirsty or having a dry mouth
- Fatigue and tiredness
- A Headache
- Dizziness and confusion
- Cramps in the stomach or legs

If you suspect your child is becoming dehydrated, encourage him or her to stop the activity, rest in an area out of the sun, and drink fluids to alleviate thirst. If conditions do not improve, or if they worsen, seek medical attention. Severe dehydration and associated heat illnesses can be life threatening.



Water Safety

Playing outdoors in the sun is fun, but without the proper protection, it can often lead to sunburns. Help your child from getting a sunburn by applying sunscreen before going out to play. To protect even more, have your child wear a hat and sunglasses with UV protection. Use waterproof sunscreen if playing in the water, and consider buying a swim shirt or swimsuit that contains UV protection in the fabric for additional protection.

If planning a long day outdoors, take breaks so that your child can get out of the sun. Consider taking a canopy, tent, or a large beach umbrella to provide a shady spot.

When around water, children must be supervised by an adult at all times. Be aware that little children can drown in 2-4" of water. When playing at waterparks or public swimming pools, keep a close eye on your children and do not rely solely on the lifeguard. Accidents can happen at any time, and the more eyes watching your child, the safer your child will be.

When at an event with numerous adults present, consider assigning one adult at a time to monitor the children playing in the water, and rotate the task to other adults. Assuming that another adult is watching the children is not a safe practice. Accidental drowning can occur even with many adults present.

If there is a swimming pool at your house, make sure access to the pool is kept secured. Install fencing that is at least 4' high around the pool with a self-closing gate that can be securely latched. Do not install hand or foot rails on the fence that children can climb, and make the fence of a material that is not easily climbed.

Include door alarms on your house that alert you when the child has gone outside, pool alarms, and tight fitting pool covers. Remember that none of these measures guarantee safety or that children will not be able to access the pool area. Similar guidelines should be followed to secure a hot tub or inflatable pools. If you have a small kiddie-pool for your child to play in, make sure to empty the pool after use. More information on safety barriers is found in the Resource tab.

Do not depend on floating toys, inner tubes, or inflatable arm bands to keep your child safe in the water. Remove toys, balls, and floats from the pool after swimming. Children may see the items and may be tempted to try to get them, which could lead to the child accidentally falling into the water later. Appropriately fitted life jackets along with adult supervision are necessary for helping to ensure water safety. On a boat or jet ski, children are required to wear Coast Guard approved life jackets.

Finally, consider enrolling your child in swimming lessons. Teaching your child to swim is an important safety measure. If you cannot swim, consider enrolling in an adult swim lessons so you are comfortable in the water and can enjoy swimming with your children. Keep in mind that even though a child might learn how to swim, there is still risk when playing in water.

Conclusion

In this course you learned strategies for creating a healthy and safe home environment. You learned about the health concerns related to exposure to secondhand smoke and lead and tips for reducing your child from exposure. You learned about Emergency First Aid and best



practices for safe sleep for infants. You also learned tips for keeping your child safe in the car, while playing outside, and when around water. We hope you will use the information learned in this course to help ensure the health and safety of your children.

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