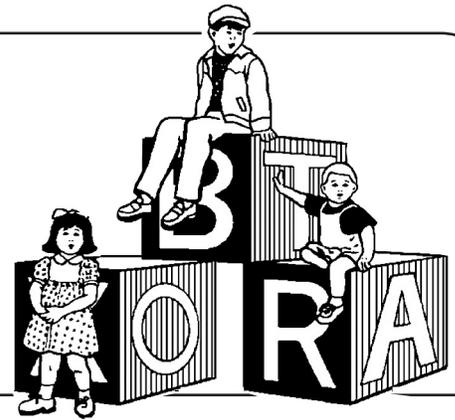


Building Blocks to Safety

*A newsletter for prevention
of childhood injuries*



North Dakota Department of Health

Spring 2004

Division of Injury Prevention and Control

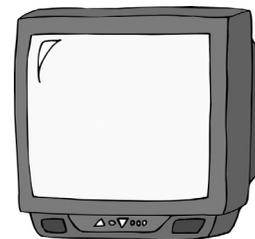
Television and Children

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, family is the most important influence in a child's life, but television is not far behind. Television can inform, entertain and teach. However, some of what TV teaches may not be the things you want children to learn. TV programs and commercials often show violence, alcohol or drug use, and sexual content that may not be suitable for children or teens. Studies show that TV viewing may lead to more aggressive behavior and less physical activity.

By knowing how television affects children and by setting limits, caregivers can help make their child's TV watching experience not only enjoyable, but healthy, too. Television affects children's lives in many ways. When children sit down to watch TV, consider the following:

Time — Children in the United States watch about four hours of TV every day. Watching movies on tape and playing video games only adds to time spent in front of the TV screen. It may be tempting to use TV, movies and video games to keep your child busy, but children need to spend as much time growing and learning as possible. Playing, reading and spending time with friends and family are much healthier than sitting in front of a TV screen.

Nutrition — Children who watch too much TV are more likely to be overweight. They do not spend as much time running, jumping and getting the exercise they need. They also see many commercials for unhealthy foods during children's programs, such as candy, snacks, sugary cereals and drinks.



Violence — Children who see violence on TV may not understand that real violence hurts and kills people. And if the "good guys" use violence, children may learn that it is okay to use force to handle aggression and settle disagreements. Some children will be affected more than others. But while the duration, intensity and extent of the impact may vary, there are several negative effects of children's exposure to violent entertainment. These effects take several forms:

- Children who see a lot of violence are more likely to view violence as an effective way of settling conflicts. Children exposed to violence are more likely to assume that acts of violence are acceptable behavior.
- Viewing violence can lead to emotional desensitization towards violence in real life. It can decrease the likelihood that one will take action on behalf of a victim when violence occurs.
- Entertainment violence feeds a perception that the world is a violent and mean place. Viewing violence increases fear of becoming a victim of violence, with a result of increased self-protective behaviors and mistrust of others.

Continued on next page

Television and Children can't

- Viewing violence may lead to real violence. Children exposed to violent programming at a young age have a higher tendency for violent and aggressive behavior later in life than children who are not so exposed.

As a parent, there are many ways you can help your child develop positive viewing habits. The following tips may help:

1. **Set limits** — Limit your child's use of TV, movies and video and computer games to no more than one to two hours a day. Do not let your child watch TV while doing homework.
2. **Plan your child's viewing** — Instead of flipping through channels, use a program guide and the TV ratings to help you and your child choose shows. Turn the TV on to watch the program you chose and turn it off when the program is over.
3. **Watch TV with your child** — Whenever possible, watch TV with your child and talk about what you see. If your child is very young, she may not be able to tell the difference between a show, a commercial, a cartoon or real life. Explain that characters on TV are make-believe and not real. Some "reality-based" programs may appear to be "real," but most of these shows focus on stories that will attract as many viewers as possible. Often these are stories about tragedy and violence. Much of their content is not appropriate for children. Young children may worry that what they see could happen to them or their family. News broadcasts also contain violent or inappropriate material. If your schedule prevents you from watching TV with your child, talk to her later about what she watched.

You Need To Know...

The new, toll-free hotline for the national poison center is 800.222.1222.

For more information about childhood poison prevention or to request stickers and magnets with the national poison control number, visit www.ndpoison.com or contact the health department at 800.472.2286.



Scooter/Mini Bike Recall

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Fisher-Price voluntarily are recalling about 30,000 electric scooters and about 55,000 electric mini bikes. The motor-control circuits can malfunction, causing the scooters and mini bikes to continue to run after the power or throttle button is released, posing a risk of injury to children.

The recalled Lightning PAC scooters and MX3 mini bikes are battery-powered ride-on toys designed for children 6 and older. The recalled toys have model numbers 73530 or 73535 (scooter) and B2222 (mini bike), which can be found inside the battery compartment. The recalled toys were made in China.

Mass merchants and toy stores nationwide sold the scooters between November 2001 and October 2003 and the mini bikes between May 2003 and September 2003. Consumers should take the toy away from children and contact Fisher-Price at 800.582.7153 to receive information about how to have their toys serviced for free.



Visit the following websites for more information about product safety and injury prevention:

www.cpsc.gov
www.health.state.nd.us

Building Blocks to Safety is published quarterly by the Injury Prevention Program, Division of Injury Prevention and Control



North Dakota Department of Health
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept 301
Bismarck, N.D. 58505-0200
800.472.2286

Terry Dwelle, M.D., State Health Officer
John Joyce, M.D., Community Health Section Chief
Mary Dasovick, Division of Injury Prevention and Control Director
Dawn Mayer and
Carol Meidinger, Editors

This newsletter can be accessed at
www.ndmch.com/injury-prevention/publications.asp



Sidewalk Chalk Recalled

The CPSC, Target and Toys R Us stores voluntarily are recalling more than 70,000 packages of sidewalk chalk. The multicolored and solid-colored sidewalk chalk contains high levels of lead, posing a risk of poisoning to young children. The manufacturer of the chalk is Agglo Corporation, Hong Kong.

Consumers should stop using the chalk and return it for a refund to the store at which it was purchased. Consumers concerned about their child's exposure to lead should notify their physician's office to receive a blood lead screening.

Chalk from Target:

The sidewalk chalk from Target is packaged in plastic that is molded to five sticks of chalk and a cardboard backing that is labeled "Double Dipp'n Fun." Each stick of chalk is triangular shaped and multicolored with three colors layered together (green, red, yellow or blue). The chalk was sold from March 2003 to July 2003.



Chalk from Toys R Us:

The Toys R Us sidewalk chalk is packaged in a clear-plastic backpack-type carrying case with these words on the label: "Chalk to Go ... Totally Me! ... 24 pieces, sidewalk chalk in different colors, fun chalk shapes." The chalk comes in several shapes: butterfly, spider, ice cream cone, bottle, cylinder and triangular stick. The chalk pieces are solid-colored or multicolored, including red, blue, green, yellow and purple.



Jack-in-the-Boxes Recalled

The CPSC and Schylling Associates voluntarily are recalling 14,000 Jack-in-the-box type toys. The bead on the crank of the toy can detach, posing a choking hazard to young children.



Two designs of the toy are included in the recall, and both play "Pop Goes the Weasel" when the crank is turned. One is based on Dr. Seuss's Cat in the Hat and the other is based on Ian Falconer's Olivia the pig.

The toy was sold at specialty stores, gift shops, department stores and book stores nationwide from June 2003 through November 2003. Consumers should remove the toy and contact Schylling Association at 800.767.8697 for information about receiving a refund or replacement toy.

Activity Books Recalled

The CPSC and Advantage Publishers Group voluntarily are recalling about 5,300 Amazing Baby Listen and Play activity



books. In some of these books, the hub of the pink dial embedded in the inside back cover can come off during use, posing a choking hazard to young children.

The activity book has a multicolored cover with a baby face on the front and is an interactive book designed to allow children 12 months to 24 months to learn about different sounds, images and materials.

Retail stores, national book chains, wholesalers and distributors, and membership warehouse clubs nationwide sold the activity books from May 2003 to October 2003. Consumers should stop using the books and call Advantage Publishers Group at 866.478.3731 to order a replacement activity book.



K'NEX Toys Recalled

The CPSC and K'NEX Industries voluntarily are recalling 14,000 Mud Buggers and Street Shredder pump-up racer toys. The air motor in the toy cars can burst while being pumped up, causing parts of the motor or car to break off. Some of these parts can have sharp points and pose a risk of eye or laceration injuries.

The racers come in two models: the Mud Bogger has a yellow car body, and the Street Shredder has a red car body. The toy cars come with a pump attachment that helps project the car forward.

Toys R Us, Wal-Mart and Target stores nationwide sold the toys between November 2003 and December 2003. Consumers should stop children from using these toy cars immediately and contact the company at 800.543.5639 for a free replacement air motor or alternative product.



Graco Toy Recalled

The CPSC and Graco Children's Products voluntarily are recalling 400,000 bumble bee toys with blue antennae sold with certain Graco high chairs and Graco mobile entertainers and also sold separately as an accessory and replacement part.

All bumble bee toys with blue antennae distributed by Graco are included in this recall; bumble bee toys with yellow or black antennae are not affected.

Discount, department and juvenile-product stores sold the products from October 2001 through March 2003. Consumers should discard the bumble bee toy and contact Graco at 800.258.3213 to receive a free replacement toy.



Save the Date!

The North Dakota Department of Health and the North Dakota Department of Transportation will sponsor an Injury Prevention and Traffic Safety Conference, November 16-17, 2004, in Bismarck, N.D. For more information, call 800.472.2286.

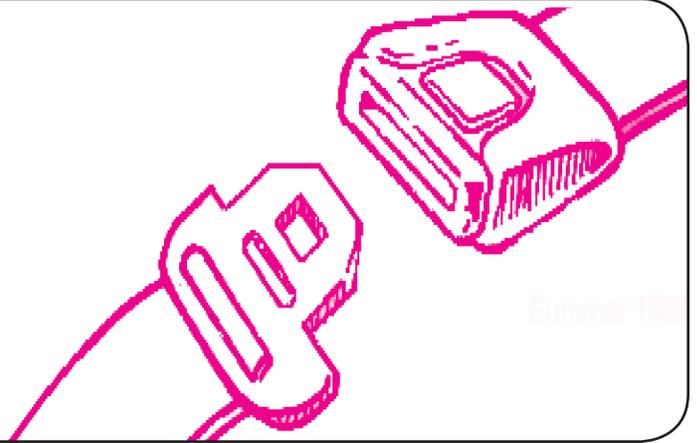


Division of Injury Prevention and Control
North Dakota Department of Health
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 301
Bismarck, N.D. 58501-0200
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE PAID
BISMARCK, ND
PERMIT # 419

The Buckle Update



Misuse of Child Restraints in Your Community: Sponsoring a Car Seat Checkup

The North Dakota Department of Health is offering communities the opportunity to sponsor a car safety seat checkup to assist parents in proper use of their child's car seat. The project, which is funded through the North Dakota Department of Transportation, sends certified child passenger safety instructors and technicians to local communities to oversee the event and inspect the car seats. Local sponsors are asked to assist with promotion of the checkup and to provide a staff person to attend the checkup to greet customers and help with traffic flow.

At the checkup, car seats are inspected for:

- Is the seat appropriate for the age and weight of the child?

- Is the seat in good repair and free of recalls or defects?
- Is the car seat installed in the vehicle correctly?
- Is the child secured correctly in the car seat?



Checkups usually are scheduled for two to four hours and are done at a variety of locations, including health units, car dealerships, fire departments, ambulance garages or store parking lots.

For more information about scheduling a checkup in your community, contact Carol Meidinger at the North Dakota Department of Health at cmeidinger@state.nd.us or 800.472.2286 (press 1).

NHTSA Advises Parents: Child Safety Seats Can Be Reused After Minor Crash

Following a review of research on child safety seat performance, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has revised its advice on the reuse of child restraints after a minor crash.

The policy change was made to ensure that parents continue to restrain their child correctly following a minor crash and to reduce the financial burden of unnecessary child safety seat replacement.

NHTSA describes a minor crash as one in which all of the following apply:

- A visual inspection of the child safety seat, including inspection under any easily movable

seat padding, does not reveal any cracks or deformation that might have been caused by the crash.

- The vehicle in which the child safety seat was installed was capable of being driven from the scene of the crash.
- The vehicle door nearest the child safety seat was not damaged.
- There were no injuries to any of the vehicle occupants.

Continued on next page

- The air bags (if any) did not deploy.

NHTSA continues to recommend that parents check with the child seat manufacturer with regard to performance, operation and installation of their child restraint.

Child Passenger Safety Trainings

The North Dakota Department of Health has scheduled three 32-hour child passenger safety courses that allow participants to become certified as child passenger safety technicians. The dates and locations are:

Bismarck: May 18-21, 2004

Grand Forks: June 7-10, 2004

Minot: July 19-22, 2004

Participants will learn the basics of child restraints and their proper installation in vehicles. They also will learn best practice advice to share with families about safe transportation of their infants, toddlers and young children.

For more information, contact Carol Meidinger or Dawn Mayer, North Dakota Department of Health, at 800.472.2286 (press 1).

NHTSA Survey Finds 73 Percent of Child Restraints Misused



Nationally, child restraint use is up, but improper use of car safety seats continues to be high, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

NHTSA collected data about misuse of child restraints in the fall of 2002 in six states, including Arizona, Florida, Mississippi, Missouri, Pennsylvania and Washington.

The study involved 5,527 children weighing less than 80 pounds in 4,126 vehicles.

The observations were done primarily at shopping centers in communities with a range of socio-demographic and economic characteristics. The data collection procedure involved intercepting potential target vehicles (driver with young child weighing less than 80 pounds), explaining the purpose of the study, asking permission to make observations and directing the driver to a safe parking area. The team then conducted the observation and recorded the information.

Critical misuse was observed for 72.6 percent. The most common misuses were loose vehicle safety belt attachment to the child restraint and loose harness straps securing the child to the seat. Misuse was most common among child restraints designed

for younger children: infant seats (83.9 percent), rear-facing convertible seats (83.5 percent), forward-facing convertible seats (81.9 percent) and forward-facing only seats (79.3 percent). Age/fit inappropriateness was observed for 7.4 percent of infant seats, 7.1 percent of forward-facing convertible seats, 9.5 percent of forward-facing only seats, and 9.2 percent of belt-positioning boosters.

Researchers also found:

- Sixty-two percent of the children were restrained in a car safety seat; 25.9 percent were buckled in a safety belt; and 11.8 percent were completely unrestrained.
- Restraint use was highest for infants (97.1 percent), followed by toddlers 20 to 39 pounds (86.4 percent), but fell sharply among children 40 to 59 pounds (41.7 percent) and 60 to 79 pounds (10.9 percent).
- A positive relationship exists between drivers using seat belts and children riding restrained. Ninety-two percent of the children who were transported by belted drivers were restrained, compared to only 62 percent of the children transported by unbelted drivers.

A copy of NHTSA's report *Misuse of Child Restraints* is available at www.nhtsa.dot.gov.

