



PARTNERS POST

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Your Partners for Public Education Newsletter

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Got active kids? Keep them safe on the playing field



With more than 38 million children and adolescents participating in sports in the United States, there are bound to be some injuries. According to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, the most common types of sport-related injuries among children are sprains, muscle strains, bone or growth plate injuries, repetitive motion injuries, and heat-related illness.

Because children's bones, muscles, tendons, and ligaments are still growing, they are more susceptible to injury. The most injuries are seen in bicycling, basketball, football, and roller sports, although injuries can happen in any sport.

There are measures that can be taken to limit potential injuries when your child participates in school sports:

Stay hydrated. Make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids before, during, and after a sporting activity. This will prevent dehydration and can ward off heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 5 oz. for an 88-pound child and 9 oz. for a 132-pound adolescent, every 20 minutes. It is also important to recognize the signs of dehydration. Symptoms range from muscle cramping to faintness and dizziness, nausea and rapid heartbeat to collapse, emotional instability to very high body temperature. While at play, children generate more heat than adults but also sweat less, which makes them more susceptible to dehydration.

Avoid overuse injuries. Sports overuse injuries are becoming more common as intensity of sports participation rises. Overuse injuries can be very subtle, making their detection difficult. Consider a pre-season program for your child to allow for a gradual increase in intensity. This allows the body to rest, rebuild, recover, and avoid injury. Stretching prior to practice and games, after 10 minutes of jogging or light activity, is crucial to injury prevention. In addition, allow for rest with an off-season and one or two days off each week during a season.

Protect against concussions. Concussions are an area of concern at all levels of play. Ensure your child wears the correct protective equipment for his/her activity, and that it fits properly, is well maintained, and is worn consistently and correctly. Encourage your child to practice good sportsmanship and to follow the rules of the sport to ensure safe play. It is also helpful to learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion. These include appearing dazed or stunned, loss of consciousness, and sensitivity to light or noise. If you believe your child has suffered a concussion, seek medical treatment right away.

Safe driving starts with involved parents

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among U.S. teens, and drivers aged 16 to 19 have crash rates well above any other age group, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Most serious crashes are caused by "critical errors" such as distracted driving or traveling too fast for road conditions.

Parents can help coach their teens to be safe and responsible drivers by participating in the new *Parent's Supervised Driving Program*. The program has produced a Pennsylvania-specific handbook available online and at local PennDOT driver's license centers.

Find the handbook and download the free RoadReady iPhone app at www.PartnersforPublicEd.org.



Putting an end to name-calling by embracing kindness

In the young adult novel *The Misfits*, four friends struggle to survive 7th grade in an environment of vicious taunts and name-calling. Day after day, they are the targets of mocking comments about their weight, height, intelligence, and sexual orientation. With student council elections approaching, the four friends decide to form a new political party, the "No Name-Calling" Party, and wage a challenge against some of their more popular peers. The 2003 book by James Howe has inspired an annual event in schools across the country, known as "No Name-Calling Week."

Educators say teaching kindness is essential to reducing bullying. "Scientific studies prove that kindness has many physical, emotional, and mental health benefits," writes Lisa Currie at the blog *Edutopia*.



Kindness is something that children cannot learn in books alone, adds Patty O'Grady, Ph.D., an expert in neuroscience, emotional learning, and positive psychology. "Children and adolescents do not learn kindness by only thinking about it and talking about it," she writes at *Psychology Today*. "Kindness [is] best learned by feeling it so that they can reproduce it."

Reading the warning signs of suicide in a young person

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people between 10 and 19 years of age. The good news is parents, teachers, and friends are in key positions to identify the warning signs in young people and to get them help.

Partners for Public Education has put together a new resource outlining suicide risk factors and warning signs in young people; it includes tips for how parents and caring adults can help.

One of the most important things you can do with the children in your life is lay the groundwork for good communications now — before a crisis situation or troubling event arises. You can begin to achieve this goal by communicating unconditional love and letting your kids know they can talk to you about anything.

For more information on suicide risk factors, warning signs, and action steps, read *Suicide Prevention: Getting children the help they need*, available at www.PartnersforPublicEd.org.

Be a better bystander

Did you know that an analysis of 30 school shootings found the attackers had told others about their plans in advance four out of five times? Imagine if more people spoke up about threats of violence before they happened.

The Sandy Hook Promise is urging parents and caring adults to teach the children in their lives to be "better bystanders" and to "Say Something" when they get wind of such threats. Go to www.sandyhookpromise.org/say_something for resources to help you have conversations with the teens and preteens in your lives about this often difficult subject.

Partner Benefits: It's warmer at the movies

Looking for something to do on a cold or rainy day? Why not go to the movies? Through your **Partner Benefits**, you can save as much as \$3 to \$5 on each ticket when you take in a flick. Visit the **Partner Benefits** page to sign in to Access, and click on the "Movies" link under Categories to find discounts at theaters in your area.



About Partners for Public Education

Partners for Public Education is working to provide you with resources about public education in Pennsylvania because we are committed to the success of every child. It is brought to you by the *Pennsylvania State Education Association*, an organization made up of the dedicated employees in your Pennsylvania public schools.

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