

# Good, old-fashioned, *SAFE, Summertime Fun!*

By Ranger Brandy Hanusosky

**WE'VE ALL SAID IT, "WHEN I WAS A KID** I never wore a helmet, didn't ride in a car seat, and played down at the creek bank for hours all alone. I turned out just fine." The truth is—times have changed—according to accidental injury death rates there are five leading summertime risks for children: drowning, biking/wheeled sports, falls, pedestrian injuries and motor vehicle passenger injuries. Summer vacation should be packed with great memories and not traumatic visits to the emergency room. Your family can enjoy your summer and visits to Lake Metroparks by following a few easy safety tips.

## WATER SAFETY

Actively supervise children in and around open bodies of water, giving them undivided attention even if a lifeguard is present. Teach children to tread water, float and stay by the shore or shallow end of a pool. Inflatable swimming aids are not a substitute for approved life vests and can give children a false sense of security. Do not let children dive into oceans, lake or rivers because you never know how deep the water is or what might be hidden under the surface of the water. Open water poses other dangers like hidden/sharp objects, uneven surfaces and drop offs, river currents, ocean undertow and changing weather. Lake Metroparks permits swimming in designated swimming areas only. Visit [lakemetroparks.com](http://lakemetroparks.com) for information and the Fairport Harbor Lakefront Park schedule.

## PLAYGROUND SAFETY

Children should not wear loose clothing or drawstrings when at a playground. Guardians should personally check equipment to be sure there are no open "s" hooks, protruding bolt ends, pinch points or poorly maintained landing areas near swings and slides. Also check the area for bees/wasps. If you observe a problem, contact the facility responsible for maintaining the equipment right away. Supervise children at all times while they are at play.

## WHEEL SAFE

Make sure your child always wears a helmet with a CPSC safety label and other protective gear every time he or she bikes, skateboards, skates or rides a scooter. Helmets should sit on top of the head in a level position and should not rock forward, backward or side to side when snugly buckled. A child's bike should be the right size and should be in good working order. If your child is younger than 10, they should cycle/skate only on sidewalks, paths or other areas designated for such activity. Teach older children the rules of the road, including all traffic laws.

## WALK SAFE

Children younger than 10 should cross the street with an adult. Cross at a corner, use crosswalks wherever possible and obey traffic signals. Teach children to look left, right and left again when crossing a street/driveway and to continue looking for cars as they cross. Roads, cul-de-sacs and parking areas are not safe places for children to play. Dress children in clothing with reflective materials and use a flashlight when it's dark.

## RIDE SAFE

Ohio's Child Restraint Law requires the following:

- Infants must ride in rear-facing car seats until at least one year old and 20 pounds.
- Children younger than four years of age and less than 40 pounds must be secured in a child safety seat in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions for the height/weight of that child.
- Children younger than eight, unless they are at least 4 feet 9 inches tall, must be in a booster seat (law effective October 7, 2009; full enforcement began April 7, 2010).
- Children eight to 15 years of age must be properly restrained in a vehicle at all times.

Please note that the back seat is the safest place for kids of any age because front air bags are designed to protect average-sized adults. For more information or to schedule a FREE child safety seat inspection (conducted by appointment only), contact Ranger

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