

Safety First!

One of the first and most important jobs of parenting is developing rules or habits that keep your young children safe.

Some things are negotiable, but others shouldn't be, including:

Sleep Safety

While it's natural to want to sleep with your infant, it can be harmful. If you choose to practice co-sleeping, make sure your baby always sleeps on his back with his head uncovered; do not put any stuffed animals or pillows on the bed; and keep your baby away from spaces between the mattress and wall, side rail, headboard or footboard.

Car Safety

Never leave your child alone inside a car. On a warm day, the temperature inside a vehicle can climb to 125 degrees within minutes, even with the windows down. A child's body temperature rises three to five times faster than an adult's and she can easily suffer heat stroke.

Sun Safety

Regularly applying sunscreen with a minimum SPF 15 on your children, even on cloudy or overcast days, can reduce their risk of skin cancer later in life by 78 percent. The sun's rays are the strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., so limit your child's outdoor time during these hours.

Water Safety

Never leave your young child unattended around water, including a bucket, a bath tub or a pool. Even if your child can swim, he needs to be monitored at all times.



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1-800-552-7096 Virginia Child Abuse Hotline (language line available)