



Children's Hospital Oakland – Kohl's Injury Prevention Program

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Active Supervision of Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers



Why is active supervision important?

Infants, toddlers and preschoolers have some of the highest lifetime injury rates. Because of their developmental immaturity, young children need adults to help keep them safe. Children often are not able to recognize risk until they reach middle to late elementary school age. Children's energetic curiosity makes them natural explorers of the world around them. In addition, research shows that parents often underestimate the age at which children can physically do things (like climb) and overestimate their child's thinking and judgment ("he knows not to do that").

Active supervision is a proven way to help keep your child safe. Parents who actively supervise are close, attentive, and constant (see definition below). Parents must constantly and proactively anticipate dangers for their children.

What is active supervision?

- 1) attention, 2) continuity,
3) closeness**

- Active supervision means watching your child in a way that allows you to prevent injuries from happening.
- Active supervision is especially important when there is high risk: near water, in and around vehicles, open flames, animals, heat sources, roads, dangerous chemicals and on playgrounds.
- Other children can never substitute for adults.

How can I actively supervise my child?

There are three parts to active supervision of young children. These are attention, continuity and closeness. It is impossible to actively supervise your child 24 hours a day but you must use active supervision any time injury risk is high.

Attention means focusing on your child and nothing else.

Anything that takes your attention away increases your child's injury risk. Common distractions are taking telephone calls, doing household chores or watching television.

Continuity means constantly watching your child.

For example do not leave your child outside your home to go inside and get something.

Closeness means staying close enough to actually touch your child.

If you are out of arms-reach of your child, your ability to prevent injury goes down significantly.

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