



# Kids' Health Connection

Presented by the Hales Corners Health Department

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## Talking to Kids About Gun Safety

With a firearm in one-third of American Homes with children, it's very likely that, as a parent, you've thought about gun safety for your child.

Children are naturally curious. To learn about the world, they gravitate toward the new and interesting, especially things

that often get portrayed as "taboo" like drugs, alcohol—and guns. Though it can be a nerve-racking discussion, an important part of preparing your child to be an adult is teaching them how to think about guns when they do encounter one, whether it's in your home or someone else's.

Teach kids to follow these rules if they come into contact with a gun:

- ⇒ Stop what they're doing
- ⇒ Do not touch the gun
- ⇒ Leave the area where the gun is
- ⇒ Tell an adult right away



If you keep a gun in the house, it's vital to keep it out of sight and out of reach of kids. The gun should be kept locked and unloaded, and the ammunition should be stored separately.

The Hales Corners Health Department has a limited number of free gun locks available to residents. Call 414-529-6155 today to pick up a free gun lock.

## Look Where You Walk!

According to SafeKids.org, 61 children are hit by cars every day in the United States. These injuries happen most often during the hours before or after school. In recent years there has been a very noticeable demographic shift in the age of children struck by vehicles. Now, a teenager is much more likely to be hit by a car than a younger child. In 2013, of the 484 children ages 19 and younger who died after being hit by a motor vehicle, 47% were aged 15-19. Why? Because they are distracted while walking.

The National Safety Council is focused on trying to eliminate distracted walking—especially walking while texting. A Nielson Company study found kids aged 12-17 send more than 3,400 texts a month (7 messages an hour while they are awake). Not only are kids distracted, but

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## Protecting Your Child From Substance Abuse

A child with healthy self-esteem has much less likelihood to abuse drugs and other substances. A number of factors can contribute to a child's feeling good and having a healthy self-esteem. When a person has low self-esteem, they may be more influenced by the world around them and their resulting actions. For example, a person with low self-esteem may have trouble overcoming negative thoughts and therefore turn to outside activities to change those negative thoughts into positive ones. Drugs can be one of the outside activities they turn to in a negative situation or state of mind.

Here are a few ways to help strengthen your child's self-esteem:

- ✓ Raise your child to feel that he/she is important in your life and to believe that his/her feelings really matter.
- ✓ Be respectful of your child's wishes and try to understand your child's perspective. Instill self-worth in your child.
- ✓ Get involved and stay involved in your child's life.
- ✓ Spend time reading books together or playing games that your child likes.
- ✓ Be honest with your child in all aspects of your relationship. Parents who lie or break

promises give their child reasons to distrust them.

- ✓ Acknowledge and celebrate your child's successes and achievements, which can help your child build a sense of personal confidence and power in the world. Clearly articulate your own attitudes about substance abuse. At the same time, examine your own use of substances and what kind of role model you are presenting to your child.

For more information go to: The American Academy of Pediatrics

### Reach Out Now

Your fifth grader is trying on new clothes, new friends, and new behaviors. Could alcohol be involved in those new behaviors? Nearly 10.5 million youth between 12-20 are underage drinkers; and the average age of first use keeps dropping. So, fifth grade is not too early to start talking with your child about underage drinking. Getting a dialogue going about underage drinking isn't easy, but a publication produced by Scholastic can help you and your fifth grader get started. You may be amazed by what you learn about your child and what your child can learn from you. The benefits of that dialogue can last a lifetime. Log on to [www.health.org](http://www.health.org)—*"Reach Out Now: Talk with Your Fifth Grader About Underage Drinking."*

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drivers are too. Eliminating all distractions is the way to keep kids safe. Before your children head to school tell them:

- Never walk while texting, playing games, or talking on the phone
- Do not cross the road while using an electronic device or wearing headphones
- Take note of your surroundings
- If available, always use the sidewalk instead of walking in the road
- Make sure to look both directions before crossing the street at a crosswalk



For more information on pedestrian safety go to [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org)