



QUICK FACTS FOR PARENTS

Learning about **Staying Safe**

Safety includes not only physical safety and the avoidance of physical injury but also emotional safety.

Ontario schools strive to provide a learning environment that is both physically and emotionally safe, that is free from violence and harassment, and that provides students with acceptance, support, and respect.

Having students learn to be actively involved in their own safety and in caring for the safety of others is an important goal of the health and physical education curriculum. The emphasis is not only on safety in the gym but on developing a “safety mindset” that can be applied in situations of all kinds, at school, at home, and in the community. As they participate in the program, students learn the importance of following safety rules and incorporating appropriate safety practices into their activities. At the same time, they develop the skills they need to recognize, assess, and manage risk in a wide variety of circumstances.

WHAT DO STUDENTS LEARN AT SCHOOL ABOUT SAFETY?

Students in all grades learn to:

- take responsibility for their own safety and that of others
- make safe and healthy choices and to think about the consequences of their decisions for themselves and others
- understand that risk taking is a natural and important part of healthy development
- assess and manage risks and develop habits, ways of thinking and skills that give them the ability and confidence to take risks safely
- understand and follow safety procedures and rules (e.g., for road safety, concussion prevention, home safety, fire safety, sun and weather safety, workplace safety) and use safety equipment properly
- identify possible safety concerns in different situations (e.g., holes or hazards on trails, risk of online luring)
- develop skills that increase their personal safety (e.g., skills for identifying, preventing, and addressing issues such as bullying, assault, child abuse, harassment, and violence in relationships)
- develop skills that help them avoid conflict as well as skills that help them stand up for themselves
- develop skills for getting help in situations in which they don't feel safe (e.g., recognizing when they need help and knowing what to do and where to go to find help).

Students also learn safety skills in many other areas of the school curriculum, including the sciences, technology education, the arts, social studies, history and geography, and computer studies. These skills include using materials, tools, technology, and equipment safely and knowing how to identify or anticipate hazards and avoid safety problems.

Students also learn to be sensitive to diverse points of view and to respect the experiences and perceptions of others. These are skills which support emotional safety.

Most “accidents” are not accidents at all, but are predictable and preventable events.

www.parachutecanada.org

Properly worn, helmets reduce the risk of severe brain injuries by up to 80%.

www.parachutecanada.org

Children who engage in active outdoor play in natural environments are more resilient, show a greater ability to regulate themselves, and are able to develop skills for dealing with stress later in life.

ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, 2015

Cyberbullying is a serious issue that can threaten your child's emotional safety and overall well-being. Seventy per cent of Kids Help Phone users said they have been bullied online.

www.kidshelpphone.ca

WHAT DO YOUNGER STUDENTS LEARN?

Students in Grades 1-3 learn how to stay safe at home, at school, and in the community and how to get help in cases of injury or abuse. They develop skills that will help them stand up for themselves and also learn about the importance of listening to and respecting others. In grades 4-6, they learn about taking precautions to prevent injuries during physical activities and also learn about simple first aid treatment procedures. In terms of emotional safety, they build their understanding about stereotypes, learn about ways to ask questions and avoid making assumptions about others.

WHAT DO OLDER STUDENTS LEARN?

In Grades 7 and 8 and in high school, students learn to participate safely in a wider range of physical activities, including ones that can involve greater potential risk. They develop their ability to assess situations and avoid possible hazards and learn how to respond to emergencies. Personal safety, in both physical situations and online (e.g., cyberbullying), also receives more attention. Students continue to learn and practise ways of interacting positively with each other. They also consider the consequences of bullying, harassment, and violent behaviour and learn ways of preventing and responding to these threats.

SUPPORTING LEARNING ABOUT SAFETY AT HOME AND IN THE COMMUNITY

Parents can encourage students to become aware of safety in all aspects of daily life. Consider these ideas:

- Be a role model for your children and demonstrate how to act safely in a variety of everyday situations (e.g., by wearing seatbelts and helmets, obeying rules for crossing streets safely, not using a cell phone while driving, speaking respectfully to others, using social media responsibly).

MORE INFORMATION

- » The Ontario government offers information on programs and policies that support student health and safety on the following websites:
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/healthyschools.html>
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/safeschools.html>
- » *Bullying: We Can All Help Stop It* (a downloadable pamphlet available in multiple languages) can be found at:
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/learn.html>
- » Links to resources on the prevention, identification, management, and treatment of concussions can be found at:
www.ontario.ca/concussions
- » Parachute is a non-profit organization that provides information on a wide range of injury prevention topics.
<http://www.parachutecanada.org/>
- » Kids Help Phone (1-800-668-6868) is a free, national, bilingual, confidential, and anonymous, 24-hour telephone and online counselling service for young people. www.kidshelpphone.ca
- » The Canadian Centre for Child Protection, a registered charity, offers a number of programs, services, and resources to help protect children. www.protectchildren.ca

- Provide children with opportunities to explore in ways appropriate to their age so that they can build confidence and learn what they are capable of doing. It's also important, however, for children to be taught to assess and manage the risks that come with greater independence.
- Help your children assess risks and plan for safety by asking them to think about questions like these:
 - Are they aware of the hazards they might encounter?
 - Do they have the safety equipment they need, and, if appropriate, does it fit properly?
 - Do they know the rules and why those rules exist?
 - What do they do if they get hurt, feel unsafe, or have a concern about how they are being treated?
- Help your children develop the communication skills they need to speak up for their own safety. Ask them if they have any concerns about their safety in different situations, including online situations, and encourage them to express their ideas about what they need to be safe.
- Work with your children to develop family plans and agreements for safety. These might include plans for things like:
 - reacting to a fire at home
 - answering the phone and door when home alone
 - getting home safely
 - managing conflict
 - using social media
- Let your children know that safety includes safety from emotional harm and abuse. Assure them that support is always available at home, and make sure they know where they can find help at school and in the community when they feel that their physical or emotional safety is at risk.