

## Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)

### Background

Children from age 3 to 5 can begin to learn about safety, but they do not always understand or remember safety rules. Children this age still need adults to supervise them carefully.

Preschoolers need special protection from:

- Burns and Scalds
- Falls
- Drowning
- Poisoning
- Choking
- Injuries in traffic (for example, being hit by a car or being injured while riding in a car)

### Safety Checks

- ✓ Be sure to use a booster seat in the car once your child is over 18kg.
- ✓ Keep hot drinks away from your child. Put a lid on hot drinks. Keep him or her safely out of the way when you are cooking or making hot drinks.
- ✓ Keep dangerous products locked up (such as medicine and cleaning products) where your child cannot reach them.
- ✓ Install smoke alarms (test them regularly and change the battery on 1<sup>st</sup> April every year).
- ✓ Lower the temperature of the hot water in your home to 50 degrees Celsius. Tap water that is too hot can burn like fire!

### Safety Tips

Children love to copy adults at this age. They also like to understand rules.

Explain to your child why you have safety rules. Show how you follow safety rules as an adult (for example, when you drive). You are your child's best teacher.

#### IN THE HOME

Children at this age are at risk with appliances they wish to master but are too young to manage safely – for example stoves, hair dryers. Always supervise children in the kitchen and bathroom.

Preschoolers are also attracted to candles, matches and lighters – keep lighters and matches out of the reach of children.

Never leave candles, lighters and matches unattended or in the care of children.

Since imaginative play is critical to preschoolers development, choking and suffocation typically occur in new settings – the abandoned refrigerator becomes a ship; the blanket box becomes a playhouse. Supervise children during play and provide safe places.

Always supervise preschoolers closely in and around water. This includes in the bath and near ponds, pools, ditches and at the beach.

Always supervise your child around animals, especially dogs as bites are very common. Teach your child how to behave towards animals and to never approach or touch an unfamiliar dog without asking the owner first.

#### AT THE PLAYGROUND

Keep children under 5 off equipment that is higher than 1.5 metres. Make sure equipment has good handrails, barriers, and railings.

Stand right beside your children when he or she is climbing, riding in a swing or playing on equipment above the ground. You should be close enough to stop him or her from falling.



Play area surfacing should minimise the effect of a fall. Rubberised surfaces or loose fill like sand will help. Always report any problems with the play equipment to the provider eg. Your Local Council.

Check your child before you go to the playground. Take off anything that could strangle him or her. This includes strings, drawstrings, scarves, bike helmets, and skipping ropes.

## IN THE CAR AND ON THE ROAD

Your child needs a car seat every time you ride in the car. Never hold your child on your lap, or share a seatbelt with them.

Never place your child's car seat/booster seat in the front seat. This is especially important if your car is fitted with airbags.

Preschoolers need a car seat until he or she reaches 18 kg in weight. Once your child is over 18kg, move him or her to a booster seat. A booster seat helps the seatbelt fit properly over your child's body.

Many booster seats can be used with a child safety harness. Never use a Booster seat with a Lap only seatbelt – except if used in conjunction with a child safety harness.

### Fitting your Child Car Restraint

If you need help fitting your child car restraint or advice on which restraint will suit your vehicle & individual needs contact Kidsafe WA on 1800 802 244 for more information.

### Choosing a Car Seat for your preschooler:

There are several different restraints to suit this age group:

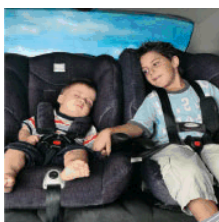
- Convertible Car Seat (Birth to 18kg)
  - Forward Facing: 8 to 18kg
- Toddler Seat (8kg to 18kg)
- Combination Restraint (8 to 26kg)
  - Toddler function: 8 to 18kg with internal harness
  - Booster Function: 18 to 26kg with adult lap/sash seatbelt or child safety harness
- Booster Seat (14 to 26kg)
  - With Lap/Sash Seatbelt
  - With Child Safety Harness



Toddler Restraints  
8 to 18kg  
Approx 6 months to 4 years



Booster Seat  
(Seatbelt or child safety harness)  
14 to 26kg - Approx 3 to 8 years



Combination Toddler/Booster Restraints  
8 to 18kg with internal harness, 18 to 26kg as booster seat  
Approx 6 months to 8 years

## BICYCLES AND TRICYCLES

Preschoolers should ride tricycles, not two wheeled bikes. They should be supervised at all times. Do not allow your preschooler to ride his or her tricycle on the road.

Choose a tricycle that is the right size for your child. He or she should be able to put feet flat on the ground when sitting on the seat.

Make sure your child wears a bicycle helmet specially designed for this age group. Check for the label that says it meets the Australian Standards.



Always hold your child's hand when near roads, driveways, and other vehicles. Start teaching them from an early age how to safely cross the road.

SUMMARY - STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT INJURIES	
Developmental Actions	Hazards/Risks
Improved motor development: reaching high 'safe' places, climbing	Ingestions, burns, falls
Riding/Peddling	Spoke injuries, traffic accidents
Increased independence (kindy, playgroups)	Car accidents, falls
Continued curiosity and exploring world	Burns (matches/lighters)
Role playing and imitations	Ingestions (poisoning), burns, drowning, suffocation, falls
Resisting constraints (eg. Car Seats)	Traffic Accidents

## Other Information available

For more detailed information on any of the topics listed visit [www.kidsafewa.com.au](http://www.kidsafewa.com.au) or contact Kidsafe WA on 1800 802 244 for specific information and advice.

### Kidsafe WA © 2007

Excerpts may be copied for educational purposes. Written permission is required to copy this fact sheet in its entirety.

For more information ☎ (08) 9340 8509

Child Safety Information Line ☎ 1800 802 244

Poisons Information Centre ☎ 13 11 26

[www.kidsafewa.com.au](http://www.kidsafewa.com.au)