FACTS ABOUT CHILDHOOD RECREATIONAL INJURIES

Many recreational activities pose the risk of accidental injury. Children are more susceptible to these injuries because they are still growing and gaining motor and cognitive skills.

- More than 3.5 million children ages 14 and under suffer from sports- and recreation-related injuries each year.
- Injuries associated with participation in sports and recreational activities account for 21 percent of all traumatic brain injuries among children in the United States.
- Young children, especially ages 5 to 9, are more likely to sustain playground- and bicycle-related injuries. Older children are more likely to suffer from bicycle- and sports-related injuries and overexertion.

Water recreation is associated with three-fourths of all recreation-related deaths. However, nearly half of all sports- and recreation-related head injuries to children are caused by bicycle, skating and skateboard incidents.

- In 2002, 130 children ages 14 and under died in *bicycle-related* crashes. In 2003, nearly 285,600 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for bicycle-related injuries.
- Since 1992, at least 89 children ages 14 and under have died from *inline skating* injuries; the majority of these deaths were from collisions with motor vehicles. In 2003, nearly 27,200 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for inline skating-related injuries and nearly 26,700 were treated for *roller skating*-related injuries.
- In 2003, nearly 43,900 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for *non-powered scooter*-related injuries. Children ages 5 to 14 accounted for 88 percent of these injuries.
- In 2003, at least 111 children under age 16 died and an estimated 38,600 were injured in *all-terrain vehicle*-related incidents.
- In 2003, more than 50,000 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for *skateboard*-related injuries. Half of all skateboarding injuries occur among children ages 14 and under.
- In 2003, nearly 10,600 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for *ice skating*-related injuries, and nearly 15,000 were treated for *sledding*-related injuries.
- In 2003, nearly 1,900 children ages 14 and under were treated for *snowmobile*-related injuries. Since 1992, at least 65 children ages 14 and under were killed in snowmobile-related incidents. Snowmobile-related injuries to children occur most frequently while being towed or when the sled or tube overturns, strikes a fixed object or is hit by another vehicle.

- In 2003, more than 12,000 children ages 5 to 14 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for *snow skiing*-related injuries and an estimated 22,700 were treated for *snowboarding*-related injuries. Approximately 22 percent of ski and snowboard head injuries are serious enough to cause loss of consciousness or a concussion.

- In 2003, more than 4,600 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for *water skiing, tubing and surfing*-related injuries.

- In 2003, 21 children ages 14 and under drowned in *reported boating accidents*. Additionally, 200 children ages 14 and under required medical treatment beyond first aid due to injuries associated with *personal watercraft* use.

- In 2003, more than 208,100 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for *playground equipment*-related injuries. Children ages 5 to 14 accounted for nearly 75 percent of these injuries.

- In 2003, nearly 80,700 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for *trampoline*-related injuries. The majority of trampoline injuries are the result of colliding with other jumpers, falling from or onto the trampoline, or doing stunts. More than 90 percent of trampoline-related injuries occur at home.

- In 2003, nearly 14,800 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for *horseback riding*-related injuries.

- In 2003, nearly 7,200 children ages 14 and under were treated in hospital emergency rooms for *amusement park*-related injuries.

Certain groups of children are at higher risk for recreation-related injuries.

- Non-Hispanic white children and children from affluent families are at increased risk of recreational injury, primarily due to the financial investment required for involvement in many injury-causing sport and recreation activities.

- Children develop at different rates, both physically and psychologically. A less developed child competing against a more mature child of the same age and weight is at a disadvantage and may be at greater risk for injury.

- Children who do not wear or use protective equipment, particularly helmets, are at greater risk of sustaining recreational injuries. Unlike organized team sports, recreational activities generally do not have helmet requirements.

Some safety laws and regulations protect children from recreation-related injury hazards.

- Playground equipment guidelines and standards have been developed by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the American Society for Testing and Materials. At least seven states have enacted some form of playground safety legislation.

- Twenty states, the District of Columbia and more than 140 localities have enacted some form of bicycle helmet legislation.