

Child Driveway Safety

Even if you are the most safety conscious parent, and we all are, we can all use a little refresher on how to maximize child driveway safety and prevent our children from being hurt in one of the most common child dangers that there is.

Most major child safety organizations will tell you that driveway accidents are the second greatest killer of young children that play around the home.

More deaths than injuries occur in child driveway accidents, and these are always caused by a car backing over an unseen child.

For the child that miraculously survives this trauma, severe and permanent brain injuries are likely sustained.



Safety Statistics

Kids 'N Cars is a non profit group that provides information and resources to parents wanting to maximize child driveway safety.

This organization also maintains a national database that tracks injuries and deaths to children that have been left unattended around motor vehicles.

In 2002, 349 incidents involving a rear-driving vehicle occurred and of those 349 accidents, 469 children were involved and more than 125 deaths occurred.

More than 30% of deaths involving a motor vehicle and a child are caused from a vehicle backing over a child while playing or simply being in the driveway.

And as you can imagine, given the locations of the vehicle and the child, more than 75% of those deaths were caused with the parent of the child being the driver of the vehicle.

These statistics are critical to understand if you want to ensure that child driveway safety is practiced in your home, because with every precaution you take to protect your child inside the home, you certainly do NOT want to be responsible for an accident that can happen steps away from your front door.

What can you do to protect your children?

The first and obvious answer is to never leave small children unattended in your front yard.

If you have a fenced in back yard, this is the ideal location for your children to play if you are not with them at all times.

Children like to play with chalk, and ride their bikes on the smooth ground of the driveway. Take your children bike riding somewhere safe, and set up areas in your backyard for fun chalk play.

One of your most important household rules if you have young children is that the front yard is a no child zone when grown-ups aren't around.

You can also take measures to block your driveway if children are in the front yard. Even using tools such as a trash bin can slow down vehicles that are coming in and out of your driveway.

Place the bin at the entrance to the driveway or behind any vehicles parked in the driveway.

This will ensure that cars moving in or out of the driveway will have to wait for the bin to be moved.

Again, this requires you to be in full attendance if your children are playing in the front yard, and again, this is your responsibility.

Child driveway safety nets are also available for those parents that can attend their children's front yard activities.

These will extend across the bottom portion of your driveway and will prevent your children from running into the street, or from vehicles coming in.

In some cases, vehicles parked on the street will back into the nearest driveway to make a turn in the other direction. Again, this puts your children at risk, and a safety net will be an excellent way to prevent this.

Another tip is to keep your children from playing outside after dark, particularly the younger ones.

Little people are hard to see in broad daylight when a vehicle is backing up, but they are impossible to see at all after the sun goes down.

Your driveway should be illuminated as much as possible, but preventing them from being outside at all will certainly be your best weapon of defense here.

Lastly, adults that are leaving the home and backing out of the driveway need to instill in themselves a routine they make before they even enter their vehicle.

Walk around your vehicle before you put your key in the ignition. Do not allow toys to be on the driveway, and ensure your children know to never play around or behind a parked vehicle.

Vehicles need to be kept locked with the keys out of sight for little fingers. Being aware and following the most basic road safety rules needs to start in your driveway before the engine gets running.

Basic Safety Tips!

Driveway accidents occur all over the country and in the most secure and safety conscious homes.

A vehicle can trap or crush a child before you even have a chance to think twice about it.

Follow some basic safety tips, and you will ensure your child driveway safety is maximized at all times.

- Never leave your child unattended when they are in the front yard.
- Do not let your children play outside after dark.
- Use doors and blocks to block your driveway when your child is playing outside, and ensure your children are attended during this time.
- Teach your children the basic rules of never playing around or near a parked or moving vehicle.
- If you are home and need to move your car, and there is no other adult to attend to your children, secure your child in the vehicle with you as you move your car.
- Always walk around your parked vehicle before you put the key in the ignition.
- Create safe zones in your yard where your children can move to quickly when a vehicle is entering or exiting your driveway. A simple 'go to the safe zone' command will have your children acting quickly in the event of a moving vehicle.

When it comes to child driveway safety, nothing will replace the value of parental or adult supervision.

In some cases, parents find this inconvenient and a challenge, however, it is always better to face these challenges and inconveniences than to suffer the consequences of a driveway tragedy.