

For Immediate Release

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Safe Kids PA Recognizes Brain Injury Awareness Month

Mechanicsburg, Pa. – March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. According to the Brain Injury Association of America, each year, [1 out of every 10 children in the U.S.](#) experiences a traumatic brain injury (TBI), a type of brain injury caused by an external force. TBIs and concussions can occur in children during sports and physical activities, within their homes, and in motor vehicles. It is important to remember that a concussion feels different to everyone. One person may notice concussion symptoms right away, while another person might not notice symptoms for hours or days after an injury. For at least 72 hours after an injury, it is vital to observe and ask a child how they feel and what symptoms they are experiencing.

In recognition of Brain Injury Awareness Month, Safe Kids PA offers these tips from [Safe Kids Worldwide](#), [Heads Up Foundation of the CDC](#), and [Healthy Children from the American Academy of Pediatrics](#):

- **Home Safety**
 - To prevent falls, never leave a child out of reach on high surfaces, including couches and kitchen counters. Always keep one hand on a child when changing their diaper or pull-up on a changing table.
 - Use approved safety gates at the tops and bottoms of stairs and attach them to the wall, if possible. Remember to read the manufacturer's instructions and warning labels to make sure you have the right gate for your specific needs. Not all gates are safe for use at the top of stairs.
 - Screens are meant to keep bugs out, not children in. [Properly install window guards to prevent unintentional window falls](#). For windows above the first floor, include an emergency release device in case of fire.

- **Motor Vehicle Safety**
 - Ensure any child in your care is always properly buckled up in a car seat, booster seat, or seat belt — [whichever is appropriate for their age and size](#).
 - Avoid using a car seat that is expired; has been damaged, recalled, or involved in a crash; or lacks essential information such as an expiration date, model number, or instructions.
 - If your child is learning to drive, stress the importance of driver safety by talking with them about [the eight "danger zones"](#): driver inexperience, driving with teen or young adult passengers, nighttime driving, not using seat belts, distracted driving, drowsy driving, reckless driving, and impaired driving.

- **Playground Safety**
 - Actively supervise children on playgrounds and teach children that pushing, shoving, or crowding others while on the playground can be dangerous.
 - Take children in your care to [playgrounds with guardrails and shock-absorbing surfaces](#) such as rubber, synthetic turf, sand, or mulch. Guardrails will help prevent falls, but if a child does fall, the landing will be more cushioned than on asphalt, concrete, grass, or dirt.
 - Look out for things in the play area that could be tripping hazards, like tree stumps or rocks.

- **Physical Activity and Sports Safety**
 - Teach child athletes to follow proper techniques in play, stick to the spirit of good sportsmanship, and avoid unsafe actions such as striking another athlete in the head, making illegal contacts (like checking, tackling, or colliding with an unprotected opponent), and/or trying to injure or put another athlete at risk for injury.
 - Ensure that when recommended or required, any child in your care wears a properly fitted helmet and protective equipment that is appropriate for their age and the specific activity or sport they are participating in. Remember, helmets made for manual bikes are not appropriate for every activity, such as riding an e-bike, in which higher standards of head protection should be used.
 - TBIs are the leading cause of death and disability among children who experience [a crash on an all-terrain vehicle \(ATV\)](#). Do not allow a child younger than 16 to operate or ride as a passenger on an adult ATV or any other off-road vehicle.

Additionally, Safe Kids PA suggests that caregivers, coaches, and trainers stay informed about the safety regulations regarding headgear and the preventative measures to take for childhood head injuries.

If your child or a child in your care is experiencing concussion symptoms after a head injury, seek medical attention immediately. To learn more about concussion awareness, visit the CDC's [Heads Up](#) website.

More information on concussion awareness in adolescents is available at www.pasafekids.org.

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Safe Kids Pennsylvania (SKPA) is part of Safe Kids Worldwide's global network dedicated to keeping kids safe from preventable childhood injury, which is the number one cause of death among children ages 1 to 19. These injuries range from accidental falls, to poisonings, car crashes, drownings, and many more unintentional injuries. SKPA promotes and supports childhood injury prevention activities through education, collaboration, and advocacy throughout Pennsylvania.

Safe Kids Pennsylvania is one of many statewide coalitions under Safe Kids Worldwide and is led by the American Trauma Society, PA Division. For more information on Safe Kids PA, visit our official SKPA [website](#) and social media platforms; [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).