

## Children's Eye Health

### Protecting Your Child's Eyesight

Each year thousands of eye injuries occur in children 14 and younger related to toys and play activities. This is especially disturbing when you consider that 80% of learning in a child's first 12 years comes through the eyes.<sup>1</sup>

During the summer months, children are especially vulnerable to eye injuries while participating in outdoor activities. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission offers the following tips for safety during the summer months and throughout the year:

- Select toys to suit the age, abilities, skills, and interest level of the intended child. Toys too advanced may pose safety hazards to younger children.
- Be a label reader. Look for labels that give age and safety recommendations and use that information as a guide.
- Make sure your child wears a helmet and other safety gear when biking, skating and skateboarding, and when riding scooters, all-terrain vehicles, and horses. Studies on bicycle helmets have shown they can reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85 percent.
- Place barriers completely around your pool to prevent a child's access by using door and pool alarms. Closely supervise your child and be prepared in case of an emergency.
- Use softer-than standard baseballs, safety-release bases and batting helmets with face guards to reduce baseball-related injuries to children.
- To prevent serious injuries while using a trampoline, allow only one person on at a time, and do not allow somersaults. Use a shock-absorbing pad that completely covers the springs and place the trampoline away from structures and other play areas. Kids under 6-years-old should not use full-size trampolines.
- Install window guards to prevent children from falling out of open windows. Guards should be installed in children's bedrooms, parents' bedrooms, and other rooms where young children spend time. Or, install window stops that permit windows to open no more than 4 inches. Also, keep furniture away from windows to discourage children from climbing near windows.

Summer is a favorite time of year for children. This summer, take the time to review the tips above and make it memorable for the fun times, and not the injuries.

Source:

(1) Vision Council of America, 2006 ([www.checkyearly.com](http://www.checkyearly.com))  
Journal of Behavioral Optometry, "Visual Screening of Adjudicated Adolescents"

