



Pedia Tracks



Tracking What's New For You!

Summer 2014

Cool Down and Wise Up



Every summer has at least a few oppressively hot, muggy days that are perfect for sitting in a cool, quiet movie theatre with popcorn and a cold beverage. Everyone enjoys that occasionally but for a change of pace spend an

afternoon or evening at the Science Museum of Minnesota and savor the cool temperatures along with some cool exhibits.

There is always something new and interesting to experience at the Science Museum with exhibits coming and going. This summer your kids can compare their bones with those of some gigantic dinosaurs. You can also take a quick trip up to the fifth floor to investigate an interactive display that deals with

immunizations and the concept of herd immunity. The display is across from the Mississippi River Gallery and is the result of the combined efforts of the Science Museum and the Minnesota Department of Health.



Father's Day Sunday, June 15th 2014

It is so easy to underestimate the importance of fathers in a child's life. It is now known that girls need the presence and influence of fathers as much as boys do.



Many dads get this already and make a point of spending time with their daughters as well as their sons. One father takes his daughters on fishing trips to Canada another encourages his daughter in her somewhat unusual sport of racing go-carts. The activity itself is less important than just having special time with dad.

And of course dads enjoy time with their boys—attending games, teaching them the fine art of casting with a rod and reel or just horsing around in the backyard—it is never time wasted. Children sometimes don't have a father in their lives but can benefit from other male relatives like grandfathers and uncles or even neighbors.

Remember to thank the dads in your life this Father's Day—they like to know they are appreciated.



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Organized Sports



The Good...

Have you ever shared a bleacher with an overzealous parent or coach who managed to turn your child's game into a nerve-racking nightmare of name-calling and poor sportsmanship? Many people have witnessed a display of this behavior provided by one of the people who give children's sports a bad name, and that's a shame because kids can get so many positive things from playing a team sport.

First, there are the health benefits. A disturbing number of American youngsters are overweight. There are any number of reasons why this has been happening: parents who work and find it hard to prepare nutritious meals; the explosion of entertainments available on TV screens, computers, phones and other electronic devices; the amount and availability of high-calorie fast food and junk food.



...The Bad...

Kids naturally have a lot of energy and participating in practices and games provides them with the opportunity to put that energy to good use. What is better for kids than to be running around outside on a spring or summer day? With organized sports that running around is supervised by coaches and parents.

Children who have never played baseball or soccer learn the rules of those sports and have the chance to build on or improve their skills. In many communities the coaches and parent assistants make a point of giving all players a turn at playing different positions. Kids discover their own talents as well as the things they need to work on—Ethan might not be good at fielding but he can whack the ball a mile and run the bases like nobody else. Besides, kids are not locked into one sport and over time can try different ones. Then there is the life-long cultural connection with others. A person who has never played baseball might miss out on the entire cultural phenomenon that goes along with it. That brings this discussion around to the non-physical but important life-lessons that kids develop from playing team sports—things like learning to win and lose gracefully; cheering for others and celebrating their successes; understanding that hard work and effort pay off, even though you won't always win, and so much more.

As children move past kindergarten, they begin to learn about competition and making friends. They are developing a sense of self and self-esteem. Being a member of a team calls for growth in all areas of social development. This is not to say that team sports are a panacea for all things for all children. When is it *not* a good idea to sign Amanda up for soccer?

Very young children often don't 'get' the rules and have trouble with following orders. Kids under the age of five and even six or seven for some kids, might not enjoy the pressure of team sports. Likewise, children who are in too many other activities (piano, swimming, golf, dance lessons) might find one more organized event just too much. Parents need to remember that kids will always need time to just be kids.

Another thing to watch out for is the level of physicality. If your child is pulling and straining muscles, coming home sore and exhausted, or complains about being pushed too hard, talk to the coaches or team manager. No third-grader needs to prepare for the World Series. Helmets and safety equipment should be appropriate to the sport and used consistently.



...And the Ugly

One last thing, believe it or not, children do not deal with heat as well as adults, so someone should be monitoring the team for hydration—making sure the kids get enough to drink. This makes sense when you realize that their smaller bodies dehydrate faster than adult bodies.

The point of team sports is to provide kids with opportunities to learn a sport, make friends, learn some life lessons and have fun. If these elements, especially that last part, aren't in the picture, your child shouldn't be either.

Time for physicals, med checks, and sports exams



Don't wait until August to schedule a physical or med check. Call now and avoid the crowds!

Other questionable behaviors



Almost as much fun for parents as biting is the full metal jacket of punching, hitting and kicking. While it is easy to make light of it here, it's not terribly amusing when your child is in full melt-down at a busy check-out counter or whaling on another kid at the playground. No Kodak moments there.

As your adorable infant becomes an adorable toddler and preschooler, his behavior changes along with his body. He is beginning the long, slow process of becoming a unique and independent person, separate from you and there will be some rough patches along the way.

If you look at the skill set of say, an 18 month old child, it becomes easier to understand those wretched behaviors parents find so embarrassing and yet are part of normal development.

Between 12 and 24 months children have learned to walk and are just discovering spoken language and social interactions. They are little people with big emotions—fear, anger, jealousy—but lack the language skills and emotional development to work through those emotions like an adult. Instead they express their disapproval of someone or something with physical aggression. This can be directed at another child or at a parent/caregiver.

But because the behavior is normal doesn't mean that it is acceptable and can be ignored. Parents have to deal with unacceptable behaviors including tantrums from the onset to help their child learn self-control and to mature emotionally.

Parents are embarrassed and confounded when their child is physically aggressive towards another child. Understanding the reasons why kids act out helps parents feel better and it gives them tools to curb the behaviors. Here is a two-pronged solution suggested by the website, Stress Free Kids:

First: Help the Injured Child

Okay, the physical altercation has already taken place. What to do?

- 1) Tend to the injured child first. Offer comfort measures.
- 2) Help both parties calm down.
- 3) Allow the child who caused physical harm to make amends. This does not mean making them apologize. The child can apologize if he chooses, but that should not be insisted upon by the adult. Most importantly, you will want to help the child heal the relationship with the child he injured by allowing him to offer to fetch an ice-pack or provide the injured child with a stuffed animal or some other "lovie".
- 4) Engage both children in a soothing activity, if they are open to it

Then: Help the Child with Misguided Behavior

Tending to the injured child is just one part of the equation. Your work is not yet done here. Next, it's time to help the child with misguided behavior learn some better ways to get her needs met in the future.

You can start by saying things such as:

- 1) "Biting (or hitting or scratching) hurts. Let's find a way to tell what you need."
- 2) "It's okay to be mad. Everybody gets mad sometimes. We can tell other people, 'I'm mad.'"
- 3) "When you get really angry and don't know what to do, you can ask for help."
- 4) "It's okay to say, 'No' when someone is doing something you don't like."
- 5) "You can get your mad feelings out by ripping up old paper or pounding on play-dough."



Lastly, you will probably need to speak with the injured child's parents. This can be the most difficult part of all. It is best to calmly acknowledge what your child has done and then explain the measures being taken to prevent future occurrences. Hopefully the parents will be gracious and handle the information calmly. Bad situations are always made worse if parents become angry and lose control.



Sometimes, my little head spins around and then I kick and hit and scream!

As kids learn to speak and interact better with others the incidents of physical aggression become fewer and fewer. By the time a child has reached the so-called 'age of reason' at six or seven years of age, she knows that physical aggression is wrong but might still slip up occasionally. If your child is continuing to use physical aggression on a regular basis please talk to your provider to determine if there is something more going on. Read our providers' thoughts on temper tantrums in the next issue of PediaTracks due out in the fall.

Ask a Provider about:

Leaving Your Children Home Alone!

By Jenny Hanlon, M.Ed.



Ripped from the headlines, the horror stories are many. Why would any parent allow their child to come home to-and-stay in-an empty house when the world is so unpredictable?

But there will come a time when your child will ask for more independence – like being allowed to return home after school versus going to an organized afterschool group or activity. At that time you will have to make a decision.

They might believe they are ready, sure. But are they really? Are we?

Jeff and Liz Monroe of Stillwater were stressed with the cost of after-school care and frustrated with the mad morning rush to get to work, and get their sons, Joe and Alex, ages 8 and 11, to their before-school group. “At about this same time, the boys started hounding us to let them stay home alone before and after school rather than going to the kids club,” says Liz.

“Until the boys brought up the idea of staying home alone, it hadn’t occurred to us that this might be an option” adds Jeff.

The Monroes liked the idea, but had concerns. “We wanted to make sure we weren’t just making the decision because it would be easier for us” Liz explained. “We wanted to know they were really ready for this step.”

State Guidelines

MN state law says that parents must provide their children with adequate supervision so they’re not left in unsafe situations. According to Don Pelton, Community Services Supervisor for Washington County, in 2008 the Citizens Review Panel published *It’s Not Safe for Kids Under 8*, to provide clear guidelines for parents as they attempt to interpret the state law in terms of when it’s safe for children to be left unsupervised. They examined research regarding children’s ability to care for themselves, respond to emergency situations, and keep themselves safe.

The guidelines from this study were adopted by The MN Department of Human Services and added to the state wide “Maltreatment Screening Guidelines”. The guidelines are:

- Children under age 8 should not be left alone for any period of time.
- Children ages 8, 9, 10 may be left alone for no longer than three hours.

- Children under the age of 11 should not provide child-care (babysitting).
- Children ages 11-13 may be left alone for no longer than 12 hours.
- Children ages 14-15 may be left alone for no longer than 24 hours.
- Children ages 11-15 that are placed in a child-care role are subject to the same time restrictions of being left alone.
- Children ages 16-17 may be left alone for over 24 hours with a plan in place concerning how to respond to an emergency and have adequate adult back-up supervision.

Assessing readiness

Kristin and Bill Nielson of Maplewood experienced a similar situation to the Monroe’s. When the kids were about seven and 11 their involvement in evening activities increased. “We could tell they were struggling to go from after school care to evening activities without any down time at home in between,” says Kristin.



“For a couple of years we were able to negotiate some flexibility with our bosses to limit the amount of time the children had to spend in after school care,” adds Bill, but he noted that as the kids got older, he and his wife realized that the boys were becoming quite independent. “We both started to think they were probably ready to take on the responsibility of coming home on their own,” says Bill.



“It’s extremely important for parents to know their children’s strengths and limitations to be able to assess accurately if they’re ready to stay home alone,” says pediatrician, Kristin Davis of Allina Medical Clinics. “There are many children that are within the age guidelines that aren’t ready to be home alone due to impulsivity, mental health issues, behavioral issues, lack of focus, or simply lack of desire to be home alone. Parents are key players in making a safe assessment.”

Davis doesn’t usually get too many questions related to supervision of children; however, she has begun to share the MN State Guidelines with parents and talk with them about signs of readiness. “I’m very honest with parents if I feel a child isn’t ready to be home alone based on what they’ve shared with me during an appointment.”

One of Stillwater Medical Group’s Family Practitioners, Beth Adams, adds, “I recommend that parents ask their

child's teachers or other caretakers how they think the child would handle being home alone. For a child to safely stay home alone he should consistently follow through with directions, expectations, and use good judgment in all settings.

Tips for parents

Leaving a child to get to school on his own or to come home to an empty house is a bigger responsibility than just leaving your child while you run a few errands. There are more variables involved when your child is entering the house alone. If your child is given this responsibility, it's important that he have a strong awareness of his surroundings. Think about when your child gets off the bus, for example. Would he notice if there was an unfamiliar car or person near his house? How about if there is a car continuing to drive by or circle around while waiting at the bus stop? If your child lacks an awareness of his surroundings, he isn't ready to be home alone yet.

Many times in life things go as planned – until they just don't. As adults, we've learned what steps we need to take when something goes differently than expected. Children are very much concrete thinkers. It's difficult for them to think and understand that sometimes a secondary plan is needed. If a parent finds that their child isn't able to think beyond plan A, then it's too early for the child to be left home alone.

What kids should know before being left at home:

- Who to call if something goes wrong
- What to do if he or she has forgotten or lost the house key
- What to do if someone comes to the door
- What to do when the phone rings
- What activities are allowed when home alone
- Where the first aid kit is
- What to do if a fire breaks out
- When you'll be returning

Home Alone Success

After much consideration The Monroe's determined that their children were ready for this next step, "We started leaving the kids gradually. The first few times we only left them for short periods while we ran errands," says Liz. "Then we allowed them to come home off the bus by themselves and eventually get



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on the bus on their own in the mornings" adds Jeff. They also alerted a couple trusted neighbors that they're kids would be home alone during these times, which provided a level of comfort for the family.

When children are ready to be home alone, parents often see their children grow in confidence from the added responsibility. "We really noticed that both kids started to show even more responsibility once we gave them the opportunity to be home alone," says Bill Nielson, noting that, "they actually started taking on more household jobs without being asked and needed fewer reminders to get their homework done."



The two families continue to revisit and discuss how to handle situations that might arise when their children are home alone. They have set rules and guidelines about what are acceptable activities to do when they're home alone and what things are not allowed during that time.

"We've had very few problems," says Jeff Monroe. "I think taking the

time to talk about it and gradually build up to it really helped. Our kids take it seriously and we're grateful for that."

What parents need to know before children stay home alone:

- Do you live in an area with a safe adult close by?
- Do you live in a safe neighborhood?
- Does your child know your home address? Can the child spell it?
- Is there a working phone that the child will have access to while home alone? Does the child know how to use it?
- Does the child understand when and how to call 911?
- Does your child have an awareness of his or her surroundings and the ability to be alert to potential dangers?
- Does your child consistently follow through with expectations and rules at home, school, sports, etc.? In other words, does your child consistently use good judgment?
- Will you be able to rely on your child to follow through with the expectations/guidelines you set up as a family when he's left alone?
- Does your child typically remain coherent with his or her judgment during stressful or scary situations?
- Is your child interested in being home alone?

Write down the rules and post them where they can easily be accessed



This list is a good jumping off point for your family. But each household is unique and during the process of discussing these important issues you will want to fine tune the list to better fit your family's needs and individual lifestyle. For example, kids might not be allowed to use the computer but can watch TV, and you might want to spell out rules regarding use of the telephones, microwave and handheld devices.

When setting rules and limitations, make sure that everyone is quite clear on expectations and don't hesitate to revise the rules when necessary.

Many thanks to teacher and consultant, Jenny Hanlon, M.Ed. for sharing this excellent article with PediaTracks

www.jennyhanlonconsulting.com
www.yourfamilycompass.com

Jenny is also the author of an outstanding book entitled, *Your Family Compass, a Parenting Guide for the Journey.*



Michael Douglas, Farrah Fawcett and HPV



What do Michael Douglas and the late Farrah Fawcett have in common? The answer is that both actors have had cancers caused by the human papilloma virus, or HPV. Ms. Fawcett died while fighting anal cancer and for the time being, Mr. Douglas has won his battle with throat cancer. Setting compassion aside, one could argue that they simply paid the price

for living a 'Hollywood' lifestyle.

On the other hand, is abstinence alone sufficient to protect children and young adults from acquiring HPV? As parents we want to keep our kids free from disease as much as possible and **encouraging teens to remain abstinent seems like a perfect solution to more than one problem.** Yet, is it realistic to replace the readily available HPV vaccine by preaching abstinence?

IMAGINE
A VACCINE
TO PREVENT
CANCER

A bastion of conservative Christianity, the state of Texas might offer some answers. Most Texas school districts have eschewed to offer sex education programs in schools and the state of Texas has invested over one million dollars in an abstinence-only campaign. Teens commonly pledge themselves to abstinence in formal ceremonies in churches and many of the kids wear rings to symbolize their commitment. In spite of all this, Texas has the third or fourth-highest teen birth rate in the country, along with a similarly high rate of STDs¹.

Within the last two years, some Texas school districts have moved from abstinence-only instruction to a program called 'abstinence-plus' that includes sex education. Why? Roy Knight, Lufkin Independent School District Superintendent, explained, "Our data says that what we're doing isn't working, and our community is ready for us to do something different."

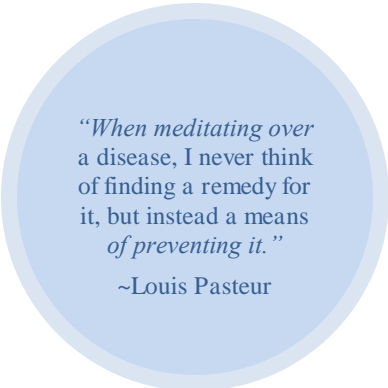
FACT:
HPV CAUSES
MORE THROAT
CANCER THAN
SMOKING
CIGARETTES.

When you come right down to it abstinence only works if it is practiced consistently with no lapses. Human beings have lapses. Furthermore, abstinence doesn't protect girls from date rape, nor does it protect a newlywed from contracting the virus from his or her new spouse.

The providers of PYAM believe in high moral and religious values as well as teen abstinence. Still as medical providers they urge all parents to consider the HPV vaccine for their children. There are many misconceptions and scientifically unfounded rumors on television and the Internet re-

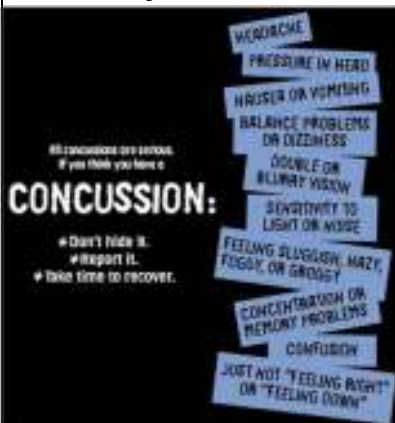
garding this vaccine. Please talk to your provider if you have questions or concerns about the vaccine. **Remember: this is the only cancer that is entirely preventable.**

- Each year, 26,000 new cases of HPV-related cancers are diagnosed. Of that group, 4,000 people will die.
- HPV can be transmitted without intercourse through any intimate sexual contact—the virus has been isolated in virgins.
- The HPV vaccine must be given before a person becomes sexually active; furthermore it has been proven that 11 to 12 year olds produce a stronger antibody response than older teens.
- Even a single dose of the HPV vaccine affords some protection.
- Protection from HPV means not having to undergo procedures to remove suspect tissues.



¹Texas was chosen for purposes here because of the wealth of data that correlates to this article.

Call today for information and appointments



Concussions can happen anytime, anywhere, not just during a soccer match or softball game. Whenever human bodies are in motion the potential for serious head trauma exists. Use of skateboards, scooters, and bicycles increases the chance for concussion. Get smart and outfit your child with the right helmet

for the right activity. Take advantage of impact testing to help your child safely return to normal activity after a head injury has occurred.

Eating to Keep Cool



When temperatures soar, the last thing you want to do to your body is dive into a meal that is heavy on proteins, animal fats and calories. Those are the food groups that make you feel even hotter and less comfortable than you already do.

Eating lighter in hot weather doesn't mean you have to give up those cherished back yard grill-outs, maybe just tweaking the menu would be enough to give you the smoky delights that you crave and keep meals on the lighter side.

What kind of tweaking you might ask? There are many choices for making thoughtful substitutions. You can start with the meat that you will be serving--everything in moderation, including beef. Just remember other grilling options like turkey burgers, or if you plan on hamburgers leave off the cheese, bacon and mayo.



Grill light with fish and chicken

It's easy to forget about these alternative meats because we tend to focus on the traditional choices like hot dogs, hamburgers and bratwurst. But chicken, salmon, tuna steaks

and other fishes are all excellent when grilled. **Remember to cut portion size of all proteins in hot weather.** Check out the vast collection of recipes on the Internet and you will not be disappointed.

Quinoa and Wild Rice

While cold pasta salads are popular dishes in the summer, try using more vegetables in the mix and less pasta. Many pastas are simple carbohydrates and are not especially nutritious. Ever try quinoa? The PYAM recipe testers have substituted this ancient New-World 'grain' for pasta in tuna, chicken and turkey salads with wonderful results. Another way to cut back on the use of pasta is with wild rice, which is again more nutritious than ordinary pasta.

Roasting vegetables on the grill

This is a fun and tasty way to serve vegetables and why not? The grill is already fired up. In addition to red and green peppers, try



corn-on-the-cob, asparagus, mushrooms and zucchini. Roasting brings out subtle new flavors.

Cold bean salads

are nutritious and refreshing. Most recipes call for light dressings that are great for hot weather. Remember that beans are high in fiber, iron and protein, while low in cholesterol and fat. In addition, beans tend to have a low glycemic index or glycemic load which means your body will use the nutrients gradually avoiding sharp spikes in blood sugar.

Melon, melon, and of course, melon

These fruits served chilled can be the basis for healthy light summer desserts. These sweet treats are naturally low in sugar and high in fiber. They can be paired with other fruits and berries or with a single scoop of your favorite frozen dessert. Either way, they satisfy the cravings for something sweet at the end of the meal.

Iceberg lettuce? Really?

Perhaps this will be the year that you wean your family off iceberg lettuce and step up to salad greens that have real nutritional value. Start slowly, maybe replacing the lettuce in a sandwich with Romaine or Spinach. Speaking of Romaine, it is one of the staff's favorites because when stored properly it has the crisp, crunch factor of iceberg lettuce. It is also a great 'base' for salads and you can experiment by adding in other greens with it, like spinach, baby kale, Arugula and Water Cress. If you have any great recipes for Mustard, Chard or Beet greens please send them in to Pediatracks care of anne.pink@pyam.com



1 Romaine – romaine lettuce has large, crisp leaves that provide a crunchy texture sharp flavor making it the perfect selection for Caesar salads. It has a decent shelf life in the refrigerator and can be found in both green (the more com-

mon) and red varieties. **2** Arugula – arugula lettuce has a peppery, pungent flavor that goes great with milder greens as a contrast flavor. At some health food stores you can find arugula sold on its own, but it is usually found in pre-made spring mixes. **3** Radicchio – radicchio has a beautiful purple color with a bitter, peppery flavor when eaten alone but goes well mixed in with milder greens. **4** Watercress – watercress is a peppery green that goes great in salads, sandwiches, and in soups. It also makes a great garnish for any meal. Watercress is highly perishable so it is recommended that you use it as soon as you buy it. **5** Butter – Butter lettuce (or butterhead lettuce) consists of both Bibb and Boston lettuces. These lettuces have soft tender loose leaves that can be used in salads, on sandwiches, or as a bed for other dishes. **6** Bibb lettuce tends to be smaller, more flavorful, and more expensive than Boston lettuce. Leaf lettuce – leaf lettuce comes in both green and red tip varieties that can be used interchangeably. Leaf lettuce has a tender, sweet, mild flavor that makes them versatile for any salad. **7** Mizuna – mizuna lettuce is a Japanese green that has tender leaves with a pleasant peppery flavor. Mizuna lettuce is commonly seen in spring green mixes. **8** Endive – endive lettuce is a category that includes Belgian endive, curly endive, and escarole. Belgian endive has crunchy, bitter leaves usually used to make hors d'oeuvres but can also be chopped up and added to salad. Curly endive / Frisee is also a crisp bitter green that can be used in salads or as a side dish. Curly endive is often seen on salads to add visual interest over flavor. The outer leaves are more bitter than the more pale, tender, and mild inner leaves. **9** Iceberg – Iceberg lettuce is known for its crisp texture and long shelf life in the refrigerator. However, iceberg lacks most of the flavor and nutrients that other lettuce varieties contain - See more at: <http://www.eatchicchicago.com/blog/2010/01/23/lettuce-varieties/#sthash.BEvH2pwm.dpuf>

One last word regarding lettuces and greens—

they are easy crops to grow and can be planted just about anywhere or in any container. They won't prosper in shade however. You can plant several successive plantings throughout the growing season. Keep unused seeds in airtight containers in your refrigerator.

IS YOUR KINDERGARDENER ALL SET FOR KINDERGARDEN?



"I bet I can do that too..."

...like this, right?

Or is this it?"