

Basics of Safe Skating, Scooting, & Skateboarding

- Always use protective gear: helmets, wrist guards, knee and elbow pads. (Use all except wrist guards with a scooter.)
- Learn how to keep equipment in good condition
- Practice controlling speed and stopping.
- Avoid areas with puddles, bumps, oil, sand, and gravel.
- Use sidewalks, playgrounds, skate parks, and sport paths. Stay off streets.
- Roll politely. Give walkers the right of way.



Make
Every Ride
A Safe Ride



Having Fun Safely

Does your child want to use inline skates, a scooter, or a skateboard? These are lots of fun and good exercise. Many children can use them easily and safely by age 8 to 10 on paved sidewalks and park paths. Younger children should use them only with parent supervision.

Keeping kids safe while they have fun is one of your jobs as a parent. Skates, skateboards, and scooters are not toys. Kids using them can be seriously injured, especially when learning to use them. (Even shoes with wheels in the heel can lead to injuries when children start wearing them.)

Brain injuries from using these kinds of equipment are the most severe and can last a lifetime. Injuries to the child's wrist and lower arm are the most common.

Beware of motorized wheeled vehicles. ATVs cause many very serious injuries and deaths to children. There is no safe way for a child to ride on an ATV. This fact sheet does not cover these vehicles. See Resources (page 2) for more information.



Safety gear—Essential for kids on wheels

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommend that children should use bike helmets, pads, and guards when riding skates, skateboards, and scooters. Some states and communities require helmets for children using these kinds of equipment.

Helmets reduce the chance of serious brain injuries to bicyclists by 75 percent. They can do the same for children using other equipment with wheels. Other safety gear has been found to help prevent injuries, too.

If your child is using in-line skates or a scooter, he should use a helmet that meets the CPSC bike helmet standard. Check the label inside it. Make sure that the helmet fits snugly without adding thick pads. Thick soft pads make a helmet less protective. Replace this

kind of helmet after it has protected your child's head in a fall, it may have hidden damage. It has done its job!

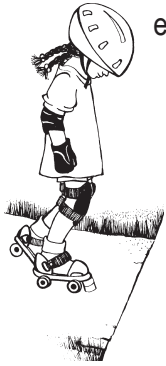
For skateboarding, choose a helmet tested to protect from many impacts. This kind should meet the ASTM F-1492 or Snell N-94 standard. Also, use this type when doing tricks or competing on inline skates or scooters.

Gear to wear:

- **Helmet**
- **Elbow pads**
- **Knee pads**
- **Wrist guards** (not for scooters)
- **Athletic shoes** (except for skates)



Learning to use wheels



- Judge your child's ability. Some kids have enough balance and control to use this equipment safely by about age 6 to 7. Many pediatricians recommend waiting until age 8 to 10. Younger children should not start with inline skates.

One scooter company suggests that a child is not ready to try a scooter until he or she has been riding a two-wheeled bike well for at least six months.

- Beginners should practice on a flat, paved, outdoor area. Use open places that have no rough surfaces, gravel, speed bumps, or puddles. Even gentle slopes can be dangerous.
- Always watch your children while they play.
- Teach children to respect others on a sidewalk or bike trail or in a park. Teach them to pass on the left and to warn others before passing. (Skating and biking on sidewalks is not legal in some places.)
- Children should never skate, scoot, or skateboard on streets. This can be extremely dangerous.
- Skateboard parks are not made for scooters or skates.
- Children with balance problems or physical disabilities should skate in a protected place. A rink where everyone moves in the same direction is safer than a playground.

Resources

General: Am. Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons: orthoinfo.aaos.org/menus/children.cfm, go to "Prevention and Safety"

National Safety Council: www.nsc.org; go to Resources > Fact sheets > Healthy living

ATVs: Safe Kids USA: www.usa.safekids.org (search for "ATV")

CPSC: www.atvsafety.gov/

Bike Helmets: Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute, www.helmets.org, go to "Children," then to "Other Helmets"

Scooters: CPSC (Consumer Product Safety Commission): www.cpsc.gov (recall lists, helmet and sports equipment information—search by type of equipment), 800-638-2772

Inline Skating: www.iisa.org, go to "Skates and Gear," "Learn and Improve" (lists free classes)

Skateboards: KidSource Online: www.kidsource.com/cpsc2/skateboard.safety.html

Equipment Tips

Insist that your children wear helmets and other safety gear. If your child refuses, you can simply put away the scooter, skates, or skateboard until he or she agrees.



Adjust child's helmet to fit snugly, covering the forehead. Side straps should meet below the ear.

Helmets

- For in-line skates and scooters, your child can use a bike helmet.
- Older kids who skateboard or want to do tricks or compete on skateboards, inline skates, or scooters should use a multi-impact helmet. This kind protects more of the head than most bike helmets.
- For details on helmet standards, see the front side.
- The helmet should fit straight on the top of the child's head. It should cover the top of the forehead. Make sure it fits your child snugly front-to-back and side-to-side. Put thin pads inside only if necessary. See page one for more about the basics of fitting a helmet.
- Adjust straps so you cannot pull the helmet over the face or to the back of the head. The chin strap is snug enough if it pulls the helmet down when your child opens his mouth.
- A bike helmet should be replaced after protecting a child in one fall. It should not be used for more than five years.
- Check the CPSC list for standards and recalls of existing helmets (see Resources).

Other equipment

- Skates must fit snugly. Avoid buying big skates "to grow into," except those made to expand as your child grows.
- Teach your child how to take good care of his skates, scooter, or skateboard. Check often to make sure that brake pads and wheels are secure and in good condition.
- Scooters: Make sure that the bolts are tight after unfolding a scooter. Teach your child how to adjust the handlebars to the right height and tighten them.



Be a good role model for your child. Wear your gear. Skate in safe, paved, off-street areas.