

# York County



# PARENT GUIDE

## Dear Parent/Guardian/Caretaker:

Each day of Safety Town, your child will be involved in five different activities that focus on that day's safety topic. Your child will be assigned to a group of 10 children, and there are 5 groups. Each group will rotate through each of the activities by the end of their Safety Town day at 11:30 a.m. Activities will be 20 minutes in length, with breaks given for using the restroom and for one for snack-time.

In this packet you will find information about each day's activities. You are encouraged to preview this information and to use it as a guideline in preparing your child for, and reinforcing him/her with, the lessons taught during the course of Safety Town.

Additional information and materials that will help you to reinforce these lessons will be available throughout the week and on Friday. Please plan to attend Safety Town on Friday with your child. **Children *must* be accompanied by an adult for Friday's activities.** Special events and activities will be provided for all in attendance. Everyone is invited. The day begins with an award ceremony recognizing each Safety Town child. The remainder of the day (until 11:00 a.m.) will be devoted to a "Safety Fair".

If you have any questions or concerns about Safety Town, please do not hesitate to ask any of our Safety Town staff. Thank you for placing your child in our care for this week of Safety Town. We encourage your continued support and reinforcement of the lessons taught in Safety Town. The more safe practices and behaviors your child adopts, the lower his/her risk will be of suffering a severe injury. This is the primary goal of our Safety Town program.

**“Injuries are not accidents. They are predictable and preventable.”**

Sincerely,

*The Safety Town Committee and Staff*

# MONDAY: TRAFFIC SAFETY



1. **Seat Belt Safety** – York County Staff / Adult Volunteer  
Buckle Bear is a puppet used to teach the importance of buckling up **every** time you are in the car ... whether going near or going far!

2. **Pedestrian Safety** – Adult Volunteer

Kids watch a short video about how to cross the road safely and then practice by taking a walk out to the front of the school, identifying a crosswalk, and crossing safely holding an adults hand and forming a chain.



3. **Sign Recognition** – York County Staff / Adult Volunteer  
Children learn to recognize street signs and their messages.

4. **School Bus Safety** – York County School Division / Bus Transportation

A bus driver talks to the children about bus safety and takes them for a short ride on a school bus in the neighborhood.



5. **Wheel Safety** – York–Poquoson Sheriff's Office



Children are taught safety on wheels by placing emphasis on the importance of wearing a helmet and other appropriate padding. The children then demonstrate skills by pedaling a four-wheeled go-cart through the “town”. Children are issued their own helmet for this activity. Their name is on the helmet and it is used by only that child throughout the week. The helmet is theirs to keep at the end of Safety Town.

## SUGGESTIONS/INFORMATION FOR REINFORCEMENT:

1. Make sure everyone in the car is buckled up before putting the car in motion (even if you are just going a short distance). This is called the “interlock system.” (The car cannot move unless everyone is buckled up!) Children should remain in a booster seat until about 4’9” tall, even if they are “legal” without it (VA law is 8 years old). Children should sit in the back seat until they are 13 years old.
2. Pedestrians on or near the road should face the traffic. When crossing the road with a child, verbalize the process, i.e. always hold an adult’s hand, stop and look left, then right, then left again before stepping on the road. Cross roads at designated crosswalks whenever possible.
3. Make a game of “what does that sign mean?” while walking, biking, or traveling.
4. Make sure your child knows his/her address, including the name of the subdivision or neighborhood. Often, children are scared when the bus stops at unfamiliar places. If the child is afraid, he/she can be reassured by telling the bus driver the address. Another way to relieve any possible anxiety and to insure your child’s safety is, at least for the first few days of school, walk to the bus stop with your child, and wait for the child at the bus stop when they come home.
5. Whenever a child goes out to ride a bicycle, or ***anything*** with wheels, he/she should wear a helmet. Properly fitted helmets help reduce the risk of head/brain injury. In York County, **it is the law** for all children 14 years of age and under to wear a helmet when riding a bike.

# TUESDAY: FIRE SAFETY

All materials for this day are provided by the York County Department of Fire and Life Safety.



## 1. “Get Out and Stay Out”

This activity teaches children the importance of smoke alarms and what to do if the smoke alarm sounds while they are sleeping. An actual smoke alarm and a simulated bedroom are used.



## 2. “Sparky’s ABC’s of Fire Safety”

Children watch the video with this title. They discuss the importance of keeping a fire from happening as well as how to prepare if it does happen (have working smoke alarms & a plan for escape). They practice crawling low in smoke and stop, drop, and roll if their clothes catch fire.

## 3. “Matches/Lighters Are Tools NOT Toys”

Children are naturally curious about fire, but matches/lighters in small hands are a deadly combination. This activity teaches children not to touch and why, and to tell a grown-up if matches/lighters are found. Adults can remove the temptation by keeping all matches and lighters out of reach and locked up.



## 4. “9-1-1 How It’s Done”

This activity reinforces how and when to use 9-1-1. The children then practice calling for help with a York County 9-1-1 dispatcher using a simulator.

## 5. “Emergency Lights - Pull to the Right”

People who do not properly yield the right-of-way often delay emergency vehicles in their response. Children are taught to “clear the way” through an activity of riding their pedal carts around the town. A volunteer rides a bike with lights and sirens pretending to be an emergency vehicle. The children riding around the town must pull to the right when the emergency vehicle approaches.



## SUGGESTIONS/INFORMATION FOR REINFORCEMENT:

1. Make a home fire escape plan that includes two ways out of each room and a place to meet outside. Discuss and practice the plan at least every six months. Check smoke alarms monthly, change the battery yearly, and clean by vacuuming around the outside of the alarm at least once a year.
2. Teach your child this song about stop, drop, and roll (sung to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb):  
If your clothes should catch on fire, catch on fire, catch on fire,  
If your clothes should catch on fire, this is what you do...  
STOP then drop and roll and roll, roll and roll, roll and roll,  
STOP then drop and roll and roll; this is what you do.  
  
Have the child practice this. Be sure to remind them to cover their face when rolling. Most importantly, teach them to stay away from hot things so this never happens and so they don’t burn their skin.
3. To reinforce the lesson that matches/lighters are tools and not toys, gather some tools and/or utensils or small appliances that are commonly used in your home (be sure to include some matches or a lighter) and some familiar toys. As each item is pointed to, have the child identify whether it is a tool to do a certain job, or a toy to play with. Be sure to point out which items should be used by only grown-ups (especially the matches/lighters). Matches and lighters should be kept out of reach and locked up. They are just as, and can be even more, deadly than a gun when played with.
4. Continue to help your child learn their address and phone number. Go over possible situations when 9-1-1 would need to be called. Be sure to familiarize your child with your phones in the home and how to use them. Emphasize the importance of calling 9-1-1 **only** when there is an emergency. Make sure the child understands what an emergency is by discussing various situations that are, and are not, emergencies.
5. The best way to reinforce giving right-of-way to emergency vehicles is to actually do it whenever you are driving. Point out to your child the drivers who do not pull over and discuss how that slows down the emergency vehicle that needs to get to an emergency as soon as possible. Remember: It is ok to pull through an intersection at a red light to clear the way for an emergency vehicle once it is safe to do so.

## WEDNESDAY: HOME SAFETY



1. **Poisonous Plants** – York County Extension Office – Master Gardeners  
Recognition of some common indoor and outdoor plants is taught in this activity. They learn to identify poison ivy with the phrase, “Leaves of three, don’t touch me!”

2. **Disaster Preparedness** – Red Cross volunteer



No matter how advanced predicting the weather has become, severe weather can strike quickly and without warning. This can be traumatic for adults, and very frightening to children, especially if proper preparations have not been made. Knowing what to do in any emergency is the first step to avoiding panic and for doing the right thing. How to be prepared for thunderstorms with lightning, power outages, and hurricanes with the possibility of evacuation, are the main subjects explored.

3. **Common Household Poisons** – York County Staff / Adult Volunteers

*This is based on a program provided by Mary Immaculate Hospital*

“Keep out of the reach of children” is a familiar statement placed on numerous common household items, yet many of these items are found by children under the sink or left out on a counter. The puppet show for this activity teaches children to recognize these dangers and how to avoid them.



4. **Gun Safety** – York-Poquoson Sheriff’s Office

Whether guns are kept in your home or not, the possibility exists that your child could find a gun. In this program, children are taught if they find a gun, “Stop! Don’t Touch. Leave the area. Tell an adult.” This is the same procedure that should be followed if they find matches or lighters.

5. **Electrical Safety** – York County Staff / Adult Volunteer

A video, various pictures, props, and a static electricity ball are used to demonstrate what electricity is, how it’s helpful and how it can be dangerous.



### SUGGESTIONS/INFORMATION FOR REINFORCEMENT:

1. Teach children to identify household plants and the proper way to care for them.  
Emphasize that nothing should be touched, picked, or eaten from plants without adult approval.
2. Children’s fears are often fueled by the adult’s reaction in an emergency situation. Sometimes fears stem from their imagination. It is important to address these fears by taking them seriously, discussing them with the child, and providing reassurance. Prepare your child for potential emergency situations by developing and practicing a plan, and by keeping a disaster kit on-hand. Making the child an important part of the plan, both before and after the disaster strikes, is an important step to helping your child cope with the situation.
3. Keep all medicines (including vitamins and cough drops), cleaners, detergents, etc. out of children’s reach and/or in locked cabinets.
4. Each family must establish their own way of dealing with the topic of gun ownership and usage. Regardless of your stand on this issue, make sure your child knows if they see a gun out of place they should: “Stop! Don’t touch. Leave the area. Tell an adult.”
5. Encourage children to dry their hands thoroughly before turning on/off lights. Be sure to keep all electrical appliances away from water. Be aware of power lines around outside of home and potential hazards, i.e. flying kites, climbing trees, etc.

## THURSDAY: PERSONAL SAFETY

1. **Strange Animal Safety** – York County Staff / Adult Volunteer  
Children are taught not to approach unfamiliar animals and why. They are also taught what to do if approached by an animal they do not know.



2. **Playground Safety** – York County Staff / Adult Volunteer  
Using the school's playground facilities, children are taught general and specific safety rules to practice when playing on a playground.



3. **“Tricky People Can’t Fool Me”** – York County Staff /Adult Volunteer  
This curriculum uses the Yello Dyno Method of teaching children that, “It’s not what people look like, their age, or if you know them – it’s what they ask you to DO that matters.” This replaces the much more difficult concept of “stranger danger” and empowers children to identify deceptive behavior, to follow their instincts and feelings, and builds their self-confidence to act appropriately.

4. **Germ Control** – Peninsula Health Department  
Children are taught the necessity of personal care by becoming aware of germs. They are taught the proper technique for washing their hands.



5. **Water Safety** – YMCA Aquatics Staff  
Children are taught to never go near the water without an adult. They are also taught the importance of dependable personal flotation devices (life jackets) and how to recognize and use them.

### SUGGESTIONS/INFORMATION FOR REINFORCEMENT:

1. If approached by a strange animal, stand very still - “like a tree”. If the animal attacks, tuck into a ball on the ground very still – “like a rock” – with face down and covering the back of the neck with both hands.
2. Playground safety incorporates the following messages:
  - It’s only safe to play on the equipment with well-fitted rubber-soled shoes.
  - Check the equipment and surrounding area for safety before playing.
  - Make sure you only go to the playground when you are with an adult you know and trust.
  - Be courteous:
    - If you have a problem with another child, use your words. If that doesn’t work, get an adult to help.
    - Never hit, push, or shove....especially when on the equipment.
    - Never run on or around the playground equipment.
3. Adopt a family “code word”. Encourage your child to NEVER go with anyone that does not know the code word. Teach your child that it is always ok for them to tell you about someone who makes them uncomfortable and that if it happens when you are not around “take three steps back and run like the wind!”
4. Remind children to keep away bad germs by: washing hands before eating, brushing teeth after eating and/or snacking, keeping wounds covered with a clean bandage, etc.
5. Water life-saving devices are NOT inflatable! Don’t trust your child’s life to an inflatable device.
  - \*Never swim alone.
  - \*It’s best to swim where there is a lifeguard on duty; however, an adult should always have their eyes on the child.
  - \*Look before you leap. Don’t jump or dive into the water before getting in and checking it out.

# SAFETY TOWN THEME SONG

(sung to the tune of “Old MacDonald”)

*CHORUS:*

At Safety Town we learn the rules  
To be safe every day.  
Be safe at work, at school, at play,  
And places where we stay.

*DAILY VERSES:*

## Monday for Traffic and Pedestrian

Today we learn to ride our bike,  
And when we ride stay on the right.  
When we buckle up make sure it's tight.  
When we cross the street look left and right.  
At Safety Town we learn the rules  
To be safe every day.

## Tuesday for Fire Safety

Today we learn if fire's inside  
Crawl under smoke and get outside.  
Don't EVER, EVER, EVER hide!  
If your clothes catch fire, roll side to side.  
At Safety Town we learn the rules  
To be safe every day.

## Wednesday for Home Safety

Today we learn how to prepare  
When there's bad weather in the air.  
If you should ever see a gun  
Don't touch, just turn around and run!  
Don't touch those plants with leaves of three.  
Use care with e-lec-tri-ci-ty,  
At Safety Town we learn the rules  
To be safe every day.

## Thursday for Personal Safety

Today we learn germs can be bad,  
So wash your hands and you'll be glad.  
Far from a stranger you should go.  
Don't touch a critter you don't know.  
When on the playground always think.  
When in the water swim, don't sink!  
At Safety Town we learn the rules  
To be safe every day.