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Leading Causes of Injury Death Among Children: What Parents Need to Know

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Throughout the year, I meet with other members of the NYC Child Fatality Review Team (CFRAT) to review injury deaths among children from infancy through 17 years of age. Injury deaths that could have been prevented! This year, we focused on the leading causes of injury deaths in different age groups. Hopefully, parents and caretakers will read this and utilize the tips to protect their children.

Infants (0-1) most often die from injuries considered "sleep-related" meaning deaths in which the infant was asleep when last seen alive. These deaths included accidental suffocation or, were of undetermined cause (i.e. SIDS). Male, black non-Hispanic infants, infants living in the Bronx, and in high poverty neighborhoods were at the highest risk. During the review, we found that most of these children were sleeping in an adult bed, had excessive blankets, bumpers, pillows, etc., shared the bed with another sleeper and were not sleeping on their back.

- Babies are safest sleeping alone, in a crib, without excess bedding or toys. Always place the baby on his or her back for naps and at night. All of these will reduce the risk of suffocation. Click [here](#) for more information on sleep safety

(Children 1-4) most often die from injury due to a fire or flame. Male, black non-Hispanic children living in Staten Island and Brooklyn and children in very high poverty neighborhoods were at the highest risk. Nearly all of these deaths occurred in the child's home. A smoke detector was either not present or not working in more than half (55 percent) of these deaths. The most common ignition sources were matches, lighters and overloaded electrical equipment.

- Keep matches and lighters away from children. Check your smoke alarms once a month and change the batteries every spring and fall. For more information on fire safety visit the Fire Department (FDNY) [Fire Safety Program](#)

Children (5-9) and from **(10-14)** most often die due to injury from motor vehicle-related accidents. The vast majority of these children (75 percent) were pedestrians. The main causes were children who ran out into the street from between parked cars or they crossed against the light. Male, black non-Hispanic children, children living in Brooklyn and Staten Island and in high poverty neighborhoods were at greatest risk.

- Teach your child to cross at the crosswalk, look both ways before crossing, and how to obey traffic signs. Make sure they are not distracted by iPhones or iPods or toys.

- Adults, please obey the speed limit, never text or talk on a cell phone while driving and be aware that children can dart out from between cars at any minute. For more information on [traffic safety](#) visit

Children (15-17) most often die from firearm-related deaths. Youth at highest risk were male, black non-Hispanic youth living in the Bronx and in high poverty neighborhoods. Firearm-related homicides accounted for (91 percent) of the deaths.

- Do not keep firearms in the home. If there must be a gun in the home, put it where children cannot access it. Keep guns unloaded and locked away.

- Teach children conflict resolution and make them aware of the consequences of violence. Become involved in anti-violence activities in your community and in your child's high school.

- If your child appears depressed or suicidal, get mental health and medical help right away. 1-800-Lifenet is available 24 hours a day.

- For more information on preventing gun violence among youth visit the [Center to Prevent Youth Violence](#)

The [full 2013 CFRAT report](#) is available at The NYSPCC's website.

For more information on keeping your child safe and to learn more about The NYSPCC's Annual Spring Luncheon on Thursday, April 10, 2014, featuring Aaron Fisher, Victim #1, the first child who spoke out against the child sexual abuse perpetrator, Jerry Sandusky, visit www.nyspcc.org.