

Expert tips for school bus safety

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Parents can do a lot to keep their kids out of harm's way.

(HealthDay)—Many children are injured each year just getting on and off the school bus. Inattentive drivers, horseplay, unsafe street crossing and even clothing issues can all contribute.

By talking to [children](#) about school bus safety and reviewing certain rules at the beginning of the year, parents can help prevent avoidable accidents, an expert says.

"A [blind spot](#) extends about 10 feet in front of the bus, obstructing the driver's view," said Susan Laurence, the [injury prevention](#) coordinator for trauma services at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. "Oftentimes, children are not aware of this blind spot and might mistakenly believe that if they can see the bus, the bus driver can see them."

Simple measures—such as removing loose drawstrings or ties on children's jackets or clothing because they can snag on bus handrails—also can help keep children safe, Laurence said in a medical center news release.

Laurence provided several [safety guidelines](#) parents should review with their children to ensure they are safe on the way to and from school.

While walking to the bus or waiting at the bus stop:

- Don't be late. Arrive at least five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive.
- Don't fool around.
- Stay on the sidewalk or grass.

While riding the bus:

- Always walk in a single-file line.
- Use the handrail to avoid tripping or falling.
- Stay seated and face forward the entire time.
- Keep feet and backpacks out of the aisle.
- Do not shout, so the bus driver can concentrate on the road.
- Always keep all body parts inside the bus.

When getting off the bus:

- Make sure the bus has come to a complete stop before trying to exit.
- Wait for a signal from the bus driver before crossing the street.
- Exit from the front of the bus.
- Look both ways before stepping into the street to make sure there are no cars attempting to pass the bus.

- Cross the street at least 10 feet in front of the bus.

Kids should ask their [bus driver](#) for help if they've dropped anything when getting on or off the bus, Laurence said. Children also should never talk to strangers on their way to or from the bus stop, she added.

The U.S. National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration reports that an average of 19 young bus riders and pedestrians die in school-transportation-related accidents each year.

"As children begin preparing to return to school, it's important for parents and children to go over school bus safety tips together," Laurence said. "This will help ensure a safe, enjoyable start to the school year for everyone."

More information: The U.S. National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration has more about [school bus safety](#).

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