

## For kids playing Pokemon Go, catch these safety tips

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(HealthDay)—It seems as if every kid in America is caught up in the

Pokemon Go craze. But in the quest to "catch 'em all," don't leave common sense and safety behind, the American Academy of Pediatrics urges.

First, keep in mind that Pokemon Go is an "augmented reality" game. That means it's a game that is partly virtual and partly based in reality. Players need to go out into the [real world](#).

"You can't just play this game from your living room," AAP spokeswoman Dr. Elizabeth Murray said in an academy statement. "You have to walk around, usually in a public space."

This means that playing the game can be considered [physical activity](#). The academy recommends at least 60 minutes of exercise a day for kids 6 years and older.

"If Pokemon Go is a painless way to get your family on the move for an hour, then that's great!" Murray said.

Murray, an assistant professor of pediatrics and emergency medicine at the University of Rochester, in New York, offers some safety tips for parents and players.

Since players will be out in the real world, they should be cautious about safety, especially considering that they may be distracted by looking at their phones. And make sure your [children](#) understand they must be careful in [public spaces](#).

"Under no circumstance should your child ever go to a second location with someone they met while playing Pokemon Go," Murray said.

"It may seem obvious to us as the adults, but remember, it can be very easy for your child to feel comfortable with a new friend because he or

she is a fellow gamer. Without some vetting, there is no promise that this person is who he or she says," she said.

Make sure your children never cross a street or ride any wheeled vehicle such as a bicycle or scooter with their eyes on the phone. And if your child is old enough to drive, make a firm rule forbidding any driving while playing Pokemon Go.

Tell your children where they can play the game and make sure they understand that they must respect other people's property and use caution in public spaces such as war memorials and cemeteries.

Consider not allowing your child under the age of 10 to own their own smartphone, so they would need a parent's help to access the game. This allows you to control where and when the game can be played. The good news: "Co-playing with your child is a great way to spend quality time together and make sure he or she is behaving in a way that you feel is safe and appropriate," Murray said.

Also, she said, "this is a great way for younger children to learn about digital citizenship. Young children need to learn that once they enter the digital world, they are a part of it and leave their footprint wherever they go."

And, the AAP also reminds kids to be polite even when caught up in the game. Make sure your kids remember to use good manners, especially when someone is talking to them while they're playing the game.

Ask your kids about the game ("What's a Jigglypuff or a Pokeball?") and think about how you can provide background about what certain words mean. "For example, choosing a 'Team' prompted a really interesting conversation with my 7-year-old," Murray said. "She realized that her choice of 'Team' was a statement about how she is representing herself

to other players [i.e., valor, instinct, etc.]."

Pokemon Go is a free app, but it allows in-[game](#) purchases. Make sure your [child](#)'s smartphone's purchasing powers are protected by a password that only you know.

Also think about how you can teach your children about the value of money by allowing them to spend part of their allowance on Pokemon Go purchases through you.

"Virtual spending, like online gambling, can too easily be separated from reality and the concept that your children are spending actual dollars can be lost," Murray said.

**More information:** Learn more about online gaming safety from [StaySafeOnline.org](#).

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