



ENHANCING CHILD SAFETY: PARENTAL AWARENESS AND PRACTICES IN ACCIDENT PREVENTION

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ABSTRACT

Child safety is a top priority for parents, as they play a crucial role in protecting their children from potential accidents and hazards. Creating a safe environment at home is essential to ensure the well-being and security of children. Parents should be aware of the risks and take necessary precautions to prevent accidents. One important aspect of child safety is home safety. Installing smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and fire extinguishers can help prevent fire-related accidents. Securing furniture and using safety gates can prevent falls and injuries. Keeping hazardous substances out of reach is also crucial to avoid poisoning incidents. Childproofing the home is another important practice. Covering electrical outlets, using cabinet locks, and securing heavy furniture can prevent accidents. Keeping small objects, choking hazards, and sharp objects out of reach is also essential. Apart from home safety, parents should also be aware of potential hazards outside the home. Supervising children closely in public places, teaching them road safety, and ensuring they wear appropriate safety gear when riding bikes or playing sports are important measures. In addition to physical safety, parents should also be mindful of online safety. Educating children about internet safety, setting parental controls, and monitoring their online activities can protect them from online threats. Overall, parental awareness and practices in accident prevention are crucial for child safety. By being proactive, attentive, and implementing safety measures, parents can create a secure environment for their children to grow and thrive.

Key Words: Parental Awareness, child safety, secure environment, accidents.

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INTRODUCTION

Child safety is of utmost importance, and parents play a crucial role in ensuring the well-being and protection of their children. By being aware of potential hazards and implementing effective safety practices, parents can significantly reduce the risk of accidents and create a safe environment for their little ones.

Childhood is a very special stage of life. The child care depends upon the parents as they are responsible for the growth and development of their children. As the childhood is a vulnerable stage of life, the parents should understand the non-verbal signal, a child expresses for his/her demand. The child should be supervised closely by the parents. The parents should provide appropriate environment for child's growth and development as well as prevention of minor accidents in the home. An accident is a sudden cause of death or an emergency in children due to urbanization and increase in population that result in overcrowded homes. This curbs the play environment of the children, which can result in home accidents.

Some common accident prevention practices. Here are a few important ones:

1. **Home Safety:** Keep your home safe by installing smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and fire extinguishers. Also, secure furniture, use safety gates, and keep hazardous substances out of reach.
2. **Childproofing:** Childproof your home by covering electrical outlets, using cabinet locks, and installing safety gates at stairs. Keep small objects, choking hazards, and toxic substances away from children.
3. **Road Safety:** Follow traffic rules, wear seat belts, and use child safety seats in vehicles. Teach children about pedestrian safety, such as crossing at crosswalks and looking both ways before crossing the road.
4. **Water Safety:** Never leave children unattended near water, whether it's a bathtub, pool, or any other body of water. Install barriers around pools and teach children how to swim.
5. **Fire Safety:** Have an escape plan in case of a fire and practice it with your family. Teach children how to stop, drop, and roll if their clothes catch fire. Also, keep fire hazards like candles and matches out of reach.
6. **Sports and Recreational Safety:** Use appropriate safety gear, such as helmets, knee pads, and life jackets, when participating in sports or recreational activities. Follow safety guidelines and supervise children during play.

Education is another vital component of enhancing child safety. Parents should teach their children about safety rules and guidelines from an early age. This includes teaching them about the importance of looking both ways before crossing the street, wearing helmets while biking, and not talking to strangers. By instilling these safety practices, parents empower their children to make informed decisions and act responsibly in various situations.

Internet safety is an increasingly important aspect of child safety in today's digital age. Parents should educate their children about online safety, including the potential risks of sharing personal information and interacting with strangers online. By teaching children to be cautious and responsible internet users, parents can help protect them from online dangers.

WHO defines "an unexpected, unplanned occurrence which may involve injury." Incidence of home accident injuries are on the increase in the country. Minor accidents are those accidents which take place in the home or in its immediate surroundings. Park K. Preventive and Social Medicine (2013).

One essential aspect of enhancing child safety is parental awareness. Parents need to stay informed about common dangers and potential risks that children may encounter in their daily lives. This includes being knowledgeable about safety guidelines for various activities, such as playground safety, water safety, and road safety. By staying informed, parents can proactively address potential hazards and take preventive measures.

In addition to awareness, parents should establish and maintain safety practices within their households. This involves childproofing the home to minimize potential risks. Securing cabinets, covering electrical outlets, and using safety gates on stairs are some examples of childproofing measures. It is also important to secure heavy furniture to prevent accidents caused by tipping over. By creating a safe environment, parents can significantly reduce the likelihood of accidents occurring.

Open communication between parents and children is crucial for maintaining child safety. Parents should encourage their children to talk about any concerns or uncomfortable situations they may encounter. By fostering open lines of communication, parents can address potential issues promptly and provide guidance and support to their children.

These accidents are due to some social factors like single parent, younger mother, illiterate parents, step families, poor status of living and size of family; lack of knowledge and experience about accidents. Another



reason can be that children are physically unable to coordinate their muscles in the mature fashions. Accidents usually occur whenever the child is unsupervised as when the parents are busy; these all factors contribute to injury causation. The child's related information can be collected from care providers because they are the best source of information regarding children. Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (2011).

There is paucity of research to emphasize safety awareness among parents and significant caregivers regarding childhood accidents, proper management and prevention to improve the quality of life of the children who are the future of our country. Care providers' education is the key determinants of injury prevention.

Prevention of Common Types of Accidents:

Uma Maheswari Pakkiri Samy and Vishnu Priya (2021) did pre-experimental study on fifty mother's and assessed knowledge regarding the prevention of accidents in under-five children before and after giving planned teaching to reduce global and national burden. The pre and posttest difference mean value was 13.42 with a standard deviation of 3.74. The standard error of the mean was 0.53. The calculated „t“ value was 25.32 which was statistically significant at $P < 0.05$ level. This result showed the significant improvement of knowledge on the prevention of accidents in under-five children among mothers.

Ms. Kuldeep Kaur and Mrs. Harpreet Kaur (2023) conducted a quasi-experimental study on effectiveness of the structured teaching programme on knowledge of mothers regarding prevention of home accidents under 5 years children. The total sample size was 60 mothers. The purposive sampling was used. Pretest was conducted by using self-structured questionnaire in both experimental and control group. Results found that the mean score pre and post-test knowledge was (16.3 & 16.5) which improved to (16.9 & 27.56) in posttest at ($p < 0.001$). Level of pre and post-test knowledge score of mothers in experimental group had average knowledge (50%) whereas after post-test mothers had good knowledge score (40%) followed by excellent knowledge score was (30%). It was concluded that structured teaching was effective in raising the knowledge of mothers regarding prevention of home accidents in children under 5 years.

Furthermore, parents should equip themselves with basic first aid and CPR knowledge. Accidents can happen unexpectedly, and having these skills can make a significant difference in providing immediate assistance to a child in need. By being prepared, parents can effectively respond to emergencies and potentially prevent further harm.

It is also important for parents to lead by example. Children often learn by observing their parents' behavior. By consistently practicing safety measures and demonstrating responsible behavior, parents can set a positive example for their children to follow. This includes wearing seat belts in the car, using designated crosswalks when walking, and following safety guidelines when participating in recreational activities. When children see their parents prioritizing safety, they are more likely to internalize these habits and incorporate them into their own lives.

In addition to parental awareness and practices, community involvement is also essential in enhancing child safety. Parents can collaborate with schools, local organizations, and community centers to promote awareness campaigns and educational programs on child safety. By working together, communities can create a collective effort to prioritize child safety and ensure that children are protected in various environments.

Lastly, it's important to remember that child safety is an ongoing process. As children grow and develop, new risks and challenges may arise. Therefore, parents should stay updated on safety guidelines and adapt their practices accordingly. Regularly reviewing safety measures and discussing potential risks with other parents can help create a supportive network that fosters a culture of child safety.

CONCLUSION

Enhancing child safety requires parental awareness and practices in accident prevention. By being informed about potential hazards, childproofing the home, educating children about safety rules, fostering open communication, and leading by example, parents can create a safe environment for their children. Community involvement and ongoing vigilance are also crucial in maintaining child safety. Together, parents can ensure that children are protected and can thrive in a secure and nurturing environment.



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