MSU - Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE EXTENSION SERVICE

Back to School Safety

School Safety Tips-

- Back to school time is almost upon us. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Association (NHTSA), school buses are one of the safest forms of transportation in the USA:
- Every year, approximately 450,000 public school buses transports 23.5 million kids to and from school and school-related activities.
- Yet, every year, on the average 6 school-age children die in school bus crashes as passengers, while more than 42,000 people are killed in traffic crashes on US roads.

Looking at the figures above reminds me of the importance for parents, teachers and others that might have responsibilities for our children is to guide them and teach them with sound safety practices. Following are some tips that will help in keeping our kids safe:

Walking to School-

- Always walk on the sidewalk (if there is one). If not, walk on the side of the road always facing the traffic.
- 1 Before crossing at intersections and streets- look in both directions- twice, for oncoming vehicles.
- Do not "dart" out in front of a parked car.
- When it is possible- walk to school with your child.

Riding a Bicycle-

- Make sure that your child is wearing a helmet each day as they leave for school.
- Teach your child the "rules of the road" for riding bicycles.
- Always come to a complete stop when approaching a crossing or an intersection.

Riding a Bus to School-

- Go to the bus stop with your children to teach them the proper way to get on and off the bus.
- Make sure that they know to stand 6 feet away from the curb.
- Hypothetical scenario: Assume that you and your child have to cross the street in front of a bus - walk on the side of the road until you're 10 feet ahead of the bus. Be sure to position yourself so that you can see the bus driver and he can also see you.

School Bus Safety Guidelines-

Getting on the bus-

- Waiting on the bus stay away from the traffic avoid horseplay or random behavior.
- Line up away from the bus as it approaches.
- Wait until the bus completely stops and the door is open. Then you can approach the roadway to load and unload your children.
- Utilize the hand rail when entering or exiting the bus.

Getting off the bus-

- Crossing the street in front of the bus walk at least 10 feet on the roadside until you can turn around and see the driver. Make sure that the driver can see you.
- When the driver signals to walk across the street- look twice at the roadway to make sure that there are no changes. Do not walk past the center line until the driver signals that it is okay.
- Stay away from the bus's rear wheels at all times.
- If a child drops an object while exiting or entering the bus- let the driver know as he may not be able to see you as you bend down to pick up the object.

Crossing the Street-

- Before crossing Stop at the curb or roadway edge look in both directions - twice - being extra cautious - then walk across the street.
- Parked cars Move out from the cars enough so that you are visible to the driver and occupants - then, again. Look in both directions and then proceed cautiously.

Ted Gordon-Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control Mgr. MAFES / MSU-EXTENSION (662) 566-2201 2/15/2017 Excerpts: www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/school-buses www.nsc.org www.21st.com/insurance-newsletter

- Choose a backpack for your child carefully. It should have ergonomically designed features to enhance their safety and comfort
- Don't overstuff a backpack. It should weigh no more than 10 to 20% of the child's body weight. For example: A child weighing 60 lbs. should carry a backpack that weighs no more than 12 lbs.
- Train your child to carry their pack with both straps over their shoulders so that the load is more evenly distributed.

Preventing Playground-related Injuries-

- Encourage your child to use playgrounds that have soft surfaces. Avoid playgrounds that have concrete or asphalt surface. They are too hard when a child takes a fall.
- Children under 4 years old should use climbing equipment with assistance and supervision and watch for older children when they're climbing, especially on monkey bars. Personally, I would discourage any child from playing on monkey bars. They are very dangerous.

Prevent Bullying-

Bullying in schools is as old as time, but just recently has gone viral in our society. We hear of tragedies all over the country, and now it has been brought to the forefront. Psychologists are doing extensive research trying to determine the damages created by bullying.

Bullying comes in a variety of forms such as hitting, punching, teasing, name calling, social exclusion (emotional bullying), unwanted sexual bullying (sexual bullying), e-mail or text messaging.

Warning signs of bullying can be recognized with the following problems:

- Lost interest or disliking school work
- Has only a few friends
- Appears sad or moody when talking about school
- Complains of stomach pains and aches
- Unexplained bruises, scratches or cuts
- Fear of returning to school
- Coming home with torn clothing or missing articles or school supplies
- Has trouble sleeping and having nightmares

Bullying can have long-term psychological effects, such as depression and loss of self-esteem.

Back to School Driving Safety Tips-

As mentioned school will be starting soon, and with it thousands of school buses will be on the road. So it is important that vehicles and school buses understand how they should safely share the road along with pedestrians. The time is also ideal for parents and the children to discuss how to stay safe while traveling to and from school. Following are some rules or tips to consider:

- Beware of school zone signals- obey all posted speed limits.
- Never pass a school bus on the right side- it is illegal and extremely dangerous.
- When a school bus is trying to merge back into traffic- let them in, they have the ride-of-way.
- All 50 states require traffic to stop in both directions on undivided roadways when students are entering or exiting the bus. State laws vary on what is required on a divided highway. But, in all cases, traffic behind the bus, traveling in the same direction, must stop. In Mississippi, and surrounding states traffic must stop, I believe it is 50 feet from the front or back of the bus, and don't start until the crossbar has returned to the resting position on the front of the bus.

STAY SAFE & COOL WHEN TAKING THE KIDS TO SCHOOL!!! BE ALERT & BE AWARE & BE ALIVE