

# Skating and Skateboarding Safety Tips

Everything you need to know to keep your kids safe while skating or skateboarding.

Skating and skateboarding can increase balance, agility, coordination and reaction time. It's also pretty fun. With plenty of practice and these safety tips, your kids can roll smart and safe.

## Helmets Are a Must

- Every skater should wear a helmet. Wrist guards, knee pads and elbow pads are a good idea for everyone, but especially for beginners. Mouthguards are good protection against broken teeth.



*More than 82,000 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms for skateboard-related injuries every year. Skateboarding injuries can range from mild to life-threatening. Skateboarders have been killed by head injuries and collisions with cars.*



## Find the Right Helmet Fit

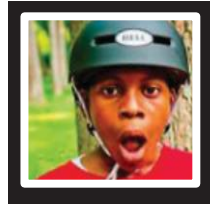
- Make sure the helmet fits and your child knows how to put it on correctly. A helmet should sit on top of the head in a level position, and should not rock forward, backward or side to side. The helmet straps must always be buckled, but not too tightly. Safe Kids recommends kids take the Helmet Fit Test:



**EYES check:** Position the helmet on your head. Look up and you should see the bottom rim of the helmet. The rim should be one to two finger-widths above the eyebrows.



**EARS check:** Make sure the straps of the helmet form a "V" under your ears when buckled. The strap should be snug but comfortable.



**MOUTH check:** Open your mouth as wide as you can. Do you feel the helmet hug your head? If not, tighten those straps and make sure the buckle is flat against your skin.

### Skate Smart

- According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), children under 5 should never ride a skateboard. This might seem overly protective, but a child's balance and judgment have not fully developed yet, which means a high risk for a serious injury.
- Buy skates that truly fit in order to make learning easier and safer for your child.
- Limit skating to bike paths or areas set aside in public parks. Children should ride on smooth, dry surfaces located in a well-lit area away from traffic. Streets should be off-limits, as most in-line skating fatalities involve collisions with motor vehicles.
- Teach children to minimize the impact of a fall by crouching down as they lose balance to reduce the distance to the surface.



### Check the Gear

- Teach kids to check skates and boards for problems before each use. If there are any cracked, loose or broken parts, the item should not be used until it is repaired.
- Different skates and different boards do different things, so make sure kids have the right gear for their activity.