



## 7-8 YEARS

### Safety for Your Child

Did you know that injuries are the greatest threat to the life and health of your child? Injuries are the leading cause of death of school-aged children. **Yet you can prevent most injuries!**

At age 8, children are now taking off on their own. They look to friends for approval. They try to do daring things. They may not want to obey grown-up rules. But your child can learn safety rules with your help and reminders. Your child now goes out more without you and could drown, be hurt on a bike, or be hit by a car. And your child still can be hurt or killed while riding in a car if he is not buckled by a seat belt in a belt-positioning booster seat.

#### Sports Safety

Ask your doctor which sports are right for your child. **Be sure your child wears all the protective equipment made for the sport**, such as shin pads, mouth guards, wrist guards, eye protection, or helmets. Your child's coach also should be able to help you select protective equipment.

#### Water Safety

No one is safe alone in water, even if he or she knows how to swim. **Do not let your child play around any water (lake, stream, pool, or ocean) unless an adult is watching. Never let your child swim in canals or any fast-moving water.**

Teach your child to always enter the water feet first.

#### And Remember Bike Safety

**Make sure your child always wears a helmet** while riding a bike. Now is the time to teach your child "Rules of the Road." Be sure he or she knows the rules and can use them. Watch your child ride. See if he or she is in control of the bike. See if your child uses good judgment. Your 8-year-old is not old enough to ride at dusk or after dark. **Make sure your child brings the bike in when the sun starts to set.**

#### Car Safety

**NEVER start the car until you've checked to be sure that your child is properly restrained in a booster seat.** Your child should use a booster seat until the lap belt can be worn low and flat on the hips and the shoulder belt can be worn across the shoulder rather than the face or neck (usually at about 4 feet 9 inches tall and between 8 and 12 years old). Be sure that you and all others in the car are buckled up, too. Install shoulder belts in the back seat of your car if they are not already there. Serious injuries can occur with lap belts alone. **The safest place for all children to ride is in the back seat.**



(over)



## Firearm Hazards

It is best to keep all guns out of your home. If you choose to keep a gun, store it unloaded and in a locked place, with the ammunition locked separately. Ask if the homes where your child visits or is cared for have guns and how they are stored. Your child is at greater risk of being shot by himself, his friends, or a family member than of being injured by an intruder.



**Would you be able to help your child in case of an injury? Put emergency numbers by or on your phone today. Learn first aid and CPR. Be prepared...for your child's sake!**

## SAFETY IN A KID'S WORLD

**Dear Parent:** Your child is old enough to start learning how to prevent injuries. The games below are designed to help your child think about safety. Read the messages with your child and talk about them together. Then take this safety sheet home and post it where everyone can see it.

**It takes time to form a safety habit. Remind each other what it says. Make safety a big part of your lives.**



### Bike Safety

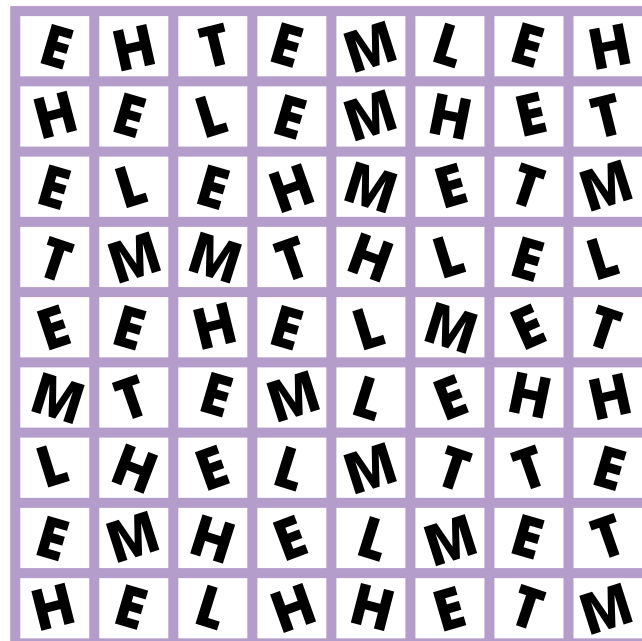
Always wear a 

when you ride your



**Get the Helmet Habit!**

**Directions:** Can you find the word "HELMET" in 9 different places (any direction)?



1. When turning or stopping,

2. LOOK both ways,

3. Always ride

4. Always stop at

5. When you ride on the sidewalk

6. Smart riders always

at street corners and driveways.

STOP signs and the curb.

wear their helmet.

watch out for people.

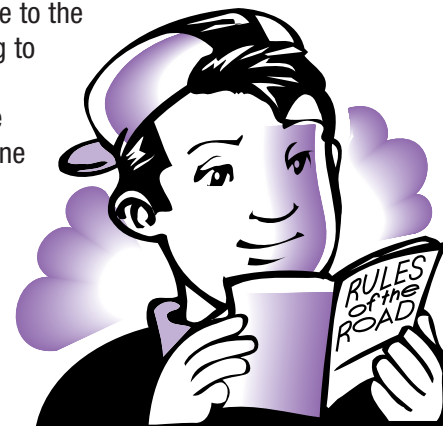
always use hand signals.

to the right.

### "Rules of the Road"

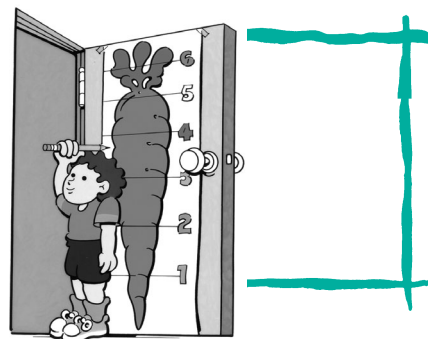
teaches you to ride your bike safely.

**Directions:** Here are 6 important "Rules of the Road." Draw a line from the first part of the rule to the correct ending to complete the sentence. The first one is done for you.



# Growing Up Healthy

## Fat, Cholesterol and More



### Children and Heart Disease: A Generation at Risk

Many Americans consume too many calories and too much fat, especially saturated fat, and cholesterol. These eating patterns are one cause of America's high rates of obesity and heart disease. As a parent or caregiver, you can help your child develop eating and physical activity habits to stay healthy now—and throughout life.

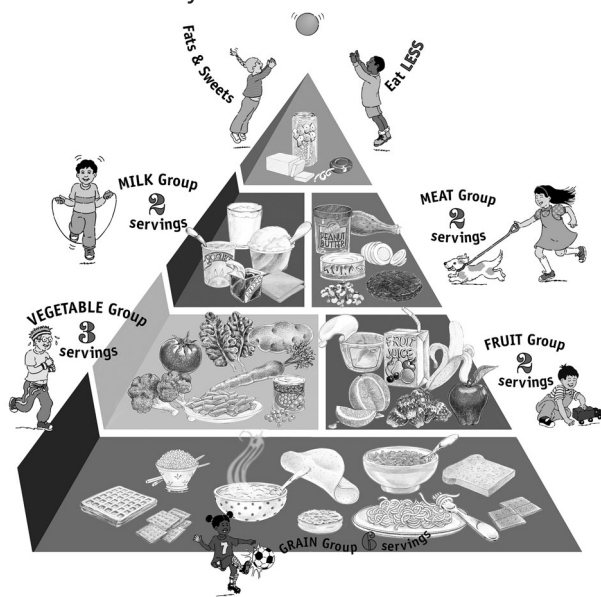
### What's a Parent to Do?

Food and physical activity habits begin at home. Although many things influence children, adults are still the most important role models for developing healthful eating and lifestyle habits.

The information in this brochure provides eating and physical activity guidelines for healthy children ages two years and over. For specific food and nutrition advice, talk to your child's pediatrician or a registered dietitian.

### Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children

A Daily Guide for 2- to 6-Year-Olds



### Fat in Food: How Much for Children?

If heart disease runs in your family, your child is at greater risk for heart disease in adulthood. To help protect your child from heart disease later in life, help him or her learn healthful eating and lifestyle habits during childhood.

Most nutrition experts agree that childhood is the best time to *start* cutting back on total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol. But adult goals aren't meant for young children under the age of two years. Fat is an essential nutrient that supplies energy, or calories, they need for growth and active play.

Between the ages of two and five, as children eat with their family, encourage them to gradually choose foods with less fat and saturated fat. By age five, their overall food choices, like yours, should be low in fat.

You might wonder: how is saturated fat different than other fat? It's more solid at room temperature. Saturated fats come mostly from animal sources, such as butter, cheese, bacon and meat, as well as stick margarine.

*Caution:* A low-fat eating plan is not advised for children under two years of age because of special needs for rapid growth and development during these years.

### Pyramid Way to Healthful Eating

For healthful eating, offer foods from the five major food groups of the Food Guide Pyramid. Encourage nutrient-rich foods with less fat: grain products; fruits; vegetables; low-fat dairy foods; and lean meats, poultry, fish, and cooked dry beans.

Most young children—age two and over—need the minimum number of servings from each food group. Although children will decide how much they can eat, a child-size serving is one-fourth to one-third the size of an adult portion. That's about one measuring tablespoon per year of the young child's age.

### Good Nutrition: It's a Juggling Act

Chances are that some of your child's favorite foods are higher in fat and energy (or calories) compared to the amount of nutrients they provide. Any food that supplies energy and nutrients can fit into a nutritious eating plan for your child.

Follow this nutrition advice: Offer your child many different food-group foods. Be flexible; what children eat over several days, not one day or one meal, is what counts. Help your child eat sensibly. Here are ways to be sensible about fat, saturated fat and cholesterol in food choices:

| Food Group...                                 | Most Days...  | Some Days...   |
|---|---|--|
| Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta                 | bagel or English muffin<br>pretzels, baked chips<br>graham crackers, crackers, fig bars, vanilla wafers | doughnut or danish<br>regular corn chips<br>chocolate chip cookies, cupcakes |
| Vegetable                                     | baked potato<br>raw vegetables  | french fries<br>creamy cole slaw   |
| Fruit   | fresh fruit and juice —   |  |
| Milk, Yogurt and Cheese                       | reduced-fat cheese<br>low-fat frozen yogurt or ice cream  | cheese<br>ice cream  |
| Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts | baked and grilled chicken<br>baked fish   | fried chicken<br>fried fish sticks   |

## Smart Ideas for the Whole Family

Try these simple tips to limit extra fat, saturated fat and cholesterol:

- Have plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables available and ready to eat.
- Offer skim or 1% milk\* and low-fat yogurt. Choose cheeses that are lower in fat.
- Include starchy foods, such as potatoes, rice, pasta, and whole-grain breads and cereals often.
- Choose lower fat or fat-free toppings like grated parmesan cheese, herbed cottage cheese and nonfat/low-fat gravy, sour cream, or yogurt.
- Select lean meats, such as skinless chicken and turkey, fish, lean beef cuts (round, loin, lean ground beef) and lean pork cuts (tenderloin, chops, ham). Trim off all visible fat, and remove skin from poultry before eating.
- Choose margarine and vegetable oils made from canola, corn, sunflower, soybean and olive oils. Choose tub and liquid margarine, rather than regular margarine in sticks, too.
- Try angel food cake, frozen fruit bars, and low-fat/ fat-free frozen desserts such as fudge bars, yogurt or ice cream.
- Use nonstick vegetable sprays when cooking.
- Use fat-free cooking methods, such as baking, broiling, grilling, poaching or steaming, when preparing meat, poultry or fish.
- Serve vegetable- and broth-based soups. Or use skim or 1% milk\* or evaporated skim milk when making cream soups.
- Use the Nutrition Facts label on food packages to find foods with less fat per serving. Be sure to check serving size as you make choices. Remember that the % Daily Values on food labels are based on calorie levels for adults.

## Parent Tip: Forget “Forbidden” Foods

Forcing children to eat food doesn't work. Neither does forbidding foods. Foods that are “forbidden” just may become more desirable for children.

It's important for both children and adults to be sensible and enjoy all foods, but not to overdo on any one type of food. Sweets and higher-fat snack foods in appropriate portions are okay. Just make sure your child is offered wise food choices from all the food groups.

### Caution:

- Restricting a child's eating pattern too much may harm growth and development, or encourage undesirable eating behaviors.
- Before making any drastic changes in a child's eating plan or physical activity habits, talk to your child's pediatrician or a registered dietitian.
- Don't restrict fat or calories for children under two years of age, except on the advice of your child's pediatrician.

\* Children *under* two years old should only drink whole milk.

## Teach Good Habits by Example

Children learn more from ACTIONS than from WORDS. Practice what you preach. Your actions will make you healthier, too!

## Get Up and Move...Turn Off That Tube!

Too much television usually results in not enough physical activity or creative play. Pediatricians recommend limiting TV time to no more than one or two hours each day.

Be active. Join your children in doing other activities. These activities will please almost any young child:

- Playing tag
- Jumping rope
- Throwing balls
- Riding a tricycle or bicycle
- Pulling a wagon
- Flying a kite
- Digging in the sand
- Making a snowman
- Ice skating or sledding
- Jumping in leaves
- Playing on swings
- “Driving” a toy truck
- Swimming
- Walking with the family
- Dancing
- Pushing a toy shopping cart

This brochure was developed as part of the **HEALTHY START...Food to Grow On** program, an information and education campaign that promotes healthful food choices and eating habits for healthy children ages two years and over. The **HEALTHY START** program was produced as a cooperative effort by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), The American Dietetic Association (ADA), and the Food Marketing Institute (FMI).

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

Food pyramid courtesy of USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion.

From your doctor

American Academy  
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 57,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.  
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# Healthy Communication with Your Child

## Guidelines for Parents

Many parents think that the main purpose of communication is to get information to their children. Telling children to eat their vegetables and reminding them to look both ways before crossing the street are expressions of love and caring. That is sending *information* about diet and safety. But communication has another important function. Communication is a two-way bridge that connects you and your child's feelings. Healthy communication – the kind that builds a strong two-way bridge – is crucial in helping your child develop a healthy personality and good relationships with you and others. It gives your child a chance to be a happy, safe, healthy person, no matter what happens. The American Academy of Pediatrics has developed this brochure to help you understand what healthy communication is and how to practice it.

### Why is healthy communication important?

Healthy communication is important because it helps your child:

- Feel cared for and loved
- Believe she matters and is important to you
- Feel safe and not all alone with his worries
- Learn to tell you what she feels and needs directly I words
- Learn how to manage his feelings so that he does not act on his feelings without thinking (or overreacting)
- Talk to you openly in the future

Healthy communication also helps you:

- Feel close to you child
- Know your child's needs
- Know you have powerful tools to help your child grow
- Manage your own stress and frustrations with your child

### What are the building blocks of healthy communication?

Building the two-way bridge of communication requires:

- **Being available** – Children need to feel that their parents are available to them. This means being able to spend time with your child. Even spending 10 minutes a day communicating with each of your children alone makes the bridge of communication stronger.

Being available also means quickly getting yourself into a quiet and “tuned-in” mood before you start listening to you child or talking about something important. Being able to understand and talk about *your* feelings as well as your child's is another important part of being available.

- **Being a good listener** – Being a good listener helps your child feel loved even when he is upset and you can't do anything to fix the problem. Ask your child for his ideas and feelings before beginning to talk about yours. Also, try to understand exactly what he is saying to you. What your child is trying to tell you is important to him, even when it may not be to you.

You do not have to agree with what your child is saying to be a good listener. It helps your child calm down, so later he can listen to you.

- **Showing empathy** – This means tuning in to your child and letting her know you appreciate her feelings. You can show empathy even if you disagree with your child. Empathy is about appreciating feelings for their own sake. It is not about who is right or wrong. Showing empathy means checking out whether you understand what your child is feeling. Ask whether your understanding of how she is feeling is right.
- **Being a good sender** – Be a good *listener* first. If your child already feels heard and cared for, he will be in a better mood to listen to you.

Make sure that what you say, your tone of voice, and what you do all send the same message. For example, if you laugh when you say "NO!" your child will be confused and will not know what you really want.

Use *words* to communicate what you want your child to do. Even when setting limits with a toddler you can use words while holding him back.

Use feeling words when you praise your child's behavior. For example, you can say "I am so happy!" when your child puts away her toys. It is also helpful to use "you" and point out the good behavior (as in "You have done a great job with your homework!"). Encourage your child to praise herself as well. Praise helps children get through the bad times.

Use "I" statements to tell you child what displeases you about her behavior. For example, saying "When I couldn't find you, I felt worried and angry" is better than saying in a angry tone "You Disappeared! Where were you?" Tell you child what you feel and think. Don't tell your child what she should think or feel.

- **Being a good role model** – Young children learn better by copying what their parents do that by being told. Children will copy your way of communicating. If you yourself use a lot of feeling words, it will help your child to learn to do the same. When parents use feeling words instead of screaming, doing something hurtful, or calling someone a name, children learn that using feeling words is a better way to deal with strong feelings. Saying feelings rather than acting on them helps children control themselves. You can help your child learn to label his feelings by deciding what feeling words are OK to say at home or in school.

## The flip side of healthy communication: verbal abuse

Children usually bounce back quickly when they are hurt. For example, your child may cry when she falls and scrapes a knee, but ten minutes later she has forgotten all about the fall and is running outside again. The same thing might happen when someone at school calls your child a name. If it only happens once, your child will probably forget it. However, children who suffer the same type of hurts over and over again do not bounce back quickly. Children who are verbally abused are deeply hurt by what their parents say and by how they say it.

### What is verbal abuse?

There are three kinds of verbal abuse:

- **Name-calling, frequent criticism, and blaming:** Criticism is making “you” statements and calling your child names. For example, saying “You are stupid” is name-calling and criticism; saying “I am upset with you and I wish you would stop doing that” is not. Criticizing, name-calling, and blaming only make things worse in the long run.
- **Violating children’s boundaries, yelling, threatening to hurt or abandon them, and lying:** Sometimes, a parent’s strong emotions are too much for a young child to handle. Children build walls between themselves and their parents then this happens. Children who back up, hide, or put their hands over their eyes are often trying to protect themselves from too much strong emotion. They are usually not trying to show disrespect.

Children are not little adults. They cannot block out screaming and loudness the way adults can. Loud talking or yelling while standing over children makes them feel scared and unsafe. It hurts their emotions, just as physical abuse hurts their bodies and emotions. Yelling and loudness are even more hurtful when children are tired, sick, hungry, or scared about something. The younger the child is, the more this is true.

Children believe threats of harm or threats that you will leave them. Threats scare children more than you can imagine. They do not help your child behave better.

Lying also violates your child’s boundaries. Children will believe lies because they do not usually have enough information to be able to tell lies from the truth.

- **Silence:** Children feel long silences (hours or days) very strongly. They do not know what these silences mean. Children read horrible things into their parents’ silences. Silence sends a strong message of anger or dislike. It makes your child feel confused and helpless. If you are silent because you are depressed, it is better to tell your child that you are sad or ill and that it is not about him. When you are silent, you are not being a good sender.



Parents may get silent because:

- They are afraid that they will say something that will make things worse.
- They do not know what to say or do.
- They have such strong feelings of anger or sadness that they cannot talk.
- They are ill.
- Their own parents use silence to control them.

Parents verbally abuse children because they:

- Never learned healthy communication.
- Do not know other ways to control their children's behavior.
- Do not know that children are hurt by verbal abuse and that it makes things worse.
- Have not learned how to manage their own strong feelings.
- Are under a lot of stress.
- Think their children need to develop a "thick skin" to survive.
- Were treated the same way by their parents, teachers, and other adults.

### Preventing Verbal Abuse: handling parental stress and anger

Parenting is a very hard job. There are times when you will feel so stressed that you think that you cannot handle one more thing. At those times, a crying baby, a toddler throwing a temper tantrum, or a fifth-grader refusing to do her homework might push you over the edge. It is important to find ways to help your child to behave that do not involve hurting her feelings. It is also important to find ways to prevent stress, and to calm yourself down when you are stressed, so that you do not say or do something harmful to your child.

Here are some things you might do to calm yourself

- Take a few deep breaths very slowly.
- Wait five (5) minutes before starting to talk to your child.
- Try to find a word to label your feelings.
- Say it to yourself or write it down.
- Share your feelings with your spouse or another adult. Call a friend.
- Keep your attention on the present. Do not add up past problems.

Parents who are under a lot of stress may find it hard to control strong feelings like anger, fear, frustration, or helplessness. They may not realize that their anger is a reaction to feeling worried, confused, hurt, or overwhelmed with stress. For example, you would probably feel worried if your child got lost in the supermarket. If you were in a rush, you might be angry when you find her. You might yell at your child for having wandered away instead of saying, "I was worried that I might not find you!" When you can learn to calm down and figure out what is really making you angry, you can avoid hurting your child out of anger.

Some people find that using the **RETHINK** method helps them control their anger, before they say or do something they might regret.



**RETHINK** stands for:

**RECOGNIZE** your feelings.

**EMPATHIZE** with the other person.

**THINK** of the situation differently. Use humor.

**HEAR** what the other person is saying.

**INTEGRATE** your love with your angry thoughts.

**NOTICE** your body's reaction to feeling anger and to calming down.

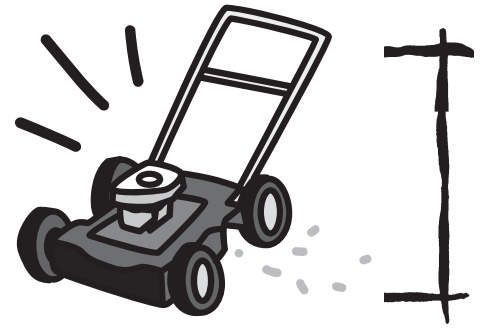
**KEEP** your attention on the present problem.

Using **RETHINK** can help you get control over your anger before you lash out at your child. If using the **RETHINK** method or trying other ways to calm yourself down does not work, try talking to your spouse, your pediatrician, counselor, minister, parent, or close friend. There is nothing to be ashamed of in admitting you need help in controlling your anger. All parents get frustrated and angry with their children. Asking for help with the difficult job of parenting is always better than losing control.

*The information contained in this publication **should not** be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.*



# Lawn Mower Safety



Each year many children are injured severely by lawn mowers. Power mowers can be especially dangerous. However, most lawn mower-related injuries can be prevented by following these safety guidelines.

## When is my child old enough to mow the lawn?

Before learning how to mow the lawn, your child should show the maturity, good judgment, strength and coordination that the job requires. In general, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children should be at least

- 12 years of age to operate a walk-behind power mower or hand mower safely
- 16 years of age to operate a riding lawn mower safely

It is important to teach your child how to use a lawn mower. Before you allow your child to mow the lawn alone, spend time showing him or her how to do the job safely. Supervise your child's work until you are sure that he or she can manage the task alone.

## Before mowing the lawn:

1. Make sure that children are indoors or at a safe distance well away from the area that you plan to mow.
2. Read the lawn mower operator's manual and the instructions on the mower.
3. Check conditions
  - Do not mow during bad weather, such as during a thunderstorm.
  - Do not mow wet grass.
  - Do not mow without enough daylight.
4. Clear the mowing area of any objects such as twigs, stones, and toys, that could be picked up and thrown by the lawn mower blades.
5. Make sure that protective guards, shields, the grass catcher, and other types of safety equipment are placed properly on the lawn mower and that your mower is in good condition.
6. If your lawn mower is electric, use a ground fault circuit interrupter to prevent electric shock.
7. Never allow children to ride as passengers on ride-on lawn mowers or garden tractors.

## While mowing:

1. Wear sturdy closed-toe shoes with slip-proof soles, close-fitting clothes, safety goggles or glasses with side shields, and hearing protection.
2. Watch for objects that could be picked up and thrown by the mower blades, as well as hidden dangers. Tall grass can hide objects, holes or bumps. Use caution when approaching corners, trees or anything that might block your view.
3. If the mower strikes an object, stop, turn the mower off, and inspect the mower. If it is damaged, do not use it until it has been repaired.
4. Do not pull the mower backwards or mow in reverse unless absolutely necessary, and carefully look for children behind you when you mow in reverse.
5. Use extra caution when mowing a slope.
  - When a walk-behind mower is used, mow across the face of slopes, not up and down, to avoid slipping under the mower and into the blades.
  - With a riding mower, mow up and down slopes, not across, to avoid tipping over.
6. Keep in mind that lawn trimmers also can throw objects at high speed.
7. Remain aware of where children are and do not allow them near the area where you are working. Children tend to be attracted to mowers in use.

## Stop the engine and allow it to cool before refueling.

Always turn off the mower and wait for the blades to stop completely before

- Crossing gravel paths, roads or other areas
- Removing the grass catcher
- Unclogging the discharge chute
- Walking away from the mower

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This information is based on the American Academy of Pediatrics' policy statement *Lawn Mower Injuries to Children*, published in June 2001. *Parent Pages* offers parents relevant facts that explain current policies about children's health.

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 57,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

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