

Why are education licensure candidates required to participate in this safety-related task?

The Illinois legislature requires that the curriculum at all State universities contain instruction in safety education for teachers and other education licensure professionals.

ISU has chosen to have teacher candidates fulfill this requirement via the following reading and then subsequent verification form. Education licensure candidates will read and consider the following material. The content is intended to encourage candidates to think about safety.

The entire task will require approximately one hour. Before beginning this task, please read the following statement.

Commitment

I understand that the following material is intended to fulfill a certification requirement. However, as an education professional, I want to ensure that all students have a healthy and safe school and community environment and educational experience. I am committed to the safety of the children and youth whom I will educate. Therefore, I commit to developing safe personal and professional habits. I recognize that my behavior will serve as a role model to children and youth. My safe behavior may inspire them to be safer. Furthermore, I will work to help students develop safe habits in and out of the classroom.

Section I

Why Safety in Schools?

Every morning, parents send their children and youth off to school with the expectation that they will remain safe. Education professionals never need to lose sight of that great responsibility.

Our schools focus on academic achievement and other important measurements of success, but those things do not matter unless our students remain safe in a healthy environment that is conducive to learning. A safe school is a school where safety concerns are openly acknowledged; where there is participation and involvement between school officials and students, parents and community stakeholders, and resource agencies in the planning and decision-making process.

It's important that schools are perceived as safe havens for learning. Students learn best and achieve their full potential in safe and orderly classrooms. This positive academic environment begins with safe families and communities. There are, however, many things education professionals can and should do to help ensure the safest schools possible. Education professionals can model safe habits and help focus student attention on safety issues. Safety can be integrated throughout the curriculum. By making safety a priority, schools can help students recognize the utility of safe behavior.

Statistically, schools continue to be one of the most secure places for children and youth (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH)). Schools are the safest place for children and youth -- safer than the street, the mall, or even the home. Almost all children and youth deaths occur away from school, after hours, and during holidays.

However, safety remains a concern for education professionals. Accidents, intentional and unintentional injury, bullying, and other risks and forms of violence create a need for safety awareness. It takes a comprehensive, coordinated effort by all education professionals to ensure safety policies and plans are effectively administered to keep our children and youth and the education professionals who work in our schools -- free from harm.

Section II

How do we describe risk?

There are many contexts in which the concept of risk may be explained. At a basic level, risk deals with exposure to an unwanted outcome and can be described as a combination of the likelihood of the outcome, as well as the severity of the loss that results. Risk can be described quantitatively or qualitatively. One of the difficulties in describing risk is identifying the cumulative hazards or adverse conditions that have the potential to produce unwanted outcomes. For children and youth, these can be physical, behavioral, environmental, or socioeconomic. Without a wealth of life experiences, some students may find it difficult to comprehend risk.

The following demonstrates how a teacher might approach the explanation of risks to a group of students. The risk associated with any behavior is a function of the interaction between severity and probability. If either the likelihood of the exposure or the severity of the outcome increases, then the risk also increases. If a student comprehends that a specific behavior (i.e., riding a bicycle without a helmet) is highly likely to result in a severe injury (i.e., concussion), he or she is typically less likely to engage in that behavior. Safety education one might say is a matter of helping children and youth understand the potential severity and probability associated with any behavior.

Are children and youth at risk for accidents or illnesses at school?

The short answer is yes.

Risk factors can be anything that is associated with a greater or lesser probability of a child or young person experiencing harm. Risk factors are not static and can be divided into several domains:

- individual (i.e., lack of knowledge or skill)
- the school (i.e., policy)
- peer group (i.e., positive, or negative attitudes towards safe behavior)
- family (i.e., parental rules)
- community (i.e., crime)

An understanding of risk factors can help those designing and delivering education to focus on wider aspects of injury prevention and personal safety.

Age or development factors of the student may affect the likelihood that some sort of exposure will lead to an accident or adverse health effects. One of those factors is the cognitive development of young students. Not only does emotional and intellectual growth vary by age through different life stages, but the rates at which individuals develop high-level thinking skills also vary. Typically, students will not develop a full capacity for critical thought until adolescence or adulthood some never fully develop the ability.

However, safe behavior is a habit, and it can be taught. According to Fetro, (Personal and Social Skills (ETR)) in any classroom there will be a range of skills that should be considered as it relates to safe decision-making and goal setting. The key is that skills can be enhanced through practice. Examples of the important skills to be developed include decision-making and goal-setting skills:

Decision-making

Decision-making skills allow students to think critically and actively solve problems that may arise in their lives. In the case of safety, students should have safe decision-making skills modeled consistently by educational professionals. Students should be encouraged to practice these skills in different contexts throughout their lives.

Goal-setting

Most students make safety-related decisions based on their perceptions of the immediate rather than long-term consequences of their decisions. Teachers can help students build goal-setting skills by utilizing strategies that help students focus on their future goals and how current decisions may impact those future goals.

Helping students "work through" a safety-related problem and determine the safest choice should be an ongoing aspect of every classroom. For example, helping a student understand how the decision to not wear a bicycle helmet might result in a head injury that might affect his or her future may help the student choose to wear a helmet.

Teaching and learning strategies to address these needs should reflect the age and developmental stage of the learner, take account of social and cultural needs, and the effects of gender on safety-related behavior and learning. Strategies to assess learning needs can involve open-ended forms of questioning, whether through informal discussion or written reflection. They may also include more structured formats, such as surveys, focus group discussions, or interviews. These age- and developmentally appropriate activities can help students begin the lifelong process of living a safe life.

Along with critical thinking, is the concept of "Zero expectancy". Expectancy is the belief that a particular action will lead to a specific outcome. "Zero expectancy" then, is the lack of belief that doing something will result in a negative consequence. As an example, a newly licensed, teenage driver has not had the necessary life experiences behind the wheel to fully comprehend all the risks of driving a car. As a result, there is little to no expectation of an accident or other unwanted outcome on the part of the driver in high-risk driving situations. Driving is a good example for teenagers. For younger students that lack of experience increases the likelihood of an accident or unhealthy behavior. Educators can help students recognize the risks associated with their actions by consistently focusing on the behavioral expectations of students. For example, perhaps a teacher asks students to explain the potential risks associated with a playground activity. Attention to such risks can help students develop a more realistic and functional set of expectations regarding potential risky behaviors.

Another potential exposure for children and youth at school is a situation when there are physical imbalances between the abilities of the student and the design of the environment. As with cognitive development, children and youth develop at different rates physically throughout their school-aged years. Contemporary research studies have focused on ergonomic-related issues such as seating and vision when using computers, as well as the demand on student-athletes during extracurricular sporting events and training. Playgrounds have always posed a risk for injury to young children at school. On the opposite end of the physical spectrum, much has been made recently about the lack of physical activity and poor health of many children and youth today. It is important that children and youth are properly educated about the benefits of healthy behavior and safe physical activity.

Section III

Safe Environments, Safe Schools

The types and number of hazardous conditions at any given school are too great to describe in a venue of this type. Examples of these include air quality, playground and facility safety, halls and floor safety, laboratory safety, food safety, and others.

Here are some facts regarding three potential school-based environmental issues or problems -

Air Quality

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/>), indoor air quality is important for health and legal reasons. Indoor air pollutants can cause discomfort and reduce school attendance and productivity. Moreover, they can cause or contribute to short- and long-term health problems.

It is vital that education professionals be aware of the impact air quality issues have on the health and academic achievement of students. There are many local, state, and federal resources available via agency websites.

Playground Safety

According to the National Safety Council (NSC) (http://www.nsc.org/resources/factsheets/hl/playground_safety.aspx), each year more than 200,000 children are injured on playgrounds. Unfortunately, some children die as a result of these injuries. Education professionals should familiarize themselves with guidelines for safe playgrounds and work with communities to ensure access to safe playgrounds for all children. Remember that most playground injuries can be prevented.

Food Safety

The CDC-DASH reports that each day, more than 27 million children get their lunch through the National School Lunch Program. Food is prepared in schools by food service staff and is brought into the school environment from vendors and the homes of students and staff. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is needed to ensure food safety in schools.

Food-borne illness usually arises from improper handling, preparation, or food storage. Good hygiene and sanitation practices before, during, and after food preparation can reduce the chances of contracting an illness. There is a consensus in the public health community that regular handwashing is one of the most effective defenses against the spread of foodborne illness.

According to the Partnership for Food Safety Education (<http://www.fightbac.org/>), each year millions of illnesses in this country can be traced to food-borne sources. Often these illnesses are especially dangerous for children and anyone with a compromised immune system. It is important that education professionals be aware of food safety issues.

The best way to prevent foodborne illnesses is to make sure everyone who prepares, serves, or eats food in the school environment takes steps to keep it safe. And that means everyone, from parents who send in snacks prepared at home, to cafeteria workers who serve lunch or breakfast, to teachers who plan celebrations with food, to the students who must wash their hands.

Section IV

Two hazards that have contemporary significance are disasters and bullying.

Disasters both natural and human-made - require a lot of planning and attention to detail to respond safely and swiftly.

Ways you can prepare and educate your students:

Emergency Preparedness - Large-scale disasters - human-made or natural - are typically low-probability events, and teachers don't want unnecessary fear to interfere with the educational pursuits of students.

The biggest key to preparing education professionals and students for either a natural (i.e., tornado, earthquake, flood, fire) or human-made (i.e., shooter or bomb threat) disaster is communication. The ability to maintain effective lines of communication can be essential to preventing, mitigating, and dealing with disasters. An effective communication plan can inform relevant school professionals of potential danger. Once the danger has been identified and communicated, the response plan should automatically be implemented.

Every school district should have response plans for dealing with disaster situations.

Everyone in the school should learn the plans and procedures. An actual disaster situation is neither the time nor the place for people to be "guessing" what to do. If everyone associated with the school disaster plan knows the plan and procedures . . . the response to the disaster will go more smoothly!

The disaster response plan should be practiced with students regularly. Emergency preparedness professionals suggest that response exercises or drills be "scenario-based". That means that they are not merely walk-through drills - but they are based on a specific role-play scenario. This helps education professionals and students think about how to respond during an emergency. The ability to analyze the scenario and apply procedures appropriately will be useful during an actual emergency.

It's important that education professionals make students aware of possible disaster scenarios, but it's also important that the risk of such situations be explained.

If a school or district does not have a response plan in place for school buildings, it should develop one as soon as possible. The risks of being unprepared are potentially catastrophic. Planning provides schools and communities with the means to adequately respond in the event a disaster occurs in your area. Planning ensures that:

- Evacuation routes are known and practiced;
- Communication channels work
- The needs of all students are considered
- Food, water, medical and other supplies are available
- Responses are swift and sure

In this way, when the time comes the school and community will be prepared to respond decisively to protect the well-being of students, under the directions of Federal, State, and Local officials.

The more prepared education professionals and students are for an emergency, the better. Before the school year begins, education professionals should assess facilities to determine if there are vulnerabilities that could be exploited during a disaster. This is especially true for human-made situations such as school shootings and terrorism.

Bullying

A second hazard of contemporary significance is bullying. Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying is a less obvious hazard but one that can result in significant psychological or physical damage among students.

There are several reasons why education professionals should be concerned about bullying among children and youth. These reasons range from the prevalence of the problem to the impact on children and youth who bully.

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) compiles data regarding school crime and safety. According to the NCES, many children and youth are involved in bullying, and most are extremely concerned about it. Research indicates:

- One in four students experience bullying on a frequent basis.
- Bullying can seriously affect the mental health, academic work, and physical health of children and youth who are targeted.
- Children and youth who are bullied are more likely than other children to be depressed, lonely, anxious; have low self-esteem, feel unwell, and think about suicide.
- Bullying is also bad for the student who bullies. Children and youth who bully are more likely than other children and youth to be engaged in other antisocial, violent, or troubling, unhealthy behavior.
- The long-term consequences of bullying can result in profound emotional, mental, social, and physical health issues and problems.

- Bullying can negatively affect children and youth who observe bullying going on around them even if they aren't targeted themselves. Observation of bullying behavior has been linked to negative social climates in schools. Children who are bystanders to bullying can feel fearful, guilty, and distracted from schoolwork. "Online bullying" is becoming a concern. Many children and youth experience "cyber-bullying" or bullying through social media platforms, electronic mail or texting.

Bullying is a form of victimization or abuse, and it is wrong. Children should be able to attend school or take part in activities without fear of being harassed, assaulted, belittled, or excluded.

Are adults aware of bullying?

Adults are often unaware of bullying problems. Most teachers believe they intervene "almost always" in bullying situations. Research, however, indicates a vast majority of students feel that education professionals too often ignore bullying. Responsible teachers are mindful of bullying and work to prevent bullying.

Can adults bully children and youth?

It is important to remember that not only do children and youth bully each other, but adults can bully children and youth, too. Many times, education professionals and other adults bully children and youth. Education professionals must not only be watchful for signs of bullying among the children and youth that they work with, but they should also be sensitive to possible bullying of children by adults, as well. For example, if a teacher "jokingly" refers to a student by a derogatory name it can be bullying. The student may not feel comfortable discussing the effects of the "name calling" with the teachers. The behavior may seem "cute" or "endearing" to the teacher but it can be painful and damaging to the student.

Possible Warning Signs of Bullying

- Student(s) with torn, damaged, or missing pieces of clothing, books, or other belongings
- Student(s) has unexplained cuts, bruises, and scratches
- Student(s) afraid of going to school, walking to and from school, riding the school bus, or taking part in organized activities with peers (i.e., sports, clubs)
- Student has lost interest in schoolwork or suddenly begins to do poorly in schools
- Student complains frequently of headaches, stomach aches, or other physical ailments
- The student or parent reports he or she has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams

Schools interested in preventing bullying must recognize that bullying prevention is an ongoing task. Bullying in schools is not a problem that can be solved once and for all. Therefore, schools should maintain a constant readiness to counteract any tendencies toward bullying in the school environment.

Schools and individual teachers should develop a process for determining the incidence and types of bullying present. It is useful to consider the types of prevention programs that have been found to be effective. Work with your school administrator to discuss school programs and plans. Examples of anti-bullying prevention steps/programs:

1. Develop an assessment plan to determine what types of bullying are going on at the school and in the community (i.e., on school-campus or via internet). The assessment plan should obtain data about social and cultural environments, as well as growth and development factors that impact bullying behavior. The assessment plan should infer **knowledge, skill, and attitudinal/dispositional** needs related to bullying behavior and prevention.

2. Once needs are determined - the school and community work collaboratively to develop a "product" to meet needs. For example, schools might:
 - Develop a social marketing campaign aimed at altering student norms and perception regarding bullying.
 - Schedule a school-wide presentation to inform students about the mental and emotional effects of bullying
 - Provide in-service training program for teachers and staff regarding signs and symptoms of bullying and prevention strategies
 - Involve community organizations in the process of planning for bullying prevention
 - Develop materials, to post around the school, focused on creating an environment opposed to bullying
 - Finding out what works (or doesn't work) and why it works (or why it doesn't) is essential. Ongoing evaluation is critical to successful bullying prevention efforts.

Section V

The Need for Safe Routes to School

Who is at risk for vehicle-related accidents?

The issue of vehicle safety is a wide-ranging problem for students and teachers that has the potential for serious consequences. Vehicle crashes in the United States have been the leading or near leading cause of death and injury among children and youth for decades. While these crashes are not limited to transport to and from school or school-related activities, they are certainly included.

Vehicle-related crashes come in many forms, including vehicle to vehicle, vehicle to person, and vehicle to bicycle (or other forms of manual transportation). At very young ages children are more at risk as passengers in their parent's vehicles or on school busses. For youth, especially those over the age of sixteen, automobile crashes have long been the leading cause of death. While these types of crashes and injuries will never completely be eliminated, there are safety measures that can be taken to reduce the frequency and impact.

Ways you can protect and educate your students:

Child/Small students -

Children under the age of 12 or weighing less than 85 lbs should always ride in the backseat of a vehicle. Their risk of injury and death is also significantly reduced if they are properly belted into the seat. For very small children, this means riding in a car seat. It may be necessary for small children who no longer ride in a car seat to use a booster seat so that the shoulder strap of the seatbelt crosses the shoulder and not the neck. Parents should also avoid placing small children in front of airbags in the vehicle, especially passenger side airbags.

Youth drivers -

According to the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) the risk for motor vehicle-related accidents is highest among teenage drivers, aged 16-19. Youth, especially males, are more likely to drive aggressively (i.e., high speed, shorter headway distance between vehicles) than drivers in other age groups. Combine that behavior with a lack of experience in driving among newly licensed drivers, and the likelihood of a crash (risk) increases. It is important to educate students on some of the risky behaviors associated with youth drivers. The CDC-NCIPC reports that:

- Youth who are driving with youth passengers in the car are more likely to have an accident.
- Youth have the lowest rate of seatbelt use among all driver age groups.
- A large percentage of crashes among youth drivers occur on weekends and involve alcohol.

- Education and training are two of the best ways to reduce vehicle-related accidents and injuries.
- Many states are pushing for graduated driver licensing programs or higher age restrictions for licensing.
- Parents/guardians should be encouraged to take an active role in their students' driving experience and access to vehicles.

Safe routes to school

Whether in an urban setting or a rural setting, many children and youth walk or ride their bicycles to school. Education professionals should encourage students who walk or ride to school to seek out safe routes. Safe routes include access to sidewalks and properly marked street crossings. Students should always let someone know when and where they will be walking and should make themselves constantly aware of their surroundings. Awareness of their surroundings is also important for students who are waiting for bus transportation to and from school.

Bike riding is a fun and healthy activity, but accidents happen. According to CDC - NCIPC, every year, about 300,000 kids go to the emergency department because of bike injuries. Some of these injuries are so serious that children die, usually from head injuries.

A bicycle is actually a non-motorized vehicle and just like driving a motorized vehicle, there are responsibilities that go along with it to ensure personal safety as well as the safety of others. That's why it is so important to teach students the basic principles of bicycle safety.

According to the National Highway Safety Traffic Administration, wearing a bicycle helmet reduces the risk of brain injury and head injury by as much as 85 to 88 percent in the event of a crash. However, estimates on helmet usage suggest that only 25 percent of children age 5 to 14 wear a helmet when riding a bike; for teen riders, the percentage is alarmingly low (nearly one percent). Children and adolescents must be taught the importance of wearing a helmet every time they ride a bike.

One of the first steps in teaching children about bicycle safety is to be a role model. To better ensure that children understand bicycle safety and engage in lifelong bicycle safety behaviors, adults need to demonstrate the desired behaviors when cycling including wearing a helmet and following the rules of the road.

There are many reputable sources of information on bicycle safety for children and youth. A web search using any "search engine" will produce valuable resources for download and use.

Section VI

Safety in the Home

Parents and guardians have the primary role in home safety. Teachers, however, can play a vital role in supporting parents in the education of children and youth regarding safety in the home.

According to the Home Safety Council (nsc.org/home-safety/safety-topics), nearly 20,000 deaths and 21 million medical visits occur on average each year as a result of home-related injuries. The leading causes of these injuries include falls, poisonings, fires and burns, choking, and drowning.

An accident or injury can occur in any part of your home. Some safety hazards are obvious - such as a toy truck left lying at the top of the stairs. Others are not so easily identified - such as a stairway railing that has become loose. The safety habits that teachers help students develop in school are likely to carry-over to the home.

Major safety issues in the home include:

Falls

According to The State of Home Safety in America conducted by the Home Safety Council, falls are by far the leading cause of unintentional home injury death. Falls account for an average of 5.1 million injuries and nearly 6,000 deaths each year. The majority of fall deaths occur among people age 65 and older and fall death rates are higher for males. In an effort to reduce injuries among people of all ages, the Home Safety Council encourages families to identify and correct potential falling hazards in and around the home.

Poisoning

Home Safety Council research shows that poisoning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury related death in the home. According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) more than 92 percent of the 2.4 million poison exposures reported each year studied occurred in the home. Yet, the Home Safety Council found that most families are not taking the appropriate precautions to reduce the risk of poison exposure.

Poison prevention is for everyone, not just children. Teacher encouragement to be aware of poisoning can help individuals and families keep their homes safer from poisonous and toxic products, chemicals and gases, regardless of the ages of the occupants. Homes with young children need to take extra precautions.

Fires

According to the Home Safety Council, fires and burns are the third leading cause of unintentional home injury and related deaths. Fire safety and survival begin with everyone in your household being prepared.

Fire safety experts suggest children and youth be taught the following tips:

- Make sure everyone in your family knows and practices escape routes from every room in your home.
- Remember to escape first, know how to notify the fire department, and when to call for help.
- Never open doors that are hot to the touch.
- Teach your family to stop, drop to the ground, and roll if their clothes catch fire.
- Designate a meeting place outside. Try to make it a location away from your home, but not necessarily across the street.
- Teach your family to never re-enter a burning building.

Gun Safety at Home

According to healthychildren.org, 1/3 of U.S. homes with children have guns with an estimated 4/6 million kids living with unlocked and loaded guns.

Home gun safety experts suggest the following tips to ensure safety of guns at home:

- All guns at home should be unloaded and locked in a safe location.
- The location of locked guns should be inaccessible by children.
- All ammunition should be locked separately .
- Use a gun locking device that renders the firearm inoperable when not in use.
- Teach young children about safety guidelines concerning firearms/

Swimming Safety in home and recreational areas

Drowning and water-based injuries occur daily. It is important that educators and families are knowledgeable of water safety to protect children, adolescents, and adults. A focus on water competency should be taught that includes information about pools, bathrooms, lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water. Competencies should include the following:

- Water intellect, which includes:
 - Knowing and understanding your physical limitations around water
 - Never swimming/bathing alone
 - Understanding your surroundings such as the depth of water, currents, temperature, ice and possible external hazards (animals and vegetation)
- Swimming skills that include:
 - How to enter and exit water safely
 - how to get a breath when in the water
 - how to stay afloat
 - How to swim short distances
- How to help others who are in/around water that include:
 - Paying attention to others who are in and around water
 - Knowing the signs of drowning
 - Knowing CPR and first aid treatments
 - How to contact emergency crews
- Having protection around water that includes:
 - Barriers around water to prevent access
 - Use of life jackets or other flotation devices safely
 - Active Supervision to prevent drowning or injuries

To learn more about activities you can use in your classrooms, see the resource website sections and the Water Safety for trainings offered through the American Red Cross. You can also share the Water safety for parents & Caregivers courses.

Section VII

Safety in Connection with Vocational Work or Training

Educational professionals can help students develop safety knowledge and skills and develop a pattern of safe behavior that will help them enjoy longer and healthier lives. This is likely to continue into the work lives and make them safer and more productive employees.

However, two work-related issues apply directly to education professionals:

Classes that utilize equipment (i.e., family and consumer science, agriculture, auto repair)

When using equipment that can cause injury, it is important to teach students to take the time to understand how the equipment operates. Students should be taught to read the safety tips in the manual. Regardless of what piece of equipment a student is using, he or she must understand that it can hurt! Respect for equipment is a valuable lesson.

Simple, habitual attention to detail creates safe learning environments and teaches safe practice. The key to safety is awareness and control. This is especially true when dealing with powerful tools and equipment that can cause serious injury.

The followings are examples of lessons that should be taught to and modeled for students:

- Safety wear for your eyes, ears, and breathing are necessities in any workshop.
- Never wear jewelry that can get caught in a moving blade or bit.
- Baggy clothing and long sleeves can be sucked into a blade by the wind created by its movement and thus draw you suddenly into the moving blade.
- Balance of the tool, the work piece, and you while operating the tool is absolutely a must to be safe.
- Before you turn that tool on and proceed, go through a mental safety checklist each and every time. Assess the situation for all its possibilities and minimize your risk.
- If it takes a bit longer, so be it. A couple minutes devoted to a safe procedure has the payback of your continued safety and health.

- Have fun with tools but most importantly, be safe!

Work Programs

Many schools are offering students opportunities to gain practical work-related skills. These programs occur both on- and off-campus. Regardless of the site, the school has a role in ensuring the safety of students.

Schools should work through a variety of collaborative means with local businesses and community members to help develop a community climate that is supportive of safety. Local schools and businesses should work together to deal with transportation issues, off-campus site safety, safe working conditions and other safety-related concerns.

Awareness and concern expressed before a problem occurs is the first step in mitigating or preventing work-related injuries.

Section VIII

Recreation and Safety

What are the major recreational hazards at school?

Many children and youth participate in recreational activities. For some, this is limited to physical education classes or playing during a scheduled recess or playtime at school. Many students also participate in organized sports or recreational activities outside of regular school hours. Each of these activities has its own set of risks and hazards. However, some hazards are common to most or all of them. Children and youth between the ages of five and 14 account for nearly half of all sports-related injuries in the United States. Part of the reason for that is that children and youth are still developing mentally and physically while they are participating in recreational activities. Children are more likely to sustain injuries on the playground, while youth are more likely to sustain injuries during organized athletic activities.

Ways you can protect and educate your students:

Every education professional should be aware of the school's procedure for ensuring facility safety.

Playgrounds

Faulty equipment, improper surfaces, and careless behavior are just a few of the hazards of playgrounds. The biggest impact that can be made for children on playgrounds is to ensure that the equipment is as safe as possible and that children are playing on age-appropriate equipment. Assess the hazards on the school's playground. Things to look for include soft (deep) fill and surfaces, exposed edge and hardware, and exposed tree roots and rocks. It is important that children be supervised when using playground equipment. Hazard assessment and maintenance of playground equipment should be performed by school districts on a regular basis.

Sports-related activities

There are several key hazards associated with most sports. Coaches and teachers should make sure that whatever physical activity is being performed, all student-athletes should use appropriate protective equipment.

Contemporary research has focused a great deal of attention on head and neck injuries in sports. Many products have become commercially available for a wide range of sports to address this serious concern. Protective equipment is only functional if it fits the person wearing it.

Another hazard that has received a lot of attention in research circles is overexertion and heat stress-type injuries. Many high school athletic programs have increased the amount of off-season training. During the summer months, in particular, it is important that coaches be aware of the signs of heat-related injuries and overexertion. Obvious signs include fatigue and weakness, dizziness, heavy sweating, and possible nausea or vomiting. Heat exhaustion can be avoided even in hot temperatures by careful planning. Athletes need ample access to water and shaded/cool rest areas on hot days or during heavy physical exertions. This is especially true near the beginning of training as the student-athletes have not yet had an opportunity to acclimate to the conditions.

According to SAFE KIDS World Wide(<https://www.safekids.org/>):

- More than 46.5 million children participate in sports each year in the United States
- More than 3.5 million children ages 14 and under receive medical treatment for sports injuries each year.
- Injuries associated with participation in sports and recreational activities account for 21 percent of all traumatic brain injuries among children in the United States.
- Overuse injury, which occurs over time from repeated motion, is responsible for nearly half of all sports injuries to middle and high-school students. Immature bones, insufficient rest after an injury, and poor training or conditioning contribute to overuse injuries among children.
- Most organized sports-related injuries occur during practices rather than games. Despite this fact, a third of parents often do not take the same safety precautions during their child's practices as they would for a game.
- Children ages 5 to 14 account for nearly 40 percent of all sports-related injuries treated in hospital emergency departments. The rate and severity of sports-related injury increases with a child's age.

Work Programs

The key is that teachers and coaches develop and model safe habits. They must encourage children and youth to ALWAYS play in the safest manner possible.

Educate

The teacher plays a vital role in helping students learn to play in a safe manner. Teachers must be aware of safety issues and model appropriate behavior. By calling attention to safety issues and discussing possible resolutions, the teacher models the skills students must practice in their own lives. This habitual attention to safety can help develop the ways of thinking and attitudes that support a lifetime of safe play. For example, an elementary student learns that safety is an important consideration when participating in games and activities. The student is taught that being safe does not make the game or activity less fun. He or she learns planning skills and develops positive attitudes about safety. It is reasonable to assume that the student will grow into an adult that practices safety in his or her recreational activities.

Section IX

Internet safety

The Internet is a expansive resource, full of endless amounts of information and resources. However, some people have used the Internet to promote things we do not want children and youth to be exposed to. Some sites are full of pornographic materials, drug related items and illegal information used by predators and criminals to find and exploit victims.,

Should you avoid your students using the Internet? No, there are things educational professionals can do to protect students.

Adult involvement and supervision are key ingredients for keeping students safe in an online environment. Each education professional should become familiar with the school's "Acceptable Use Policy". Educators should help students understand responsible uses for the Internet and other technologies.

Social Media Platforms: What is it?

Schools need to help students understand the uses and misuse of social media platforms.

Social media platforms refer to websites and applications such as *Facebook, Twitter and Instagram* that allow the user to communicate with others in a digital environment. The FBI has identified these types of sites as lurking places for pedophiles and child abductors.

Safe Internet Tips for Students - Schools can teach students to use the Internet safely:

1. Students should be aware that people may not be who they say they are on the Internet. An adult could pretend to be a kid your age just to get to know you. Sometimes they can do this over a long period of time to develop your trust.
2. Students should not give out or send personal information such as address, phone number, where they go to school, or photographs to someone that they only know through the Internet unless they have their parent's or guardian's permission.
3. Students should not agree to meet people that they have met through the Internet until they check with their parents or guardian.
4. Students should not respond to any messages that ask for personal information, messages that are mean or messages that make them feel uncomfortable. They do not have to continue – sign off and surf off to somewhere else.
5. Students should talk to their parents about setting up some rules to ensure that their use of the internet will be rewarding, fun and safe.

Section X

Talking with children and youth about Tragedy

No matter how diligently schools and communities work to prevent accidents, other safety-related events, or other violent events (i.e., school shootings), tragedies will occur.

An effective response to a tragedy requires advanced planning. Effective advanced planning increases the likelihood that the trauma will be minimized and that students receive support, ensures that the psychological well-being of students, faculty, and staff will be restored as soon as possible, and teaches parents and members of the school community about the signs and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorders and how and when to refer people for appropriate treatment.

Educational professionals are uniquely suited and positioned to help children and youth deal with the aftermath of events such as school shootings, suicide, automobile crashes, or the death of student or teacher. Tragedy often provides "teachable moments" - teachers should be prepared to talk openly with students about fears and concerns that children and youth face as they cope with these occurrences.

In preparation for talking with children and youth about safety-related or other violent events in your area or elsewhere, consider the age-appropriate suggestions on the following pages.

- Talking with younger children in grades PK - 3 (A)
- Talking with children in grades 4 - 8 (B)
- Talking with youth in grades 9 - 12 (C)

A) Talking with younger children in grades PK - 3

It is best for education professionals to keep answers as general and as reassuring as possible. Asking questions to get a sense of how the children know about an event, or whether it has made him or her fearful is a good place to start.

Tell them that teachers and their school are doing their best to keep children safe and that school is one of the safest places for kids.

Don't be afraid to show sympathy and concern for those who were hurt. Help children with the names of feelings they may be experiencing -- sad, worried, angry, etc.

B) Talking with children in grades 4 - 8

It is best to start with questions to get a sense of how students feel about a situation. Give children the words they need to identify their emotions in response to the event.

Rumors abound whenever there is a safety-related or other violent event at a school or in a community. Education professionals need to help students distinguish between what is fact and what is, potentially, fiction. At the same time, teachers should help them consider how such problems could be prevented.

It is important to consider that media-intensive events such as school shootings are likely to create concern and fear among students. It is important to assure students that such events are low probability events and likely to happen in their school. Students may need to be reassured that they are safe. Teachers should talk with them about things that their school and community are doing to keep schools safe.

Educational professionals should tell students that if someone they know talks about violence or threatens violence to others, it is important to tell an adult they trust. Even at this age, students need to be encouraged to take the behavior of their peers seriously and report suggestions or threats of violence.

Teachers should encourage students to keep talking with education professionals or other trusted adults about their concerns. Talking with teens, listening to them, and respecting their opinions will help them feel comforted and reassured through difficult times.

The National Institute of Mental Health reports that many teens may be hurt or confused by events like teen suicide. Most teens deal with such pressures in a healthy manner. It is important to remember that most teenagers develop into healthy adults. Unfortunately, some teenagers develop serious emotional problems requiring professional help. Education professionals should become familiar with community mental health resources.

C) Talking with youth in grades 9 - 12

The best thing that we can do for our adolescent children is to talk with them honestly about the shootings and about violence in America and listen carefully to what they say back.

Teenagers like and need a lot of privacy, so they may not be willing to share many details of their personal lives. However, let them know you're available, and feel free to talk with them about your feelings concerning the shootings.

Stress that this is a life-or-death conversation. Despite their natural tendencies to protect each other and respect privacy, teenagers need to know when they should break their silence and confide in an adult about another kid's behavior. In doing so, they're actually helping troubled kids get the necessary assistance. Friends do tell.

It is best to start with questions to get a sense of how students feel about a situation.

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Section XI

Litigation

Society has become increasingly litigious. The legal threats to education professionals have increased dramatically.

In general, there are four different legal actions that can result from a single incident:

- A lawsuit by a student or parent;
- Dismissal case by a school district;
- A credentialing investigation; and,
- A criminal case.

The most important thing for educational professionals to remember is that most lawsuits can be prevented. It is much easier to prevent a problem from occurring than it is to "win" a lawsuit at trial.

One way to avoid legal action is by establishing a pattern of behavior that is consistently professional. For example, a teacher known to be habitually aware of safety issues will have a stronger case against claims of negligence in the case of a student injury.

Things an educational professional can do:

- a. Learn the basics of the law.
- b. Behave according to the basics of the law and professional ethics.
- c. Work with other educational professionals, students, and parents to ensure a safe school environment.
- d. Develop classroom rules that have a clear, educational purpose and are governed by common sense.
- e. Realize that teachers are legally obligated to inform students of risks.
- f. Recognize that younger students require more supervision than older students.

Section XII

How to prevent safety issues and problems?

As previously stated, safety is a habit. More accurately, safety is a habitual approach to dealing with risks. The following "path" will help educational professionals plan effectively to prevent and mitigate safety-related issues and problems.

First, education professionals must clearly understand the issue or problem.

Assess the issue or problem

Understanding a safety concern enables us to effectively characterize the issue or problem and respond with appropriate actions. In order to assess safety issues and problems, we need to know what previous issues and problems there were, and what resources are available to bring about change. By discussing safety with other educational professionals, students, and community members, awareness can be created of potential and existing perceived issues and problems. More formal safety assessments can and should be conducted. They do not, however, replace the ongoing, focused attention of educational professionals, students, and community members.

For example, several students at a local school have injured themselves slipping in hallways. An analysis of the problem indicates that most have slipped while entering one set of doors. It is discovered that students track moisture in the hallway. This creates a very slippery surface and the potential for injury.

Section XIII

Plan of Action

An action plan is a way to make sure the process or plan for dealing with a safety-related issue or problem is made concrete. It describes the strategies that will be used to deal with the issue or problem. An action plan consists of several action steps or changes to be conducted to remedy the issue or problem.

There is an old saying that suggests, "People don't plan to fail. Instead, they fail to plan." Because education professionals certainly don't want to fail with regard to safety issues and problems, it makes sense to take all the steps necessary to ensure success, including developing an action plan.

An action plan should include the following information:

What actions or changes will occur?

Using the example of several students at a local school who have injured themselves slipping on wet floors at an identified school entrance - education professionals determine that some type of non-slip surface is needed.

Who will carry out these actions or changes?

A school health advisory council is an excellent example of a structure that might assume responsibility for solving the problem. Regardless, someone or a group should be given assigned the task of solving the issue.

By when will the actions or changes take place, and for how long?

With most safety concerns, solving the issues sooner is better. However, a reasonable timeline can be developed. Once the danger (wet entrance) has been identified it is anticipated that reasonable efforts are made to prevent future accidents (block doorway access).

What resources (i.e., money, staff) are needed to carry out these changes?

The school health advisory council or another responsible party will need to develop an idea of how much solving the issue will cost. The solution might involve the purchase of rugs for the door and be a relatively cost-effective and safe option. However, more expensive, long-term options may also be possible if resources available.

The key is to develop a plan that can be easily communicated to all relevant parties and implemented. This process, while time consuming, can help prevent safety-related issues and problems from occurring. This eliminates the pain, frustration, and fear that can result from lack of awareness and poor planning.

In continuation of the aforementioned example related to slippery halls; it is time to plan a course of action. Educational professionals, students, and community members would need to develop a plan of action. Perhaps they decide the easiest, most cost-effective solution is to purchase mats or rugs to absorb water in the entrance. The plan would need to identify who will do what and when the actions are to be accomplished. It is also important to consider what resources are necessary.

Implement plan

Implementation refers to how well a proposed program or intervention is put into practice. Research indicates that implementation is often varied based on who is implementing, the setting, and can be, at times, seriously compromised. Thus, it is important that educational professionals be aware that the level of implementation influences plan outcomes.

It is useful to include a timeline as part of the planning process. The timeline can be useful in helping to ensure necessary tasks are accomplished in a timely efficient manner.

Successful implementation requires the following steps:

- Prepare to implement the plan: Continuing the previous example, this requires that you have a well-developed plan to eliminate the slippery floor that is perceived as having a likelihood of success.
- Coordinate with others who have shared responsibility for the safety-related issue or problem: Whatever person or group has responsibility for solving the wet floors will have to work with others. These collaborative efforts may include assessing needs, planning, facilitating action, etc.
- Implement the plan: The solution to the wet floor has been determined. It is now put into action. A timeline is a useful tool to ensure the implementation process is on schedule.
- Evaluate the solution and initial reactions, successes, and problems: Evaluation is the key to successful implementation. Once the new rugs or other remedy has been determined and placed, the responsible person or group will need to be certain it has resolved the safety issue. Have students stopped slipping on floors at the problematic entrance since the solution? Are there other potential problem sites for slippage around school?
- Monitor status of the solution: This is an on-going process. This requires an ongoing effort by responsible person or group to ensure that the solution continues to prevent or mitigate the problem.

Implementation of the plan to eliminate slippery halls will require focused attention. Educational professionals, students, and community members would need to be involved in aspects of the implementation plan.

Section XIV

The Increasing Need for First Aid and CPR/CCR Training

Who's at risk for a sudden cardiac event?

Though the incidence of sudden cardiac events is typically low in children and youth, risk factors for these events do exist in educational environments. Included among them is hereditary predisposition to heart disease, heart arrhythmias and birth defects, obesity, and severe physical stress, including intense exercise. However, with increasing drug use and the rising popularity of games such as "pass-out" and the choking game among children and youth, there is an increased need for first aid and CPR training among education professionals.

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) usually happens quickly and without much warning. Often, the first sign of an event is shallow breathing, light-headedness, or a racing heartbeat, followed by a sudden loss of consciousness. At the same time, the heart and breathing stop. If not treated quickly, sudden cardiac arrest will normally lead to death.

How is sudden cardiac arrest treated?

Sudden cardiac arrest requires immediate treatment from trained personnel. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is an emergency medical procedure, often performed by emergency personnel or bystanders who witness a collapse. During CPR, artificial blood circulation and respiration are maintained through deep compressions on the victim's chest and ventilation of the victim's lungs. Modern CPR methods include the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs). These devices can be used by untrained bystanders and are becoming increasingly available in schools and recreational centers. Contemporary research has shown that bystanders are more willing to participate in lifesaving activities if artificial respiration is not required during SCA events. The American Heart Association officially endorsed the method of hands-only CPR, or cardio cerebral resuscitation (CCR), in March 2008 for specific SCA events. Regardless of the method used, rapid response to SCA events is critical to victim survival rates.

It is important that teachers and coaches receive appropriate training in CPR or CCR methods. This may easily be obtained at the local Red Cross or community fire department.

Three ways to protect yourself and your students:

- Promote a healthy lifestyle that includes maintaining a healthy weight and a diet that is low in saturated fats and cholesterol.
- Educate yourself and your students on the risks associated with smoking.
- Promote a healthy lifestyle that includes appropriate levels of physical activity and exercise.

Section XV

The Danger of Blood borne Pathogens

Who's at risk for exposure to Blood borne Pathogens?

Bloodborne pathogens are organisms or viruses in human blood that can infect and cause disease. Other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) include bodily fluids that can also cause infection, such as saliva, vaginal secretions, semen, and any other bodily fluid that is contaminated with blood. Most frequently referenced among the many bloodborne pathogens are the Hepatitis B (HBV) and Human Immunodeficiency (HIV) viruses. Anyone, whether at school, home, or work, who may come into contact with blood or other bodily fluid, is at risk for exposing themselves to bloodborne pathogens.

Below are listed some of the tasks and procedures in schools where employees may encounter blood borne pathogens and OPIM:

- Emergency first aid - First responders, athletic coaches, school nurse, health occupations teachers, classroom teacher
- Maintenance and repair of toilet equipment - plumbers, custodians
- Assisting with hygiene and medical-related procedures - Special education teachers, teacher aides, early childhood teachers, bus drivers, athletic coaches, custodians
- Breaking up fights in which bleeding occurs - Designated school personnel

Bloodborne pathogens are transmitted when contaminated blood or body fluids enter the body of another person. At school, transmission is most likely to occur through:

- An accidental puncture by a sharp object, such as a needle, broken glass, or other "sharps" that are contaminated with the pathogen.
- Contact between broken or damaged skin and infected body fluids
- Contact between mucous membranes and infected body fluids.

Unbroken skin forms an impervious barrier against bloodborne pathogens. However, infected blood or body fluids can enter your system through cuts, open sores, abrasions, acne, or any sort of damaged or broken skin such as sunburn or blisters. Bloodborne pathogens can also be transmitted through the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, or mouth.

How do education professionals avoid infection?

The method of Universal Precaution was developed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This method assumes that ALL bodily fluids are contaminated and recommends the use of strict infection control precautions and personal protective equipment that does not allow blood or other bodily fluids to penetrate when handling blood or OPIM. Types of protective barriers that should be used when contact with blood or OPIM is anticipated include latex gloves, masks, and eye protection/face shields. If latex allergies are a concern, then hypoallergenic gloves or glove liners should be used. Mouthpieces or other one-way valve devices should be used to minimize exposure during emergency resuscitation of students or colleagues. When cleaning spilled blood or OPIM, use antimicrobial or virucidal disinfectant solutions, exercising care not to splash or splatter any potentially contaminated material. Bloodborne pathogens are typically not transmitted by touching an infected person, coughing, and sneezing, or using the same equipment, materials, toilets, water fountains, or showers as an infected person. Again, however, the method of universal precautions assumes contamination if there is ever a doubt.

Four simple ways to protect yourself and your students:

- Assume all blood or other potentially infectious material to be contaminated and avoid contact if at all possible.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after exposure. This means heavy washing on all hand surfaces with antibacterial soap for at least 30 seconds.
- Place all contaminated sharps, syringes, and material in designated biohazard bags or containers.
- Remove personal protective equipment and clothing at the exposure site once contaminated.

Verification

Congratulations you have successfully completed the Safety Education Licensure requirement. It is expected that you will use the information to help develop and model safe habits. Please complete the verification form found within the Graduate Licensure drop down menu, sign and return to have this requirement finalized.

<https://teachercenter.illinoisstate.edu/students/licensures/#graduate>

Remember that effective safety prevention efforts require strong coordination across a whole school. You are now prepared to assume a vital role as a member of your school team focused on safety.

Web Resources

Emergency Preparedness

- [Federal Emergency Management Association](#)
- [National School Safety Center](#)

Safe Routes to School

- [CDC/National Center for Injury Prevention and Control](#)
- [National Center for Safe Routes to School](#)
- [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#)
- [National Safety Council Injury Facts](#)

Recreation Safety

- [National School Safety Center](#)
- [National Safety Council Injury Facts](#)
- [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#)

CPR

- [American Red Cross, Health and Safety Services](#)
- [American Heart Association, CPR and Emergency Cardiovascular Care](#)

Bloodborne Pathogens

- [OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens](#)
- [CDC/NIOSH Bloodborne Pathogens](#)

Firearm Safety

- [CDC Fast Facts: Firearm Violence Prevention](#)
- [Tips for firearms safety in your home](#)
- [Guns in the Home: How to Keep Kids Safe - HealthyChildren.org](#)

Water Safety

- [Water Safety | American Red Cross](#)
- [Water Safety for Kids | Red Cross](#)
- [Water Safety-DCFS](#)
- [Water Safety | Illinois Early Learning Project](#)

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Division of Adolescent and School Health