

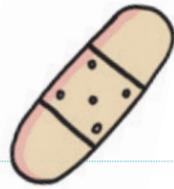
kids occupied, but studies suggest too much screen time can contribute to problems with attention and behavior," Zimmerman says. A good rule of thumb is to limit screen time to one hour per day.

In addition to creating a structured environment, keep an eye out for any developmental issues that may need a little extra attention during summer break. "Some of the most common reasons we see kids in the summer are related to

struggles with small-motor skills like handwriting or parents having trouble understanding their child when they speak," Mahowald says. "Large-motor concerns such as frequent tripping and falling or trouble riding a bike should also be mentioned to your child's doctor. Many of these challenges can be helped with therapy."

And finally, although it can sometimes feel like summer is all about the kids, it's important for parents to

take care of their mental health as well. Find other families who also have kids at home and see if you can exchange watching kids a few hours each week, so you can get some free time alone.



### Critter control: dealing with bites and stings



Nothing can ruin a picnic faster than a swarm of angry bees. "It's not possible to prevent our kids from being stung, but your best bet is to try keeping them out of any area where there might be bees," says **Konnie Harstad, LPN**, manager of Park Nicollet Allergy and Asthma. "Do not let them drink from open bottles or cans that have been sitting out."

If they do get stung, immediately move them away from the area with

bees, and try to remove the stinger with tweezers or scrape it out with a credit card. Wash the affected area and apply ice - don't rub the area as that will spread the pain. Over-the-counter antihistamines can help with itching or swelling, and may prevent further symptoms.

Most cases are mild and medical care is not necessary. However, if your child develops hives or any breathing problems call 911 immediately.

Another concern in the upper Midwest is Lyme disease, which is transmitted by the tiny deer tick. Transmission of Lyme disease usually takes more than 48 hours because the bacteria lives in the tick's intestines and takes time to make its way into the tick's saliva.

The best prevention is wearing clothes to cover the skin, including long pants, high socks and hats. Parents should examine their child's skin after being outdoors.

### Stand up to the sun



We all know sun exposure causes skin cancer, and aside from staying in the shade, sunscreen is our best tool to protect ourselves and our children. But if you think all sunscreen is equal, or wonder whether last year's tube is still effective, read on for advice from Park Nicollet dermatologist, **Larisa Speetzen, MD**.

#### Be choosy

First, check the label for broad-spectrum protection. This protects against UVA rays, which cause aging, sun spots and wrinkles (and can pass through window glass), and UVB rays, which cause you to burn. Make sure the sun protection factor (SPF) is 30 or greater and the formula is water resistant.



Consider using a sunscreen that contains zinc oxide or titanium dioxide if you have very sensitive skin or when you are using sunscreen on your children.

The new spray sunscreens seem convenient, but there are some concerns about the safety effects of inhaling the sunscreen, and it's difficult to tell how much is actually applied to the skin. If using a spray, make sure you rub the spray in to ensure an even coating.

#### Cover up

Don't like sunscreen? Think about sun-protective clothing. Local company Coolibar makes light-weight, breathable clothes that physically protect you

from the sun. Another option is Sun Guard, a laundry aid that adds sun protection to regular clothes in the wash.

For babies younger than 6 months old, avoid sunscreen and instead use clothing, hats, sunglasses and shade to protect your baby's delicate skin.

#### Check the expiration date

If you're still hanging onto tubes from seasons past, you might be ok. The FDA requires sunscreen to retain its original strength for three years. Check for an expiration date and if there's no date, use a permanent marker to write the date of purchase. If a sunscreen has a funny smell or texture, throw it out. ■

### Skateboarding and in-line skating

Personal protection should include helmet, wrist guards, knee pads and elbow pads. It can be hard to enforce on a hot summer day, but the helmet should always be non-negotiable.

### Swimming

Before hitting the pool or lake, always review water safety, including the importance of the "buddy system," knowing the depth of water, and never diving into water with poor visibility or unknown depth.

### Bikes

Review the "rules of the road" with your children to make sure they know what side of the road to ride on, and the importance of obeying traffic signs. Buy a bike that fits your child now, and don't push your child to ride a two-wheeled bike without training wheels until he or she is ready. Start using a bike helmet when they learn to ride so it becomes a habit at an early age.



### Fireworks

Fireworks are fun, but it's best to leave them to the pros. Even common fireworks such as sparklers can reach temperatures above 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit, easily causing severe and long-lasting burn injuries.

Safe  
= at =  
play

Park Nicollet pediatrician **Nathan Luscri, MD**, and **Tom Walsh, MD**, a Park Nicollet Orthopedics doctor, offer tips for keeping your kids safe through several common summer scenarios.



### ATVs

Children are involved in about 30 percent of all ATV-related deaths and emergency room-treated injuries. Children who are too young to have a driver's license should not be allowed to operate off-road vehicles.



### Trampolines

Thousands of injuries are caused each year by trampolines, and the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly discourages home use of trampolines. Providing supervision and proper spotting during trampoline use is important. It's best to allow only one person at a time on the trampoline. Trampolines are not recommended for children younger than 6 years old.



### Playground equipment

Especially with younger children, who are new to the equipment, review rules about not jumping off swings, standing on swings or jumping from high places, as well as sliding safety (one person at a time, no climbing up the slide).