

Safe Kids Columbus Offers Safety Tips for Amusement Park Rides

Thrill rides can be both exciting and safe if certain practices are followed

Columbus, GA – Whether it’s flying through the air or spinning in circles – there’s something about a summer day at an amusement park that draws people of all ages. Safe Kids Columbus believes that staying safe and having fun can and should go hand in hand.

“Parents need to use their own judgment. Posted age and height requirements are minimal guidelines,” says Christy Hubbard, Safe Kids Columbus coordinator. “Following the rules is also important. If a ride operator tells you to keep your hands and feet inside the car, hold the handrail or remain seated, there’s a good reason for doing that - it helps make the ride safer.”

Every year, an estimated 8,000 children suffer injuries from amusement park or carnival-type rides that require treatment in an emergency room. These injuries involve fixed rides, mobile rides, inflatables and other types of rides at amusement parks, festivals, traveling carnivals and other locations.

Portable carnival rides are subject to safety regulations enforced by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Amusement park rides at a fixed location are not subject to federal safety standards. Parents and caregivers need to decide whether their children are capable of sitting properly on a ride and following the operator’s instructions.

Parents can follow these tips to help keep amusement park and carnival rides safer for children of all ages:

- **Role-model proper safety behavior.** Children are more likely to follow safety rules when they see their parents doing so.
- **Supervise your child getting on and off a ride.** Make sure the child understands all announcements and posted rules. Also, parents should practice active supervision. Don’t allow older children to supervise younger children on rides.
- **Always use the safety equipment provided.** Safety belts, lap bars, chains, handrails and other safety features are there for a reason.
- **Be careful when getting off a moving ride.** Wait until the ride comes to a complete stop. Also, if a ride stops due to a mechanical problem or safety concern, stay seated and wait for instructions.
- **Don’t let children ride if they’re too tired or scared to comply with safety procedures.** On some rides, it’s important to stay upright and face forward. Don’t pressure kids to go on a ride they’re afraid of, as they’re more likely to sit incorrectly or even try to get off.
- **Note the limitations of safety devices.** Lap bars and chains are not physical restraints — their main function is to remind the occupant to stay seated. If a small child sits next to a large adult, a lap bar might not offer the child much protection.
- **Trust your instincts.** If a ride looks like it is poorly maintained or an operator seems to be inattentive or unfit, don’t let your children ride. As in any industry, while most operators pay close attention to safety, there are exceptions.

To find out about the law in your state, please visit: <http://www.saferparks.org/regulation/state>.

For more information about your local coalition activities, visit www.safekidscolumbusga.com. Safe Kids Columbus works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children 14 and under. Its members include public safety agencies, teachers, EMTs, county commissioners, health educators, nurses, civic groups, faith-based organizations, public health organizations, local government, and many others concerned about the well being of our children. Safe Kids Columbus is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing accidental injury. Safe Kids Columbus was founded in 1998 and is led by the Columbus Health Department.