

Sickness and Health Instructors' Guide

Central Idea

An important role of parents and caregivers is to keep their children safe and healthy. Being well informed helps them to do this.

Warm-up

Ask, "How do you care for yourself you're feeling under-the-weather? What do you do to comfort your child when they're sick? Most people get minor injuries or mild illnesses at some point in their lives. In this part of the course we will learn about how to keep our children as safe and as healthy as possible.

Which Comes First?

Give the worksheet **Which Comes First?** and have everyone complete it independently. Ideally, all will have recognized the correct answers as b, c, a, b and d. If not, discuss why these are most urgent. Explain that parents and caregivers must set priorities in order to keep their children safe and happy. The first priority is to deal with any situation that might become an emergency. However, all the other things they do for fun, interest, relaxation and enjoyment are also important. There are many things for a parent to juggle in a day's work.

Comforting a Hurt Child

Minor accidents are part of every child's life. Ask the group to discuss what they consider *minor* and what they consider *serious*. Also, talk about the fact that children should be given the freedom to have a good cry every now and then and should not be told that they are being 'a baby'. The handout

Using Sound Recorder

Comforting a Hurt Child gives some hints for handling minor injuries. Participants can record their voices using Sound Recorder if they like. Give them the instructions for **Using Sound Recorder**, or help them to set it up.

- Online Scavenger Hunt.** If there's a health unit or child centre near to you, pay a visit and gather a collection of brochures and pamphlets on child safety. If this is not possible, there are numerous websites where you can find printable material on child safety. Two such sites are www.safekidscanada.ca and www.kflapublichealth.ca from which you can print or order material on a huge variety of topics. Participants will get a quick overview of what information is available by doing the **Online Scavenger Hunt**. Pair people up if you think some will have difficulty navigating the website and scanning for information.
- Keeping Children Safe** The handout **Keeping Children Safe** gives a summary of the safety issues for different age groups. Participants can use it, together with the collected brochures, to list the precautions they have taken (or now plan to take) to create safe environments for their children. Encourage participants to share ideas so that those who are not quite as safety-conscious at this point will be spurred on by those who are.
- When Do You Call 911?** Ask if anyone has ever had to call 911. If they feel comfortable talking about it, ask them to describe what happened. If anyone in the group seems unsure of the purpose of the 911 system, say that it is used in an emergency situation where police, fire engine or ambulance is needed immediately. Give the quiz **When Do You Call 911?** and discuss answers as soon as everyone has had a chance to go through it. Give out the article **Use 911 Wisely** and either read it out loud or ask everyone to read it silently.
- Use 911 Wisely**
- In an Emergency** Give the handout **In an Emergency**. Pair participants up and ask them to role play three situations (police, fire and ambulance) in which one of them is the caller and the other is the 911 operator. (They could use Windows Sound Recorder.) They should be encouraged to give the details fully and clearly. Anyone who's up for it could perform their role plays for the whole group. Next, give out **Be Prepared**. You will also need a few current phone books for this activity. The object is to have all participants prepare poster of emergency phone numbers for use in their homes, by babysitters for example. Check that they include all the numbers you think are relevant to your area. The posters could be made by hand or on the computer.
- Be Prepared**

- CONSUMER SYMBOLS** Print copies of the information sheet **CONSUMER SYMBOLS**. If possible, bring in a few examples of household products that bear these symbols. Explain that these symbols are slightly different to the WHMIS symbols found on products in the workplace. Go over the handout, pointing out the meaning of the border shape (square, octagon and triangle) and the symbols inside the borders. (There is one other class of hazardous products that has no symbol—quick skin-bonding adhesives.) Remind the group that these products should be stored where small children cannot get their hands on them. Some of these products will cause immediate harm, such as burns or poisoning. Others may take effect over a longer period, causing health problems in the future. **All** these products should be handled with care. For practice in reading long and unusual words, use the worksheet **Hazardous Words**. Finally, challenge the group to hunt in their homes, in the supermarket, hardware store and drug store for products with these symbols. They should make a list of product names on **Hazardous Products** and bring it back to your next class. Present a prize to the person you think did the best job.
- Hazardous Words**
- Hazardous Products**
- Following Written Instructions** The handout **Following Written Instructions** helps participants to improve their comprehension by focusing attention on action words (verbs). Give a brief review of what verbs are if you think the group needs it and if it will help them better understand what they are to **do**. (They should underline the words: *ask, stand, put, wrap, make, place, place, squeeze*.) Some participants might be willing to give a demonstration of the Heimlich Manoeuvre afterwards.
- Fevers** Bring in a digital thermometer if possible. Does everyone have a thermometer in the home? If anyone with small children doesn't, suggest that they get one. Years ago we used mercury thermometers to measure body temperature. These are no longer recommended because they can break and release mercury, which is a poison. Nowadays, most families have a digital thermometer for home use. Explain that on a digital thermometer you read the numbers off a tiny screen, rather than on a scale. (Do a quick review of decimals if necessary.) The handout **Fevers** gives guidelines on what are considered mild fevers and high fevers. After reading it together, present this scenario and ask for suggestions:

- You're taking care of a 2-year-old child who has a bad cold. At 10 am he's playing happily, but you take his temperature and find it is 37.9°C. What should you do?
- By 3 pm he is very cranky and cries a lot. You take his temperature again and it is now 39°C. What should you do?

Flu or Just a Cold?

Flu or Just a Cold? gives guidelines on how to tell the difference between these two illnesses. Give the group a chance to look it over, then present these three scenarios and ask them to diagnose the illness.

- Kaleb has been sniffing for two days now. Today he's come home from school all stuffed up. His granny wants him to stay inside to play because she's worried he might be getting flu. But he's begging her to let him go out because he wants to play soccer with his friends. Do you think he's coming down with flu?
- Chelsea is just getting over a slight cold. She went to the park with her dad this afternoon and had a lively time. Tonight at supper she ate hardly any spaghetti, which is usually her favourite. Now she crying and holding her head and her dad notices that she feels very hot. Is her cold coming back and getting worse?
- Ali is clinging to his mother and saying he feels cold, even though it's a hot summer day. Now he's curled up on the sofa and has almost fallen asleep. His mother thinks it might be flu. What else could she do to help her decide if this is so?

Hot Water Burns

Bring in a candy or meat thermometer and show how to measure the hot water temperature in your building. (See the instructions in **Hot Water Burns**.) Participants will then feel more confident to do this at home. Stress that they should get a professional like a plumber or building maintenance person to adjust the hot water heater. Also, the temperature should not be turned below 49°C as this promotes the growth of bacteria in the heater.