

# PREVENTION COUNTS

NEW JERSEY COALITION FOR PREVENTION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

[www.CoalitionForPrevention.org](http://www.CoalitionForPrevention.org)

Dec 2011/Jan 2012

Jerisa Chiumbu-Maseko, Director  
Meghan Keffer, Program Assistant



985 Livingston Avenue  
North Brunswick, NJ 08902  
Phone: 732-246-2525  
Fax: 732-214-1834  
E-mail:  
[prevention@arcnj.org](mailto:prevention@arcnj.org)  
**Inside this issue:**

**I Am Someone to Get to Know:  
Meet Rob W.**  
Page 2

**Is Your Child Too Sick for  
School?**  
Page 3

**Shaken Baby Syndrome**  
Page 3

**Underage and Binge Drinking**  
Page 4

**Unlikely Sources of Lead  
Poisoning**  
Page 5

**Is Your Child Reaching the Right  
Developmental Milestones?**  
Page 5

**Understanding Your Family's  
Medical History**  
Page 6

**December/January Health  
Observances**  
Page 6

**Low Birth Weight Linked to  
Autism Among Other  
Complications**  
Page 7

**Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**  
Page 7

**Information Spotlight**  
Page 8

PREVENTION COUNTS is funded  
by the Office for Prevention of  
Developmental Disabilities.

## Stay Safe This Winter

Cold weather and winter mean...snow! And while your kids may also look forward to the holiday season, there are also dangers and precautions to look out for. Sledding, skiing, snowboarding, and ice skating are all fun and can help turn the cold dreary weather into an adventure, but be sure your kids are aware of some of the dangers such as falling or getting lost.

Be sure your children wear helmets when skiing and snowboarding, head trauma can occur from falls on icy slopes. Ski and snowboard equipment should also be checked and properly fitted by a professional before your kids start to use it.

Your kids should never sled, ski, snowboard or play in the snow alone. It is extremely easy to get separated, lost or injured on the slopes and often times accidents can occur without anyone else knowing. Be sure your kids are only out in the snow during the daylight hours and take frequent indoor breaks to prevent getting sick or hypothermia from the cold. When out in the snow, be sure your children are dressed in removable layers and wear a waterproof shell. Don't forget the sunscreen! The snow reflects sunlight and any exposed skin is just as likely to get burned as it is during the summer.

If you're traveling long distances in the icy winter weather you should carry a winter emergency kit in your car. Items such as: an ice scraper and a snow brush, a bag of sand or cat litter (for traction in snow), flares, a blanket, a flashlight and batteries, a first-aid kit, nonperishable snack foods, a candle and matches, a cup in case you need to melt snow for water, and a charged cell phone, can be a lifesaver if your car breaks down or you get stranded in the snow. You should also keep your house stocked with some emergency supplies such as a radio, extra blankets, nonperishable foods, flashlights and batteries, a generator, bottled water, and a first aid kit in case a blizzard also leaves you stuck at home without power.



## Do You Know What Toys To Buy This Holiday Season?

The holiday shopping season is under way but there are a few considerations to take into account before giving out presents to the little ones on your list:

- Make sure toys are age-appropriate. Some toys may pose a choking hazard or danger if children using the toy are too young to play with it safely.



- Be sure toys you are giving (or receiving) are not being recalled. You can check updated recall lists at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscub/prerel/category/toy.html>

- Check out the Top 10 "Worst" Toy List recommended by the World Against Toys Causing Harm (WATCH) group for 2011 at [http://toysafety.org/worstToyList\\_index.shtml](http://toysafety.org/worstToyList_index.shtml)

- Choose toys that will foster imagination, play, and creativity rather than giving high-tech gadgets such as iPads or video games.

## Someone to Get to Know: Meet Rob W.

**From the desk of the Director of the Coalition for Prevention, Jerisa Maseko:**

This past October, I attended the 2011 National Conference for The Arc in Denver, CO. There I participated in a workshop where the presenter spoke about being the first infant in the United States to be diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), Rob W. Rob mentioned the benefits of an early diagnosis. It armed him and his parents with the ability to avoid some pitfalls that many individuals born yearly, prenatally exposed to alcohol, frequently fall into while growing up without this knowledge. The National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS, <http://nofas.org>) sat down with Rob to talk about his life. Here is an excerpt of that interview...



**NOFAS: First question, how does FASD affect your life?**

**Rob W.:** It has affected my life in several ways. I explain it this way to my friends, my body is 37 years old, but my brain is 20 years old. My cognitive age is a lot younger than my biological age. People have a hard time telling that I have FAS; they don't believe I have FAS until I start stumbling when adding things up or remembering things. When I am given multiple tasks and verbal directions, it shows.

**NOFAS: What do you believe needs to be done to address FASD in the community and among experts in the field?**

**RW:** I would like to have more conferences. I want the experts to work with the school and legal systems to educate them about FAS. The school systems are the ones that need it the most. I would also like employers to be educated so that they can feel comfortable hiring people with a disability and understand that things will go wrong and not to just fire them because something goes wrong, but work with the person.

**NOFAS: Next question, what skills have you adapted to overcome the challenges of having FASD that other individuals living with FASD may benefit from?**

**RW:** I work with constant support from peers, but I have also built a group of support people, like NOFAS and people that know about FAS that can help me with getting resources that I need for school and work. If I want to live on my own, the ARC will help me pay my bills and will help me look for an apartment of my own. People need to know that there are services available. I suggest vocational rehabilitation. Classes on life skills would be also be helpful for people with FAS. There is a program called "Do 2 Learn" ([www.dotolearn.com](http://www.dotolearn.com)) that educates teachers how to design the classroom for kids with learning disabilities to help them function better.

**NOFAS: Next question, what are some of your personal interests?**



**RW:** I like computer games, crafts, gardening, and hanging out with friends. I also like speaking at conferences. I really like being a mentor to other people that have FAS and teaching them that I have FAS too and I have some of the same problems that they do. I am also a part of a Monarch Watch Program. I tag and release monarch butterflies every year before they fly South to California and Mexico. I tag the monarchs with an identification sticker that has my name and home address on it and a special computer code; so that when someone finds them they can see where the butterfly came from. I find the caterpillars in the plants in my garden and then I bring them in the house and raise them inside. I built a cage for them that I have in my room. They have a better success rate if I bring them in the house because there are no predators inside my house to get the caterpillars.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) is a **100% preventable developmental disability**. FASD is an umbrella term describing a range of effects that can occur in an individual who has been prenatally exposed to alcohol. The effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or developmental disabilities with lifelong implications. FASD can be prevented if a woman chooses **NOT** to drink alcohol while pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or not on birth control.

## Is Your Child Too Sick for School?



The cold and flu season is among us and your family may be at risk for getting sick in the winter months. Many families debate about when to stay home from work or keep their children home from school due to all the stress and pressure on

important activities. Going to school or work sick is not only bad for you and your child's health but it can also put your peers at risk for getting sick, especially if they are not up-to-date on vaccinations or have a weakened immune system. Hopefully your family is up-to-date on the flu shot and other important vaccinations, but look out for the following indications for when you should stay home from work and keep your child home from school or daycare:

- Has a fever above 100.4 degrees
- Is irritable, cries constantly, or seems very sleepy or difficult to awaken
- Is hard to keep awake and refuses to eat normally
- Has difficulty breathing or seems to be breathing more rapidly than usual
- Had diarrhea in the past twelve hours that would run out of a diaper, has a foul infected type odor, or would be so difficult to control that your child could not make it to the

toilet without soiling clothing or messing up the classroom

- Has vomited two or more times in the past 24 hours or once in the past eight hours
- Complains of constant stomach pains or walks stooped over and holding his/her stomach
- Has sores in the mouth or is drooling because it hurts to swallow
- Has a skin rash that includes pus bumps, water blisters, or oozing crusty areas (impetigo), or is associated with fever
- Has pinkness or redness in the whites of eyes with crusting or drainage of yellow or green pus
- If skin or whites of eyes become yellow or jaundiced
- Has untreated head lice, scabies, or strep throat
- Has an unexplained swollen joint, arm or leg and won't move the arm or stand on the leg
- Has a headache for more than twelve hours not relieved by Tylenol
- Has a croupy or wheezy cough or coughs up a lot of green or yellow phlegm
- Has a change in behavior or doesn't act "normal"

Use your best judgement when considering staying home from work or school. In addition, make sure your children wash their hands after using the bathroom and before eating, dress for the weather, eat healthy, take vitamins, and get enough sleep. Taking the proper precautions and doing what is in the best interest of your health and others can help make the sick season easier on everyone.

Source: <http://www.drhuggiebear.com/information/whentokeeptyoursickchild.htm>

## Shaken Baby Syndrome

Many new parents and caregivers are overwhelmed when dealing with the needs of an infant. Constant crying may be one of the most frustrating reactions a baby expresses to let us know he or she needs something. Most babies will cry frequently for the first few months of life. Some overwhelmed caregivers may resort to shaking a baby because they think it will help the baby stop crying or it may occur out of frustration, causing child abuse. When a baby is shaken, it can cause head trauma, which is one of the most common traumatic deaths for infants under the age of 1. Head trauma results in a traumatic brain injury which can lead to death, brain damage, intellectual disabilities, epilepsy, learning disabilities and physical damage.

Shaken baby syndrome is highly preventable and can be reduced through education and alternative ways to soothe a crying baby. One of the most important resources a new parent or other caregiver needs is an outlet for their frustration and emotions. Having a responsible person close by to watch the baby when times are overwhelming can allow the caregiver a few moments to relax and regain their composure. If the crying gets too overwhelming and no one else can take the baby, put the baby down in a safe place and walk away for a few minutes. It is extremely important to be able to manage your stress before a bad situation occurs. Also, having frequent breaks especially when a child is napping can allow the parent much needed rest. Other helpful tips for soothing a crying infant:

- Walk outside with the baby for fresh air, especially on a nice day
- Let him listen to a repetitive noise such as a clothes dryer or soft music
- Gently rock the baby in your arms with her against your shoulder
- Hum or sing gently
- Try giving the baby a pacifier
- Put the baby in a car seat and go for a car ride
- Get a snugly carrier that will cradle the baby close to your body



Source: <http://thechart.blogs.cnn.com/2011/10/24/education-cuts-shaken-baby-syndrome>

**PREVENTION COUNTS Dec/Jan 2012**

## Underage and Binge Drinking

### Drinking is prevalent

Underage drinking is prevalent throughout all of NJ and across the nation. Check out these scary facts:

Among NJ high school students in 2009:

- 72.5% of students reported having at least 1 drink of alcohol during their lifetime
- 21.1% reported having their first drink before the age of 13
- 24.2% of students reported having 5 or more drinks in a row (binge drinking)
- 21.6% of students reported drinking alcohol or using drugs prior to having sex
- 10% drove after drinking alcohol

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)



Among American college students (between the ages of 18 and 24) in 2010:

- 1,825 students died from alcohol-related unintentional injuries and 599,000 were injured
- 400,000 students had unprotected sex, while 100,000 students were too intoxicated to know if they consented to sex
- Over 150,000 students developed an alcohol-related health problem
- 25% of students reported academic consequences due to drinking such as: missed class, falling behind, doing poorly on exams and assignments, and receiving lower grades
- 3,360,000 students drove under the influence and 110,000 students were arrested for an alcohol-related violation such as public intoxication or driving under the influence
- 31% of college students met the criteria for alcohol abuse and 6% for a diagnosis of alcohol dependence

Source: A Snapshot of Annual High-Risk College Drinking Consequences, *College Drinking—Changing the Culture*, <http://www.collegedrinkingprevention.gov/statsummaries/snapshot.aspx>



### Drinking trends are scary

Many teenagers have found creative ways to hide their alcohol abuse, even if parents think they are aware of their teen's actions. Many flavored vodkas, wine coolers, alcohol-infused whipped cream, or jello shots make it tempting for teenagers to try alcohol and drink excessively, while making it taste good. Other alcoholic beverages include caffeine and are labeled as alcoholic energy drinks such as Four Loko. With a higher alcohol content these drinks cause a consumer to get drunk faster and has the added negative effects of caffeine, which keep a person awake and prevent them from passing out, far exceeding their drinking limit. Some teenagers also go to lengths to hide alcohol use by drinking vodka from water bottles or eating alcohol-infused gummy bears. At college, many students are eating less or

not eating altogether and instead binge on alcohol in an attempt to save money for alcohol consumption and get drunk faster, a trend known as "Drunkorexia". These drinking trends can be especially dangerous for young people as they allow individuals to get drunk faster and cause alcohol poisoning, since many do not know their body's alcohol limit.

### Drinking is dangerous and can lead to developmental disabilities

Drinking can lead to dangerous behaviors, much like what you see in the statistics for college students listed above. But drinking can also cause brain damage and memory impairments, directly and indirectly. Excessive alcohol consumption can damage brain tissue which is especially dangerous for teenagers and young adults, whose brains are still developing. According to National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, many alcoholics end up with a deficiency in thiamine that can develop into Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome that can cause mental confusion, paralysis of the nerves of the eyes, and difficulty with muscle coordination. Drinking can also lead to secondary dangers such as unintended pregnancy, sexual assault and rape, babies born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (mother drank alcohol while pregnant causing brain damage to the fetus, another developmental disability), illegal drug use, driving under the influence and car accidents, poor performance in school, violence, and other criminal behavior.

### Is there a solution?

One of the best ways to combat underage and binge drinking is for parent and guardians to stay involved with their children throughout their adolescent and young adult years.

- Encourage your adolescents and teenagers to get involved in sports and other after-school activities, to help cut down on the time they could be getting in trouble
- Talk to your teenagers and college-age youth about the dangers and consequences of alcohol use (such as involvement with the law, being dismissed from college, losing their driver's license, etc.) and make your viewpoints clear
- Give your teenager room to grow but set boundaries (curfew, get to know their friends)
- Be a good role model by avoiding risky alcohol behaviors
- Keep a safe-driving contract with your teenage driver to help enforce your rules and set limits
- Help your child choose a "dry" campus (alcohol-free) or a college that has a strict alcohol-use policy, and understand that policy



## Unlikely Sources of Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning is a common environmental cause of developmental delays and disabilities in many children. Children under 6 are most vulnerable to lead poisoning which can cause brain damage, behavior problems, anemia, liver and kidney damage, hearing loss, and other physical and mental problems. Common sources of lead poisoning include paint chips in older homes, old lead piping, soil, toys, jewelry, and painted or glazed pottery. Other sources of lead may be less common but also unexpected.

**Stained glass.** Many older churches or homes with antique stained glass windows is brimming with lead from soldering. During restoration or renovations, dust and debris can pose a danger. Remedy: Children and pregnant women should not be present until construction is completed and the area is thoroughly cleaned.

**Work clothes.** If someone in your family works in construction, metal work, or in a factory handling raw materials, lead may get carried home on dirty work clothes. Remedy: It's safer to remove contaminated clothing before entering the house.

**Tobacco smoke.** Lead is a common ingredient in tobacco smoke. Children exposed to secondhand smoke have been shown to have higher lead levels in their blood. Remedy: Along with other health risks associated with smoking, it is advisable to never smoke around children.

**Imported products.** Many foreign canned goods, toys, jewelry, cosmetics, and pottery are likely to contain higher levels of lead than domestic products. Foreign products are not regulated for lead levels, so you never know what may be in the items you're purchasing. Remedy: Weigh the options of what you're purchasing, an imported product may be cheaper, but also more dangerous.

**Alternative medicines.** Some alternative or herbal medicines are high sources of lead including: Azarcon, litargirio, baw-ba-san, ghasard, and daw tway. Remedy: These folk remedies from other countries aren't very common but are dangerous and should be avoided.

**Hobbies.** Hunting and fishing is also an unlikely but probable source of lead poisoning. Fishing sinkers and ammunition contain lead and could be poisonous if exposed fish and game are consumed. Remedy: Using unleaded fishing sinkers and not eating game hunted with lead-based ammunition is advisable.



## Is Your Child Reaching the Right Developmental Milestones?

In some cases, developmental disabilities may not be able to be detected until after a baby is born. Children rapidly grow during the first few years and will noticeably progress from a sleepy newborn infant into an inquisitive energetic child. During that time children reach certain milestones that show how their brains and bodies are growing and changing. Use this checklist to see how your child is progressing and at what age they should generally be reaching certain abilities. If your child shows a lack of progress or noticeable delay it may be time to talk to your doctor about why your child is not progressing as they should be. It may be a sign of a developmental disability.

### At 6 months, your child should be able to:

- Copy sounds
- Begin to sit without support
- Plays or interact with others
- Responds to name
- String vowels when babbling (“oh”, “eh”, “ah”)

### At 1 year:

- Uses simple gestures such as shaking head “no” or waving “bye, bye”
- Copies gestures
- Responds to simple requests
- Says “mama” or “dada”
- Pulls up to stand

### At 18 months:

- Able to play pretend

- Points to interesting objects
- Knows what simple objects are for (phone, spoon, brush, etc.)
- Able to say some single words
- Able to walk alone

### At 2 years:

- Can say 2 to 4 word sentences
- Gets excited to play with other children
- Follows simple instructions
- Points to objects that are named

### At 3 years:

- Copies adults and friends
- Carries on conversation in 2 to 3 sentences
- Play make-believe with dolls, objects, animals, etc.

- Show affection

### At 4 years:

- Can hop and stand on foot for 2 seconds
- Plays with other children rather than alone
- Tells stories
- Draws a person with 2 to 4 body parts

This checklist only provides a sample of the many milestones your children should demonstrate at each age. To view more, visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

Source: Track Your Child's Developmental Milestones, CDC, [http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/parents\\_pdfs/TrackChildsDevMilestonesEng.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/parents_pdfs/TrackChildsDevMilestonesEng.pdf)

# Understanding Your Family's Medical History

Did you know that many diseases, conditions, and other medical ailments are entirely linked to your genetic makeup? Certain cancers, diseases, and developmental disabilities are linked to genes inherited and passed along within your family. Heart diseases, diabetes, hemophilia, cystic fibrosis, muscular dystrophy, PKU, Marfan syndrome, Huntington's disease among others are conditions or diseases that arise as a result of inherited genes. Often people develop a condition later in their life that they may be more aware of if they understand their family's medical history. And couples may have children and are devastated to learn that they will grow up with a genetic-related disability that they could have been prepared for.

Documenting your family's medical history and genetic counseling can offer insight into future medical complications and prepare you for your future pregnancy or conditions that may arise later in your life. Genetic counseling allows couples to get a profile of any possible medical conditions that they may be at risk for passing along to their children and helps couples to make informed decisions for family planning. Unlike genetic counseling, documenting your family's medical history doesn't require the assistance of a professional. During this holiday season consider asking your members of your family during gatherings to discuss or document inheritable medical conditions to help protect other members and future generations:

Visit <http://www.hhs.gov/familyhistory> and use the online tool to document your family's medical history. Knowing family members' sex, ethnicity, age of onset of diseases/conditions, diet and exercise habits is important in determining what risk factors may have influenced their health. Ask questions such as the following:

1. What illnesses/health complications have you experienced? (Examples: stroke, high blood pressure, heart disease, cancer, etc.)
2. How old were you when you developed these illnesses?
3. How severe are/were your illnesses?
4. Have you or your partner had any difficulties with pregnancies, such as miscarriages?
5. What is our family ancestry--what country did we come from?
6. Has anyone in the family had learning or developmental disabilities?
7. What illnesses did our grandparents, great-grandparents, etc. have?
8. How old were they when they died and what caused their deaths?



Disclosing personal health information may be difficult or uncomfortable to some. Try explaining that this information is strictly for preventative and informed health reasons that can benefit current and future members of your family and will remain

## December/January Health Observances

There are many prevention-related health observances going on every month. Don't forget the following for this winter

**December 1-31st:** Safe Toys and Gifts Month

**Remember:** Just in time for the gift giving season be aware of the products you may be giving or receiving. Make sure the toys you give or your children receive are age-appropriate and not being recalled. You can check current recalls at <http://www.cpsc.gov/>

**December 4-10th:** National Handwashing Awareness Week

**Remember:** Teaching your children to properly wash their hands can help prevent the spread of flu and other illnesses. Handwashing can also help prevent your children from getting lead poisoning by washing off lead dust and debris, especially after playing outside and before eating. Get more info at <http://www.henrythehand.com/>

**January 1-31st:** National Birth Defects Awareness Month

**Remember:** Many types of birth defects can be prevented or greatly reduced with the proper precautions and good habits. Learn more at <http://www.nbdpn.org>

**January 2-8th:** National Folic Acid Awareness Week

**Remember:** Consuming the proper amount of Folic Acid before and during your pregnancy helps to reduce the chance that your baby will be born with Spina Bifida or other neural tube disorders. You can get folic acid from fortified cereals, whole grains, leafy greens and supplements. It is recommended that women consume at least 400mcg of folic acid each day. Learn more at <http://www.folicacidinfo.org/>



# Low Birth Weight May Be Linked to Autism And Other Complications

Many causes for autism are unknown or only suspected. However, a new study has found a link between low birth weight and a higher risk for developing Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) later in life. CNN.com reports, "Beginning in 1984, researchers followed 1,105 babies who weighed less than 4 pounds, 7 ounces at birth, and they found that 5% of them met the criteria for ASD by age 21 – a rate roughly five times higher than that in the general population of children." Early autism screening at a young age is becoming increasingly important to help children regain the most functioning early in their development.



Low birth weight is measured in infants that weigh less than 5lbs 8oz. at birth. Low birth weight is caused by premature birth or fetal growth restrictions and risk factors for low birth weight can be attributed to: birth defects, health problems in the mother, smoking, alcohol and drug use, infections, inadequate maternal weight gain, and socioeconomic factors. Low birth weight can cause other problems for the baby including cognitive, motor, hearing and vision disabilities, decreased immune system and susceptibility to infections, respiratory distress, bleeding in the brain, and death. Babies born with low birth weight often end up in a newborn intensive care unit

where they may spend a significant part of their early life.

It is extremely important to lower the risk of low birth weight by preventing certain habits and making good decisions during your pregnancy to help give your baby the best possible outcome and avoid future complications. If you are pregnant, be sure to visit your doctor for regular check-ups, stop smoking and drinking, take prenatal vitamins including folic acid, eat a healthy diet, and call a health care provider right away if you suspect problems during your pregnancy.

Sources: [http://www.marchofdimes.com/medicalresources\\_lowbirthweight.html](http://www.marchofdimes.com/medicalresources_lowbirthweight.html) & <http://www.cnn.com/2011/10/17/health/low-birth-weight-autism/index.html>

## Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

A silent and deadly danger during the winter is carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless and odorless gas that can cause sudden illness or death. Items that use combustion fuels such as automobiles, stoves, lanterns, gas ranges, and heating systems produce carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide binds to red blood cells preventing oxygen from adhering and being transported to the rest of your body, damaging body tissues and leading to serious injuries or death. You can protect yourself and your family from this danger by taking several simple precautions:



Source: [http://www.casafehomes.org/facts\\_about\\_co.html](http://www.casafehomes.org/facts_about_co.html)

- + Install a carbon monoxide detector on each level of your home and be sure one is placed near any bedrooms. Check the alarm and change the batteries twice a year.
- + Have your home heating system inspected every year to be sure it is functioning properly and is not producing any leaks.
- + If anyone in your household suddenly begins to feel ill including tired, nauseous, dizzy, or light-headed and you suspect CO poisoning; get everyone out of your home and seek prompt medical attention.
- + Never use your stove as a heating source.
- + Never grill, use a camp stove or other combustible items indoors.
- + If you have a fireplace be sure to check that the ventilation system is clear and cleaned before using.
- + Never run your automobile or other gas-powered equipment in a closed garage.

For more information on carbon monoxide poisoning prevention visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/co/>  
**PREVENTION COUNTS Dec/Jan 2012**

## Information Spotlight

### NJ Passes New Helmet Law

NJ has become the first state to pass a helmet law requiring children 18 and younger to wear helmets while skiing or snowboarding. The parents of any child found on the slopes without the proper head gear can be fined between \$25-\$100. The snow on ski slopes is often compacted and icy, creating a hard surface that can contribute to a concussion or head injury if a person falls. Additionally, other obstacles such as trees or other skiers/snowboarders can be a hazard if a person were to crash. Helmets can help reduce head injuries on the slopes by 33%. It is important to prevent head injuries in children especially since their brains are still developing through their mid-twenties and are vulnerable to life long disabilities if damage occurs.

Source: <http://kids.baristanet.com/2011/11/new-jerseys-1/>



### New Guidelines Developed to Prevent SIDS

The American Academy of Pediatrics has developed 3 new guidelines for preventing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). In addition to “back to sleep” (placing the infant on their back to sleep), other recommendations include:

1. Encouraging breastfeeding as protection against SIDS. Breastfeeding provides necessary and additional nutrients and antibodies to help protect an infants weak immune system.
2. Properly immunizing your infant and making sure they are up-to-date on shots. Many parents fear vaccinations can cause SIDS, but the opposite is true. Immunizations have been shown to reduce SIDS by 50%, in addition to other diseases.
3. Not using bumper pads in cribs, as it poses an additional hazard to cause suffocation.

Source: <http://www.medscape.org/viewarticle/752566?src=cmemp>



### Simple Toys May Be Better Than High Tech Ones?

It's no surprise that toys are becoming more complicated and interactive as technology gets better. But those flashy toys that play music, iPads, and baby genius video games and videos may not be the most stimulating experience for your young child. Research shows that babies and toddlers are better off with simple toys that foster imagination and play without doing the work for them. For example, a bland dolls is more effective in initiating creativity in play than an electronic toy with too many gadgets to stimulate the mind. Complicated toys do all the work a child's mind should be doing as the child develops. These toys won't necessarily make your child smarter or develop faster than other children their age. It is also recommended that children under 2 not watch any TV. So what will you be buying your kids this Christmas?

Source: <http://yourlife.usatoday.com/parenting-family/story/2011-12-11/Smartest-toys-for-kids-can-be-the-simplest/51816042/1>



## Join Our Network

Receive our e-newsletter and other prevention information by filling out the sign-up form at [www.CoalitionForPrevention.org](http://www.CoalitionForPrevention.org)

Follow us on Twitter @ThinkPrevention

Like us on Facebook at **NJ Coalition for Prevention of Developmental Disabilities**

Stay updated with our blog at <http://coalitionforprevention.wordpress.com>