

# Cold Weather Safety

*Prepared by ND Child Care Resource & Referral Health Consultant Team*

Here are some tips on how to keep children safe when going outside during cold weather.

## Tips on how to dress for the cold

- Dress children in warm layers of clothing.
- Keep children dry – wet clothing allows rapid cooling and frostbite.
- Cover children's heads with hats (as much as 50% of body heat can escape from your head).
- Keep children's ears covered with ear muffs, hats, or hoods on jackets.
- Scarves or hoods with strings are not recommended for children to wear because they have caused strangulation.
- Children's hands should always be covered with mittens or gloves.
- Always dress children in winter boots and warm socks.
- Require that parents provide extra clothing in case children get wet.

## Watch weather conditions

- Check weather forecasts to anticipate clothing needs throughout the day.
- Choose play areas with warm shelters near by, or areas where children are protected from the wind.

## Cold weather playground safety tips

- Instruct children to never put their tongues on cold metal.
- Don't let children eat snow – it may contain dirt or toxic substances.
- Snowballs can be dangerous – a hard packed snowball can cause a significant injury.
- Pay attention for areas of exposed skin – wrists, ankles, ears, etc.
- Check every child's skin temperature every 10-15 minutes to make sure it is warm.
- Always supervise children playing outside. The National Health & Safety Standards for Child Care state that infants, toddlers, preschoolers should be within sight and sound at all times. School-age should be at least within hearing at all times.
- Watch out for icy areas where children could fall.
- Watch out for areas where snow is either deep and soft or deep and hard – children could fall through or climb to heights they normally couldn't.
- Be cautious of forts or tunnels that children make; they could get buried in the snow if the fort/tunnels collapse.
- Be cautious of toys or equipment that have been exposed to cold weather. They tend to break easily – making safety hazards.
- Bulky winter clothing can affect children's movement; they may fall more easily.
- Winter clothing can also make children more slippery; they may go down hills or slides faster.

*Sources:  
Information extracted from SafeKids and FCPH*

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