

SECONDS COUNT, BE A SUPERHERO

Preventing the key causes of child death

Queensland
Family & Child
Commission



The Queensland Family and Child Commission collects and analyses information about every child death in Queensland. We do this to identify how we can keep our children safer and help make Queensland the safest place to bring up a child. Keeping our children safe is everyone's business. Here's what you need to know and what you can do to help.

DROWNING

14 drowning deaths of children 0-17 years each year
9 aged **1-4 years**

Children under 5 years were most likely to drown in **private pools, rural dams** and **bath tubs**.

Pool safety laws require that pools must have compliant fences and gates and a CPR sign nearby. Pools must be listed on the state pool safety register.

What can we do?

Maintain compliant pool fencing and be diligent about closing gates. Never prop them open.

Teach children to swim from a young age and learn resuscitation.

Be within arms reach of infants and young children when they are in or near water.

Always swim between the flags.

Teach children about dangers and 'no go' areas on rural properties. Provide a safe play area or barriers when hazards are nearby.

Be especially vigilant with young children when visiting or in the first months in a new property with pools and water hazards.

Use life jackets or personal flotation devices (PFDs) when children are on boats, kayaks or other water-craft.

Never walk away from infants in the bath or shower. Don't rely on siblings to supervise.

FIRE & PRODUCT SAFETY

11 fire and non-intentional injury deaths of children each year

35 child deaths in **house fires** in the 13 years from 2004 to 2016

2 child deaths and a number of serious injuries from children ingesting **button batteries** or inserting them into ears or noses

Young children are particularly vulnerable to choking and strangulation hazards, falls and accidental poisoning.

Smoke alarm laws require that all dwellings have smoke alarms and since 2017, require interconnected alarms in all bedrooms and living areas.

What can we do?

Replace smoke alarms every 10 years. Hard-wired photoelectric alarms are recommended in all bedrooms and living areas.

Teach children fire safety and practice escape plans in the home.

Keep household cleaners and poisons secure.

Check furniture will not tip if climbed on and put cords (for window blinds etc.) out of reach.

Button batteries are toxic when swallowed. Store button batteries out of reach of children and check that products have secure child-proof battery compartments.

Call the Poisons Hotline if you think a button battery might have been swallowed.

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TRANSPORT

19 transport deaths of children each year

8 aged **15-17 years**

5 aged **5-14 years**

6 under **5 years**

Death of young people aged 5-17 years were mostly in motor vehicles as passengers or drivers. Young children are vulnerable in driveways from low-speed runovers.

Learner driver laws are designed to keep our young people safe. 100 hours of supervised driving experience helps to prepare P-platers for driving unsupervised. In the past, P-plater accidents often involved a number of young passengers. That's why restrictions now apply to the number of people P-platers can have in their car.

What can we do?

Always use an age-appropriate child restraint or seatbelt.

Don't drink and drive.

Don't drive through floodwaters.

Driveways, parking areas and roads are dangerous places for children. Teach them to look and listen for cars. Adults should be especially vigilant, particularly when reversing.

Don't let children under 16 years operate or ride as passengers on adult-sized quad bikes.

FATAL ASSAULT & NEGLECT

10 deaths of children as a result of fatal assault and neglect each year

8 of the 10 deaths each year are caused by a family member

Children **under 5 years** are at most risk

What can we do?

Look out for the safety and wellbeing of friends and family.

Don't accept violent, abusive or bullying behaviour in others.

Seek help if family violence is occurring or a parent is distressed or unstable.

If you are aware of a family in trouble, see what you can do to help or direct them to services.

Find support services in your community through www.oneplace.org.au

SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME (SIDS)

14 deaths from SIDS and undetermined causes each year.

Over 30 infants die suddenly and unexpectedly each year. Some sudden unexpected infant deaths are found to be caused by undiagnosed infant illnesses or sleep accidents.

Risk factors associated with SIDS and sudden deaths include co-sleeping, stomach or side sleeping position, soft surfaces or loose bedding, over-wrapping as well as infant factors (prematurity, history of respiratory illness) and parental factors (smoking, high risk lifestyles).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infants are at higher risk of sudden infant deaths.

What can we do?

Sleep baby on the back from birth, not on the tummy or side.

Sleep baby with the head and face uncovered.

Keep baby smoke free before birth and after.

Provide a safe sleeping environment, night and day.

Sleep baby in their own safe sleeping place in the same room as an adult carer for 6-12 months.

Breastfeed baby.

VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES

4 children die each year of notifiable conditions that are preventable or potentially preventable by vaccines

The most common diseases causing the deaths were invasive meningococcal disease, invasive pneumococcal disease and influenza (vaccines for selected strains only).

Immunisation remains the safest and most effective way of providing protection from infectious disease. Immunisation protects not only immunised children but also children too young or not able to be vaccinated for medical reasons.

What can we do?

Ensure children are fully immunised according to the National Immunisation Program Schedule www.immunise.health.gov.au

Free flu vaccines are available for high risk groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 6 months to 4 years and children with severe medical conditions.

SUICIDE

22 suicide deaths of young people each year

17 deaths of children aged **15-17 years**

5 deaths of children aged **10-14 years**

Higher rates of death for:

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children** compared to non-Indigenous children
- **males** compared to females
- young people **known to child protection**

Known suicide risk factors include previous suicidal or self harm behaviours, stressful life events, precipitating incidents and mental health issues.

What can we do?

Provide encouragement and guidance through the difficult teenage years and be alert to signs of distress or instability.

Get help for young people experiencing difficulty or threatening suicide as early as possible.

Seek online advice or support through
www.kidshelpline.com.au
www.headspace.org.au
www.bullyingnoway.gov.au

DATA FOR PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

The QFCC collects, analyses and publishes information about child deaths to help prevent future deaths and serious injuries. We work with researchers and other agencies to raise community awareness and develop prevention programs and policies, by identifying risk factors, trends and emerging safety hazards.

The QFCC can provide detailed child death data to researchers and organisations, at no cost – please email child_death_prevention@qfcc.qld.gov.au

Reports on child deaths and 13-year data tables can be found at www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/child-death-reports-and-data-o

