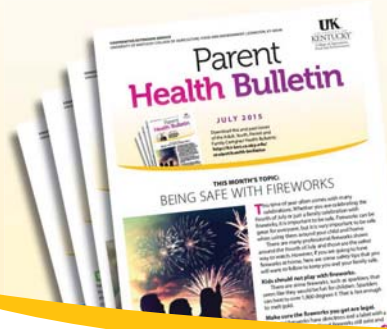


# Parent Health Bulletin



**MARCH 2016**

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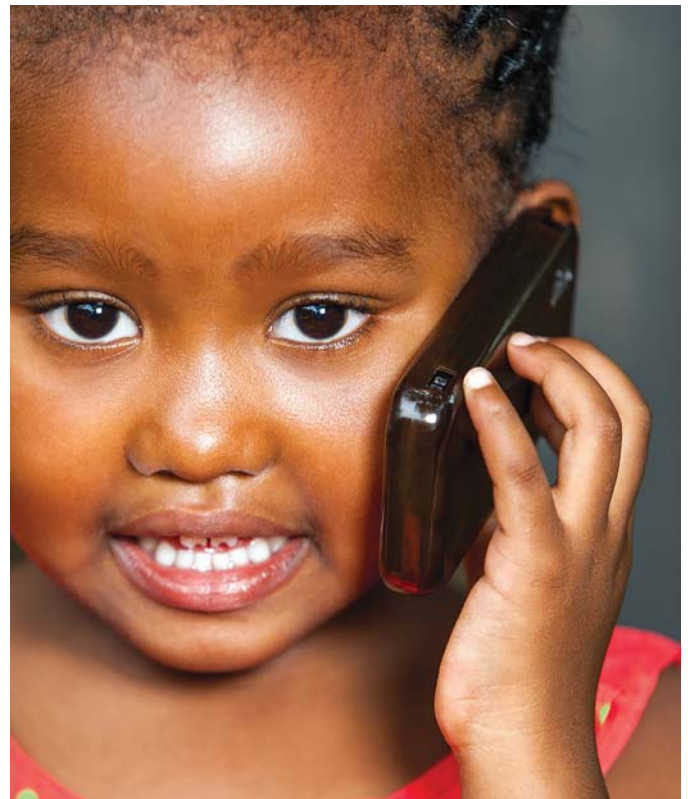
## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

# DOES YOUR CHILD KNOW HOW TO USE 911?

**W**e hope that we do not encounter emergencies in which we need the help of 911. But it is important to teach our children how to use the system, just in case. Teaching your child to use 911 could be one of the most important lessons he or she learns.

There was a time when people had to find the right phone number to call to reach the help they were looking for. There was a different number for the fire department, the police and the ambulance. Trying to find the right number in an emergency could be difficult. Today, no matter where you are in the United States, all you have to do is dial 911.

When a person calls a 911 operator (called a dispatcher), information from the caller is then directly received by the emergency help. This makes getting someone the help they need a much quicker process. The 911 number covers nearly everyone in the United States. If you are unsure, check your phone book or local officials in your area.



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# Teach your child your address — this can save time and help guide emergency workers to the right address.

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It is important to talk to your child about what a true emergency is. You may even want to role-play what to do for different types of emergencies, such as: what to do if there is a fire in the house; what to do if you see a stranger trying to break-in; or what to do if someone cannot breathe or talk.

If you have young children, now is also a good time to talk about the different types of emergency workers. It is important that your child be able to know who community emergency workers are and what they do.

## When should you call 911?

You want to make sure that your child recognizes a real emergency. You may try talking to your child about the following emergencies:

- There is a car accident.
- There is a crime, such as someone stealing something or hurting another person.
- There is someone who is having difficulty breathing or who turns blue.
- There is someone who is unconscious.
- The house is on fire.

Also, it is important to talk to your child about what is NOT an emergency. One should not call 911 because something is lost, because a friend dares your child or because your child wants to see what happens. Make sure your child never calls 911 as a joke. If your child calls when there is not a real emergency, the dispatcher has to talk to him or her and there could be other people waiting who need real assistance.

If there is an adult with your child, ask him or her to speak with an adult before calling 911. If there is no adult around and the child thinks it is an emergency, then he or she should go ahead and call.

## What happens when there is a call to 911?

Most dispatchers can trace where the call is coming from, but it is still important for your child to know some basic information. Make sure you talk to your child about what the dispatcher may



ask. Teach your child your address — this can save time for the dispatcher and make sure that time is not lost sending emergency workers to the wrong place. Although it is likely that you have taught your child not to share personal information with strangers, take care to talk about why it is OK to share information with the dispatcher. Other questions the dispatcher may ask include:

- Where are you calling from? (What is your address?)
- What is the emergency? (Why are you calling?)
- Who needs help?
- Is the person that needs help awake and breathing?

Make sure you also share with your child that it is OK if they are scared — emergencies can be scary — but that it is important that they stay calm and speak clearly to the dispatcher.

Make sure that your child knows to stay on the phone until the dispatcher says it is OK to hang up. You want to make sure that the dispatcher gets all of the information that he or she needs.

Although we hope that your family never needs to call 911, it is important that everyone, including your child, knows what to do in an emergency.

### SOURCES:

- Nemours Kidshealth. [http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid\\_safe/emergencies/911.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/emergencies/911.html)
- National Emergency Number Association. <https://www.nena.org>

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Parent  
Health Bulletin

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