

*The Home of Wisconsin's Family to Family Health Information and Education Network  
in Partnership with the Wisconsin Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Program*

## Injury Prevention Safety for Our Kids with Special Needs



We all want to keep our children safe and help them to be happy and healthy. Preventing injuries and harm takes planning and finding the right information and learning about the kinds of risks children might face at different ages is often not easy.

According to Patty Huang, MD, "Children with special health care needs are at greater risk for injuries, up to 65% higher, and children with special needs have more severe injuries and more often need medical attention for their injuries."<sup>1</sup>

Consider the following questions:

### ***Does your child have challenges with understanding or communicating with others?***

Children who have a disability or special health care need may have limited ability to learn about safety and danger. A child who has trouble understanding or remembering might not learn about safety and might not be able to ask questions when adults give them rules or warnings.

You may need to find different ways to teach your child about safety, such as:

- Showing them what to do
- Using pretend play to rehearse
- Practicing on a regular basis

Find different ways to let a child communicate that they are in danger. For example, teaching your child to use a whistle, bell, or alarm can alert others to danger. Tell adults who take care of your child about the ways to communicate with your child if there is any danger.

### ***Would your child know what to do?***

Some children might have problems distinguishing when situations are safe or dangerous. You can give children specific instructions on how to behave in certain situations that might become dangerous (for example, if they are being bullied or a stranger approaches them) and then practice with them.

### ***Do you have the right kind of equipment?***

Safety equipment is often developed for age and size, and less for ability. For example, a major cause of child death is motor vehicle crashes. Keeping your child safe in the car is important. When choosing the right car seat, you might need to consider whether your child has difficulties sitting up or sitting still in the seat, in addition to your child's age, height, and weight.

Talk to your child's health care providers about the best type of car seat or booster seat and the proper seat position for your child. You can also ask a certified child passenger safety technician who is trained in special needs. Go to **Safe Kids Wisconsin at [www.safekidswi.org](http://www.safekidswi.org)** or call **1-715-843-1890** to find resources and car seat check events in your area.

Other examples of special safety equipment include:

- Life jackets may need to be specially fitted for your child.
- Smoke alarms that signal with a light and vibration may be better in a home where there is a child who cannot hear.

***What Can You Do?*** Talk to your child's doctor about risks and safety concerns you have for your child. You may also want to talk to their teachers if there are safety risks during the school day.

**Family Voices of Wisconsin wishes you a safe and happy 2015!**

This article was excerpted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Safety and Children with Disabilities  
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandsafety/child-safety.html>

<sup>1</sup> Patty Huang, MD, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia



## WEB WATCH

For additional resources related to the articles in this newsletter, you can visit the following sites:

**National Office of Family Voices**  
[www.familyvoices.org](http://www.familyvoices.org)

**Family Voices of Wisconsin**  
<http://fvofwi.org>

**Health Insurance Marketplace**  
[www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov)

**HealthWatch WI**  
[www.healthwatchwisconsin.org/](http://www.healthwatchwisconsin.org/)

**Safe Kids Wisconsin**  
[www.safekidswi.org](http://www.safekidswi.org)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[www.cdc.gov/injury/](http://www.cdc.gov/injury/)

**Wisconsin Injury Prevention Program**  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/injury-prevention/](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/injury-prevention/)



## Did You Know? Now You Know! Marketplace Coverage - Know Your Options

Considering new insurance coverage for your family for 2015? Now is the time to carefully consider all your options for health care coverage, even if you are happy with your current plan.

If you purchased your health coverage through the Marketplace last year, it's time to renew your coverage! We strongly encourage you to look closely at all the plans available in the Marketplace to see if better coverage and lower cost plans are available. In many areas of the state, there are now more health plans to choose from. In addition, provider networks may change in 2015 so make sure your plan still covers your family's providers including specialists.

If your income or your family situation has changed (you moved, changed jobs, have a change in your family size) you may be eligible for higher tax credits or more premium assistance to make your out-of-pocket costs lower in 2015.

The rollout of Healthcare.gov last year was shaky, to say the least! This year, the site is working smoothly, with many new features. One of the improvements of the Marketplace website is that you can browse and compare plan costs without filling out an application or providing any personal information - go to [www.healthcare.gov/see-plans/](http://www.healthcare.gov/see-plans/)

Keep in mind that you can still shop through the Marketplace until **February 15th**. After that date, you will only be able to purchase or change plans if you have a "qualifying life event." By applying for coverage or updating your application through the Marketplace you can also find out if you or family members might be eligible for Medicaid/BadgerCare Plus. Remember, you can enroll in BadgerCare Plus at any time - it's not limited by an open enrollment period.

For help as you consider your options, go online to [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov), by phone at **1-800-318-2596**, or dial **2-1-1** to find local enrollment assistance.

### NEWS FROM FAMILY VOICES OF WISCONSIN

#### Leadership Institute - March 4th in Madison

Family Voices will be hosting our **Advocacy for Change - Family Leadership Institute** on **Wednesday, March 4th** at the Madison Concourse Hotel. This is a free advocacy and systems change training for families who have a child (or adult child) with special needs. Participants will learn from policy experts about the latest legislative and policy priorities, including **waiting lists for children's long term supports, BadgerCare/Medicaid, special education and mental health services**. Participants will then meet with their Representatives to educate them about issues important to families. To learn more, go to the Family Voices website at [fvofwi.org/training-and-events/advocacy-for-change/](http://fvofwi.org/training-and-events/advocacy-for-change/)

#### Family Listening Session - COME TO THE TABLE!

Join us on **Thursday, April 30th** for our annual family/provider listening session. The session will be held at the Stevens Point Holiday Inn from 5:00 - 6:30pm in conjunction with the **Circles of Life Conference**. Your experiences and your stories about challenges you face as you care for your child/youth with special needs will help guide our advocacy and policy efforts. Representatives from the Department of Health Services, the Survival Coalition, Board of People with Developmental Disabilities and other organizations will also be there to answer questions and hear your concerns and comments.

# Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs News

## Family Voices of Wisconsin Trainings

**"Did You Know? Now You Know!"** provides an overview of health insurance and how to best use your benefits, Medicaid and the impact of the Affordable Care Act, long term supports and services, and resources for children with disabilities and special health care needs from birth through young adulthood.

**What's After High School?** is a broad overview on transition to adult life for youth with disabilities and/or special health care needs. Topics include: envisioning a youth's future in the community; post-secondary education; long term supports; vocational resources; transitioning to adult health care; guardianship and other legal options; living in the community; and the fundamentals of self-determination.

Training sessions are being planned for 2015! Check our website for more details. Go to <http://fvofwi.org/training-and-events/training-dates-and-locations/>

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## ACA/Policy Update

### ***Congress Passes ABLE Act***

In December, Congress passed and the President signed into law the ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) Act. The ABLE Act will allow families to save for a loved one's long-term needs without jeopardizing an individual's eligibility for federal programs like Medicaid. These accounts (called ABLE Accounts) will be tax advantaged savings accounts. Interest earned would not be taxed. ABLE accounts can be used for future expenses related to things like transportation, housing, employment support, and assistive technology. The annual contribution to an ABLE account is \$14,000.

The Arc of the US noted that the ABLE Act is an important legislative victory for people with disabilities and their families. "We believe these accounts will serve as another tool families and individuals can use as they plan for the years ahead. We are thankful to the sponsors for their leadership on this bill and to the President for signing it into law."

To learn more, including "ABLE Accounts: 10 Things You Must Know" from the National Disability Institute go to [www.realeconomicimpact.org](http://www.realeconomicimpact.org)

### ***The Marketplace - Know Your Rights***

You have certain rights when you enroll in health coverage through the Marketplace. Some of these rights include:

- ◆ getting easy to understand information about what your plan covers, what prescription drugs are covered and what providers are in the network;
- ◆ getting coverage for emergency services; and
- ◆ having the right to appeal a health plan's decision to not pay a claim.

A new helpful fact sheet with more details on consumer's rights, including the process for appealing a denial, is available at [marketplace.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/know-your-rights.pdf](http://marketplace.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/know-your-rights.pdf)

Remember, many resources and links on the ACA and children with special needs is available on the Family Voices website - <http://fvofwi.org/public-policy/affordable-care-act/>



Children and Youth with  
Special Health Care Needs

## CYSHCN

### REGIONAL CENTERS

**Call with your  
questions!**

#### **Northeast Region**

Children's Hospital of  
Wisconsin - Fox Valley

1.877.568.5205

#### **Northern Region**

Marathon County Health  
Department

Wausau

1.866.640.4106

#### **Southeast Region**

Children's Hospital

Milwaukee

1.800.234.5437

#### **Southern Region**

Waisman Center

Madison

1.800.532.3321

#### **Western Region**

Chippewa County Dept of  
Public Health

Chippewa Falls

1.800.400.3678

#### **Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council**

(GLITC)

Lac du Flambeau

1.800.472.7207



## Family Voices of Wisconsin

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### About Family Voices of Wisconsin

Family Voices of Wisconsin (FVW) is a state affiliate organization of the national Family Voices organization and serves as Wisconsin's Family-to-Family Health Information Center. Additionally, FVW is recognized as the Family Leadership Hub for Wisconsin's Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) partnership.

Family Voices focuses its work on health care and community supports in three areas:

- Education and information development and dissemination, including trainings, fact sheets, and newsletters;
- Family leadership activities, including the annual Advocacy for Change institute; and
- Public policy and systems change activities.

#### Feedback Welcome

We want to make sure that this newsletter is an effective resource for you. If you have any comments, or wish to provide news and information for us to publish, please contact Lynn at **Lynn@fvofwi.org**. We look forward to hearing from you!

**LIKE US ON FACEBOOK AND JOIN THE FAMILY ACTION NETWORK LISTSERV**  
**(join-fan@lists.wisc.edu)**

**Would you prefer to have this newsletter emailed to you?**  
**Contact Lynn at Lynn@fvofwi.org**