

SAFETY SENSE

With School Out, Keep Kids Safe Around The Home

(NAPSA)—Summer vacation. You can already hear the bees buzzing, the lawnmowers humming and the squeals of children playing in the yard. And while for school children, it is a time of freedom and summer fun, it's the time for parents to be at their highest alert for potential dangers around the home. So before kicking off the summer, parents should heed some valuable advice from the experts.

"School's out and more kids are playing at home and in the neighborhood, often with less supervision," says Cindi Bookout, executive director of the Alliance for Consumer Education (ACE), a foundation dedicated to community health and well-being. "Parents need to keep potential poisons locked-up and out of reach, know what their children are playing with and talk to them about potential dangers. A safe summer is a good summer."

Inhalant abuse—the intentional inhalation of gases or vapors from common household products to get high—is one potential hazard parents often overlook. Used safely by millions everyday, there are more than 1,000 products that can be deadly or cause serious injury when intentionally abused.

Also known as "huffing" or "sniffing," one in five children abuse common household products before reaching the eighth grade. But according to recent research conducted by ACE, less than half of parents surveyed have discussed inhalant abuse with their six to 11-year-old children.

Alliance for Consumer Education offers valuable tips as children enjoy more time at home and at play this summer:

- Keep potential poisons locked up and out of reach of children.
- Use household products only according to the directions. Always supervise children using products.
- Talk to children about the serious dangers and consequences of abusing household products.
- Know the warning signs of inhalant abuse and the products that can be abused.
- Know what to do in case of an emergency.



Parents also are unable to identify specific warning signs of inhalant abuse, according to the research. Along with common substance abuse symptoms like erratic behavior, glassy eyes and slurred speech, parents should look out for material evidence such as used aerosol cans and butane lighters, gasoline or paint-soaked rags in a child's room, or sores around the mouth and nose.

If you suspect a child is under the influence of an inhalant, remain calm. Agitating the child may cause cardiac arrest. Call 9-1-1 immediately or the National Poison Control Centers at 1-800-222-1222.

For further information about warning signs and how to talk to your child about inhalant abuse, visit www.inhalant.org or call (202) 862-3902 for a free brochure.