

Train tracks deadly for kids, but many parents underestimate the danger

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(HealthDay)—Think the chances that your kid could be hit by a train are slim to none?

New research suggests you should think again.

Issued to coincide with "Rail Safety Week," the Sept. 23 report finds that, on average, a child dies of a train-related injury somewhere in the United States every five days. And for every death, another three children are injured.

The finding indicates that many parents may not realize the importance of addressing [railroad](#) safety, said Torine Creppy, president of Safe Kids Worldwide.

"In fact, fewer than half of parents we surveyed say they have talked with their children about it, and half of parents admit to taking risks around railroads," Creppy added.

"We want to help [parents](#) get the little-known, but lifesaving information they need to protect

themselves and their kids," she added in a Safe Kids news release.

The Safe Kids Worldwide report highlights two key reasons people get hit by trains: car collisions and trespassing.

The report warns that collisions occur when drivers aren't paying attention, ignore track safety barriers, or race to cross over the tracks before an oncoming train. The latter is a big mistake, Creppy and her colleagues noted, because even if a conductor spots a problem it's impossible to stop a hurtling train on a dime. It can take upwards of a mile of advanced warning to bring a moving train to a full stop.

Trespassing on foot alongside tracks is both illegal and dangerous, they added. For one, modern trains aren't as loud as one might expect. And they're also considerably wider than the track itself—at least three feet wider on either side—which means being near, but not on, a track is no guarantee of safety.

In concert with Union Pacific Railroad, Safe Kids Worldwide offers some [safety](#) tips:

- Only cross at designated track crossings.
- Never try to beat a train across the tracks.
- Always wait for trains to completely clear the crossing.
- Don't play, stroll or take photos anywhere near a train track.
- Avoid distractions, such as cellphones or music, when preparing to cross a railroad track.

More information: There's more on railroad track safety at [Safe Kids Worldwide](#).

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