

# Sledding Safety Tips for Kids

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by Dean Forbes and Lisa Rogers

Parents should be aware of the potential dangers of a favorite activity — sledding. Unless children take certain precautions when sledding in urban areas, they could be on a slippery path to serious injury or worse.

Physicians at Children's Hospital and Medical Center and the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center in Seattle suggest the following simple safety tips:

- ◆ Do not sled down city streets where there are parked cars and signs, hydrants or trees close to curbs, no matter whether the street is closed to auto traffic.
- ◆ Don't sled into busy intersections or streets where there is motor vehicle traffic. Instead, go sledding in open areas of city parks or golf courses.
- ◆ Never hitch a sled to the back of a car or other moving vehicle.
- ◆ Children under age 8 should be supervised by adults.

"We're not trying to tell people not to sled and not to have a good time, but the bottom line in safety is to sled in an area where there are no objects to run into," said Richard Shugerman, MD, an emergency room physician at Children's Hospital and Medical Center in Seattle.

Shugerman and Frederick Rivara, MD, pediatrician and director of the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center (HIRPC) in Seattle, conducted a study of children who were treated by Children's and Harborview Medical Center following a storm in February 1988. Their safety tips were derived from the study.

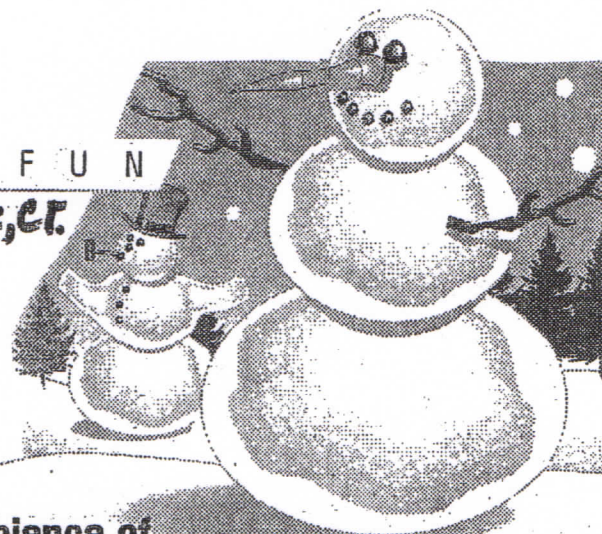
Rivara recommends that children wear bicycle helmets while sledding. "Most of the sledding injuries that were treated in the emergency rooms at Children's Hospital and Harborview Medical Center during February 1988 were head injuries. Research conducted by the Injury Prevention and Research Center demonstrates that bicycle helmets reduce the risk of serious head injury by 85 percent," said Rivara.

## W I N T E R F U N The Hour Normal K, C.F.

Building snowmen can be a lot of fun.

You can achieve the best results

when the snow is just right...



## The science of Snowman building

### Form a snowball...

32°F

Snow can be packed into snowballs

Best snow for a snowman

23°F

Icy, freezing snow; snowballs fall apart

14°F

### Roll it...

Under the right conditions, snow can be rolled off the ground like a carpet

27°F

Freezing snow at surface

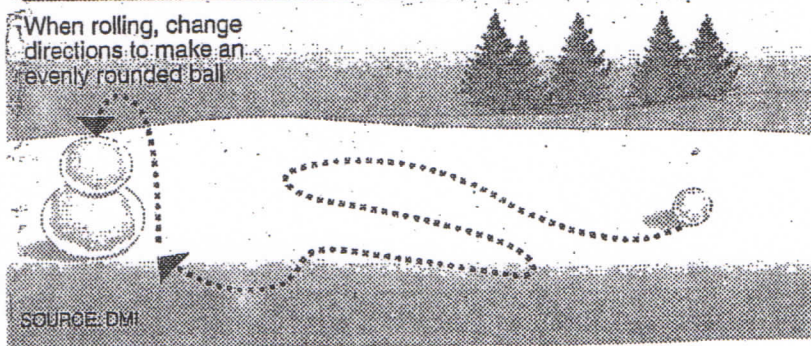
32°F

Melting snow near ground

Snow slips off the ground

### And roll it...

When rolling, change directions to make an evenly rounded ball



SOURCE: DMI



## Making a paper snowflake

1 Start with a square piece of paper. Fold in half on the diagonal.



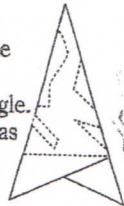
2 Fold in half again.



3 Fold in thirds, with one section folded behind and one in front.



4 Cut off the bottom to make a triangle. Cut designs as desired and open.



### Play snow

1 cup Ivory Snow (powdered)  
2 tablespoons water  
Electric mixer and mixing bowl

Use play snow to make wintry scenes.

### Snow candy

Caramel candies or ice-cream topping that hardens  
Ice cubes

Normally, this activity calls for real snow, but crushed ice serves just as well.

Crush ice cubes in a powerful blender or use a sno-cone machine to make shaved ice. Spread a layer of crushed ice in an 8-inch baking dish or other shallow pan.

Unwrap caramel candies and melt in a saucepan over low heat. Or place in a microwave-safe bowl for 30 seconds on high, stir and heat another 30 seconds. Continue for 20 second-intervals until caramels are all melted.

Use a spoon to pour the melted caramel into shapes in the ice. Or pour ice-cream topping in the same way. Let the shapes cool and harden, then lift and eat.

### Snowy books

Cecilia P. McGowan, manager of the children's department at Bellevue Regional Library, compiled this list of snow-related book recommendations.

### Fiction

"Cat and Mouse in the Snow," by Tomasz Bogacki. A curious little cat and mouse set out to look for the green meadow one morning because the world around

them looks very different. Age 3 and up.

"Snowballs," by Lois Ehlert. Some inventive children create a family out of snow, including their dog and cat. Age 2 and up.

"Snow Day," by Lynn Plourde. A child enjoys all kinds of activities inside and out on a snowy day. Age 3 and up.

"Stranger in the Woods: A Photographic Fantasy," by Carl R. Sams and Jean Stoick. Forest animals, awakened by the birds' warning that there is a stranger in the woods, set out to discover if there is danger and find, instead, a wonderful surprise. Age 3 and up.

"Snow Treasure," by Marie McSwigan. A fictionalized account of how a group of Norwegian children carried gold bullion to the sea on their sleds, thus helping their country move its gold reserves to the United States during the German occupation. Grade 4 and up.

### Nonfiction

"Snow is Falling," by Franklyn Mansfield Branley. Describes snow's physical qualities and how quantities of it can be fun as well as dangerous. Age 3 and up.

"Snowmen: Snow Creatures, Crafts and Other Winter Projects," by Peter Cole, Frankie Frankeny and Leslie Jonath. This collection of creatures, crafts, and other winter projects offers inspiration and easy-to-follow instructions for constructing fantastic winter wonderlands using food and other simple props found in every home. Age 5 and up.

"Snow: Causes and Effects," by Philip Steele. Explains where it snows and why and how snow affects the lives of humans and other animals. Age 8 and up.

"The Snow Walker," by Margaret K. Wetterer. The famous blizzard of 1888 was the worst ever to hit the Northeast. But to a 12-year-old Bronx boy, the storm was a call to action. On a pair of homemade snowshoes, he braved the elements to bring food and medicine to his neighbors. Age 6 and up.

"The Secret Language of Snow," Terry Tempest Williams and Ted Major. Examines over a dozen different types of snow and snowy conditions through the vocabulary of the Inuit people of Alaska. Age 8 and up.

### Snowflake song

(to the tune of "Mary Had A Little Lamb")

Snowflakes falling from the sky,  
from the sky, from the sky,

Snowflakes falling from the sky,  
to the earth below.

Watch them as they dance and  
whirl, dance and whirl, dance and  
whirl,

Watch them as they dance and  
whirl, soft white winter snow.

— from

[www.activityvillage.com](http://www.activityvillage.com)

### Sparkle snow

1/4 cup flour

1/4 cup salt

1/4 cup water

Construction paper

Plastic squeeze bottle or paintbrushes

Mix flour, salt and water together in a bowl and pour into a squeeze bottle. Squeeze the paint (or use paintbrushes) on black or dark-blue construction paper to make snowy scenes. Let it dry and the salt will make it sparkly. Keep flat once dry or the paint may crack and peel off.

### Snow facts

- Real snowflakes have six points. Paper snowflakes with more points should really be called "stars" rather than flakes.

- Every snowflake is made up of two to as many as 200 separate crystals. Snow crystals form around tiny bits of dirt carried up into the atmosphere by the wind. Falling snow crystals clump together to form snowflakes.

- Why snow is white: Visible sunlight is white. All the tiny surfaces of snow crystals reflect most sunlight. After bouncing around, some of the light scatters back out, and that is the light we see. Since all colors are scattered equally, the snow appears white.

- Wilson A. Bentley was dubbed "The Snowflake Man" for photographing some 5,000 snowflakes during his life, starting in late 1800s.

— Data from

[www.snowcrystals.net](http://www.snowcrystals.net),  
the National Snow and

Ice Data center, and

Michigan State University.

1 Mix Ivory Snow + water into thick paste. Add small amounts of water if too thick.  
2 Let children use fingers to "paint" snow pictures on cardboard. Dried "snow" may be too heavy for paper alone.