



## Save Alabama Summers offers safety tips for hot return to school

With the majority of Alabama school children returning to school during the hottest week of the summer thus far, SaveAlabama- Summers.org is offering tips to parents to help children avoid heat exhaustion on the playground and on the hot bus ride home.

While the group strongly advocates a later start to the school year, parent spokesman Phillip Moultrie says keeping kids safe is the issue at hand on these hot days. "As with any topic, the more people know the better," said Moultrie.

After talking with doctors, researching the Web and using common sense, Moultrie said the group's parent volunteer core offers the following tips for keeping kids hydrated and as cool as possible during the hot school day and often un-airconditioned bus ride home:

### **Drink, drink, drink**

Make sure your child has a good amount to drink in the morning before leaving for school and that drinks in lunch boxes are plentiful. Don't forget to push liquid when your child returns home from school as well. Talk to your child about the importance of drinking during the school day and not passing up the offered trip to the water fountain. Dr. Timothy K. Duffin, a Tennessee-based urologist, says when possible offer children sports drinks containing electrolytes over water, because they will replace salt and help children retain fluids.

### **Educate your children**

#### **about the signs of dehydration**

Talk to your children about the signs of dehydration. Explain to students that any change in how they are feeling should be told to the teacher or bus driver immediately. Ask them not to wait if they begin to experience leg cramps or feel like they are getting a headache. Encourage children not to wait to see if the feelings go away, but to tell an adult immediately.

### **Communicate with your**

## **classroom teacher**

Dr. Duffin says keeping your child's teacher abreast of physical ailments or conditions is also important in keeping your child safe during heat. "It's important for the teacher and school to know if your daughter played inside all summer and never properly acclimated to the heat. Duffin also stressed the importance of letting teachers know if your child is taking any medication, as medication can also play a role in dehydration.

## **Keep clothing loose,**

## **light and natural**

The last tip offered is to keep children's clothing, loose, light and natural. Dressing children in breathable clothing will help keep them cool and allow the skin to breath and release toxins. Don't forget the importance of hats and the ever-important application of sunscreen each morning.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, 318 Americans die every year of heat-related illnesses. "Sadly, most of these deaths are preventable if people know what to look for," said Duffin.

So as parents get ready to send their children off to hit the books, they are encouraged to do their homework on dehydration and heat exhaustion as well.

***Editor's Note:** [SaveAlabamaSummers.org](http://SaveAlabamaSummers.org) advocates a later start to the school year.*