

ATV RIDING IS NOT CHILD'S PLAY

The machines are agile, fast and unforgiving



There are many reasons we don't let children operate motor vehicles. These same physical, cognitive and emotional reasons are why children cannot and should not operate all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). In fact, safely operating an ATV can be more challenging than driving an automobile because ATV design makes them much more prone to loss of control under conditions where cars are stable.

Tragic outcomes:

- A 9-year-old boy approached a large pile of hay and attempted to climb the pile, causing the ATV to tip onto its side.
- An 11-year-old boy was killed after he failed to negotiate a curve, ran off the paved county road, struck a fence and was ejected from the ATV.
- A 14-year-old boy died while driving his ATV through a pasture. The ATV overturned when he maneuvered suddenly to

avoid a cow in his path.

- A 12-year-old girl was killed in an ATV accident on her grandparents' farm. She lost control of the ATV while going through a gate and it rolled several times down a hillside.

ATVs have a high center of gravity making them more likely to roll over, especially in a turn, when they hit a bump or rut, or when one or more tires grabs the surface or loses traction. The risk of roll-over increases with ATV speed, weight and height. There is NO EVIDENCE that children under 12 can safely operate an ATV even at 15 miles per hour. Many adult crashes occur at that speed or less.

Can't accelerate child development

Unlike the throttle on an 800-pound ATV, there is no way to speed up child development, and that can spell tragedy. For example, in a turn the driver must judge speed, turning radius and the ability to physically maintain

control by shifting weight and maintaining grip, footing and seating. Children do not have the cognitive maturity needed to consistently make the complex calculations to safely turn. Going up or down an incline takes considerable cognitive maturity to avoid inclines that are too steep, and to achieve the right speed and angle to avoid a rollover. Children lack the accurate perception, quick decision making and physical strength needed to do this.

Injury toll

In the United States, about 40,000 children under age 16 are treated in emergency departments for ATV-related injuries each year.

- Children account for 37% of ATV-related injuries and 28% of ATV-related fatalities.
- There are more than 130 ATV related fatalities among children each year.

Tips/Action steps

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that no child under age 16 ride an ATV of any size.
- Refer to CultivateSafety.org for ATV work safety guidelines for older children, and to see a child development chart that can help you better understand children's capabilities at all ages.
- Visit ChildAgSafety.org for ATV safety posters and rack cards.

