

- Young child—Object permanence: actively searches for attractive object; cause and effect: lacks awareness of consequential dangers; transductive reasoning: may fail to learn from experiences (e.g., perceives falling from a step as a different type of danger from climbing a tree); magical and egocentric thinking: is unable to comprehend danger to self or others
- School-age child—Transitional cognitive processes: is unable to fully comprehend causal relationships; attempts dangerous acts without detailed planning regarding consequences
- Adolescent—Formal operations: is preoccupied with abstract thinking and loses sight of reality; may lead to feeling of invulnerability
- Anatomic characteristics (especially in young children)
- Large head—Predisposes to cranial injury
- Large spleen and liver with wide costal arch—Predisposes to direct trauma to these organs
- Small and light body—May be thrown easily, especially inside a moving vehicle
- Other factors—Poverty, family stress (e.g., maternal illness, recent environmental change), substandard alternative child care, young maternal age, low maternal education, multiple siblings

The child's developmental stage partially determines the types of injuries that are most likely to occur at a specific age and helps