

## Youth ATV Safety

ATV's were developed for use in agriculture, for hauling equipment and traveling around farm property. They have since evolved into a hobby for many people and are now even used for racing. People love the excitement that ATV's provide and the vast array of terrain that ATV's open up for exploring. ATV's can provide a lot of enjoyment for riders and be a worthwhile activity.

ATV's can also be dangerous, especially for children. Adults are often injured when they lose control of an AT and children have even less skill and experience than adults. This is not to say that children should not be allowed to ride an ATV, but they must follow strict safety rules in order to avoid injury.

Children should be taught that an ATV is not a toy and should be operated with care and with safety in mind. They should be made aware of all the safety rules and never allowed to ride without supervision. If children realize how dangerous ATV's can be and what they must do to stay safe, they will be at a much lower risk of injury.

The best thing you can do for your child before they are allowed to ride is send them to an approved ATV training course. Many places require riders under 16 to take a training course before they can legally ride which is a good idea anyway even if your area does not require it. You should attend the training course with your child so that you are also familiar with ATV safety and can enforce the safety rules your child learned.

Another important safety practice for you and your child is riding the correct sized ATV. Children should never ride an adult sized ATV, as they are usually too large for them to comfortably operate and increase the likelihood of injury. If you are going to purchase your child an ATV make sure you get a youth sized ATV that is not too large for your child. You should also consider the engine size as a more powerful engine means a faster ATV. Children should only drive an ATV that they can handle.

Wearing appropriate safety gear is also an important part of ATV safety. Children should always wear helmets, gloves, goggles, long pants and a long sleeved shirt. Most places require helmet use by law but even if they do not a helmet should always be worn. Using safety gear will prevent many injuries that can occur when riders fall. Make sure that the safety equipment you purchase for your child fits properly and is of high quality. You should make sure that the safety gear your child uses is rated for ATV use.

The last thing you should always do to keep your child safe, is to inspect their

ATV before each use. Teach your child how to inspect their ATV as well and you can then both make sure it stays in good working condition and will not break or malfunction during use. If you and your child follow these safety tips, your child will have a safe and enjoyable time with their ATV.