

## Children and Lawn Mowers: A Dangerous Combination

*National Medical Societies Offer Tips to Prevent Injuries this Summer;  
Children Often Victims*

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**For immediate release: June 8, 2010 - Chicago** – The Rudie family knows all too well how dangerous lawn mowing can be when proper safety precautions are not taken. In July 2009, Mrs. Brenda Rudie's two-year-old son Brandon suffered devastating facial injuries in a lawn mower accident. His father was mowing the lawn and Brandon was in a cart behind him with his 5-year-old cousin. Somehow Brandon fell out of the front and his father backed up, accidentally running him over.



“We never thought this would happen. We thought he was safe,” said Mrs. Rudie. “Brandon had deep cuts on the left side of his face - to the bone; his ear was severed; and his eye, mouth and chest were badly injured. His plastic surgeon took tissue from his arm and back to repair his face. It took two months before we could bring Brandon home. Please don't let your kids near lawn mowers-- it's just not safe.”

Unfortunately, nearly 230,000 people were treated for lawn mower-related injuries in 2008, more than 17,000 of them children under age 19, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports.

“A summer day should be about kids playing outside and having fun, not getting hurt. Yet every summer, thousands do get hurt with lawn mowers,” said AAP president Judith Palfrey, MD, FAAP. “We want parents and kids to be more aware of precautions to take so that serious injuries can be prevented,”

With the summer mowing season approaching, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Society for Reconstructive Microsurgery (ASRM), American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), American Society of Maxillofacial Surgeons (ASMS), and American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) are working together to prevent injuries and educate adults and children about the importance of lawn mower safety.

Many lawn mower-related injuries require a team of physicians from various specialties – plastic surgery, microsurgery, maxillofacial surgery, pediatrics, and orthopaedics – to properly repair them. Often, patients must endure painful reconstructive operations for months, sometimes years, to restore form and function.

The AAP, ASRM, ASPS, ASMS, and AAOS offer the following tips to help prevent lawn mower-related injuries:

- Children should be at least 12 years old before they operate any lawn mower, and at least 16 years old for a ride-on mower.
- Children should never be passengers on ride-on mowers.
- Always wear sturdy shoes while mowing – not sandals.
- Young children should be at a safe distance from the area you are mowing.
- Pick up stones, toys and debris from the lawn to prevent injuries from flying objects.
- Always wear eye and hearing protection.
- Use a mower with a control that stops it from moving forward if the handle is released.
- Never pull backward or mow in reverse unless absolutely necessary – carefully look for others behind you when you do.

Hear firsthand Mrs. Rudie and her son's plastic surgeon, Dr. Robert Whitfield, discussing the life-altering effects of lawn mower injuries by downloading their video blog at [www.plasticsurgery.org/x10363.xml](http://www.plasticsurgery.org/x10363.xml).