

Protecting Our Future

CHILD FATALITY REVIEW COMMITTEE
Cuyahoga County Family and Children First Council



"Choking Game"

What We've Learned

- In Cuyahoga County over the last several years, some of the deaths ruled as accidental hanging or accidental suffocation appear to have been the result of the child playing the "choking game". Case review has showed us that:
 - Children who play the "choking game" are getting younger.
 - It is especially dangerous for a child to play the "choking game" alone.
 - Many parents and other adults have never heard of the "choking game".

Have you heard of the games Space Monkey, Knockout, Cloud Nine, or Pass-out? These are all names for a dangerous game that children play—**The Choking Game**.

What is the Choking Game?

This is a game of suffocation that can cause children to die. When the blood flow to the brain is cut off the players get a short "high" and then when the pressure is released they can feel a "rush".

How is the game played?

It can be played in groups or alone. When played in groups, the children choke each other with their hands around the neck or a bear hug around the chest. They can also hold their breath or hyperventilate. When played alone a child can use a rope, dog leash, tie, or belt around the neck to cut off his oxygen.

Who is playing this game? Boys and girls between the ages of 9-14 are the most common players. They are often athletes and good students.

Why are children playing the Choking Game? Many children think that this is a harmless way to get a "high" because it's drug-free and alcohol-free.

What children don't know is that the game can cause permanent brain damage, and even death.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW . . .

- Most middle school children know about the Choking Game. They have learned about it from their friends or on the Internet.
- Children think differently than adults. Therefore, children do not understand the risks they are taking by playing the game.
- Every time the Choking Game is played brain cells are killed. Loss of oxygen for only a few seconds can cause permanent brain damage. This damage can affect how a child learns, talks, and moves for the rest of his life.
- The Choking Game can also cause seizures, strokes, eye damage and sudden death.
- A child can pass out within 1 minute and die in 2-4 minutes if the pressure around the neck is not removed. Children who play this game alone are in more danger of dying.
- A child is in danger of dying any time they play the Choking Game.





KEEPING KIDS SAFE!

NURTURE HEALTHY, HAPPY AND SAFE CHILDREN

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Warning Signs of the Choking Game

- *Bruises or marks on the neck.*
- *Wearing clothing that covers the neck.*
- *Complaint of frequent headaches.*
- *Tiny red spots on the eyes, eyelids, face, and neck.*
- *Spending more time alone in the bedroom.*
- *Locked bedroom doors.*
- *Finding ropes, leashes, ties, or belts in strange places.*
- *Acting confused or disoriented after spending time alone.*



What can parents and adults do?

- **Talk to children about the dangers of the Choking Game.**
- **Supervise children while on the Internet.**
- **Know where your children are, who they are with, and what they are doing.**
- **Watch for the warning signs.**
- **Tell other parents and adults about the risks of the Choking Game.**
- **Encourage schools to include the Choking Game information in programs that talk about drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.**

