Slumber parties away from home can be a healthy way to foster independence for both parents and children. Basic child safety standards should be set early and upheld by both guests and hosts.

Before dropping off your child:
1. Is your child ready?
   - Let your child decide when he or she is ready to spend the night at a friend’s or relative’s house.
   - Arrange practice sleepovers.
   - Pack a special item such as a pillow, blanket or toy so your child has a bit of home with him or her while away.
   - Let your child know that it’s OK to talk to a friend’s parent if he or she feels sick, lonely or uncomfortable.

2. Invite a friend over first.
   Daytime play dates give you a chance to meet your child’s friend before you send your son or daughter off to spend the night. Watch how the children interact before agreeing to any slumber party plans.

3. Meet the parents.
   Do you trust the supervising adults and feel comfortable with their parenting techniques? Keep safety in mind. Ask about any pool gates, pets and guns or weapons in the house. Discuss food allergies or medical conditions that either child has.

4. Establish ground rules.
   Let the hosting parents know your child safety rules and supervision requirements for your child. Offer any information about your youngster that will pertain to the overnight plans, such as fear of the dark or food allergies.

5. Choose a code word.
   Create a word that your child may use as code if he or she becomes
uncomfortable and wants to go home. A “no questions asked” policy when this code word is used will help keep you and your child at ease.

**Hosting a sleepover?**
- Plan activities and meals ahead of time. Kids often will play and have fun according to their own agenda.
- Establish ground rules.

**Parking lot safety**

**As a driver**
- **Be alert and remember to slow down:**
  - Stay watchful for other drivers pulling in and out of parking spots.
  - Small children, strollers and shopping carts may be blocked from your visibility.
  - Look out for distracted pedestrians darting between cars.
- **Follow the rules of the lot:**
  - Obey posted speed limits, stop and directional signs.
  - Park inside the lines.
  - Common courtesy goes a long way.
- **Other tips:**
  - Park in well-lighted areas that are not isolated.
  - Leave valuables at home or secured in the trunk.
- **Have a plan for pickup or drop-off if things aren’t going well.**
- **Find out information about the kids who are attending, such as food allergies or fear of the dark.**
- **Allow kids to stay in touch with home. A goodnight or good-morning phone call or texts are easy ways for children to check in with their families.**

**Navigating through parking lots with children**
- **Remember to roll up windows and lock doors.**
- **Do a backseat check:** Are all children out of the car?

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For more information, contact Safe Kids at 859-323-1153 or visit www.safekidsfayettecounty.com.

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