

INJURED CHILDREN

Dealing with anxiety of a child hurt in an accident

What do we do when a child is hurt?

We hear the cry or scream and do our best to remain calm while we assess whether or not there is anything "serious" like a broken bone.

We do our best to hide frantic feelings of anxiety because we have learned that if we appear concerned, the child will become even more upset and concerned.

Alternatively, if we display a complete lack of concern and are able to distract the child from whatever has occurred they're often back to giggly play within minutes, if not moments.

We respond in a similar way if, perhaps the next day, the child continues to complain about whatever was hurt.

Once again, we do our best to hide whatever anxiety we might have while we consider, again, if there is something "seriously" wrong. If not, we try again to steer the child's attention away

Achieving Justice

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from the hurt, reassuring the child that he or she will be just fine.

We don't want our child to become fixated on the injury for fear that it will take on a life of its own. We also desperately want to believe what we are telling our child, that everything will be just fine. Our greatest fear is that our child might be hurt in a way that he or she might never fully recover.

This common approach to children's "hurts" creates a huge challenge for protecting children's rights when the "hurts" arise as a result of a motor vehicle collision.

Children are incredibly resilient and adaptable. With enough dismissiveness on our part, whatever hurt they

are experiencing will become their new normal and they will stop complaining about it.

If careful work isn't done to identify and record the symptoms, and to monitor whether or not those symptoms continue and how they progress, imagine the challenge of trying to prove that the struggles a 15-year-old is having sitting through class in high school has any relationship to a crash that occurred at age 6.

Certainly, it will be impossible for the 15 year old to give a coherent history of his or her symptoms going back to age 6. How much do you remember of your own early childhood?

Parents are often lulled by an extended "limitation period" that dealing with the child's legal rights can be put off until much, much later. A limitation period provides a deadline for

commencing a lawsuit to protect and preserve rights. For adults, the

limitation period is two years. For children, the clock

for the two-year limitation deadline does not start ticking until the child becomes an adult.

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