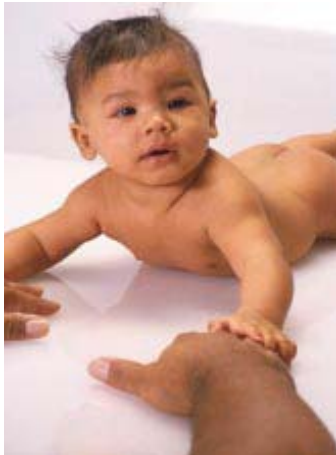


# Child Proofing Your Home



Put yourself in your young child's place by crawling around your home on your hands and knees. Keep a sharp eye for places he could receive an electric shock, get fingers or head stuck, reach sharp or dangerous objects, get burned or scalded, reach toxic chemicals or toxic plants, tip over heavy objects onto himself (e.g., TV stands, microwave carts, stereo components, aquariums, floor lamps, freestanding bookshelves, etc.). Secure all unstable objects or move them to rooms where your child cannot go. Bookshelves should be bolted to the walls or floor.

## **Kitchen Safety:**

- Always turn pot handles away from the front of the stove so children cannot pull pots down on themselves.
- Cook on back burners whenever possible to reduce risk of small children burning a curious hand.
- While cooking, put babies or toddlers in a playpen where you can see them but where they cannot be splashed by hot grease, spilled foods or an overturned pot.
- Never carry or hold hot liquids or foods near your child or while you are carrying or holding a child.
- Put guards on stove controls, or remove stove knobs when not in use so children cannot turn on the stove by accident.
- Keep all electric appliances away from the reach of children, fasten cords out of reach, and supervise children when there are appliances present.
- Sharp knives should be kept in a locked drawer or cabinet out of children's sight and reach.
- Lock all cabinets storing household cleaners, abrasives, products and toxins, and keep these products in their original, clearly-marked containers out of children's sight and reach.
- Kitchen cabinets should be fastened with childproof latches (available in hardware stores) to keep children from toppling items onto themselves.
- Secure unstable cabinets or shelves by bolting them to walls or floors.
- Store plastic bags and plastic wrap out of children's reach -- they can easily suffocate in a matter of minutes.



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*A working coalition of child abuse prevention councils from 15 counties.*

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- Store sharp-edged aluminum foil dispensers, waxed paper and plastic wrap dispensers out of small children's reach.
- Teach older children safe use of sharp knives, proper way to walk with them (points down) and always to wash, dry, and put sharp knives and other implements in locked drawers out of smaller siblings' reach.
- Young children should be supervised by an adult when using a microwave. Do not allow children to heat jelly
- donuts or any liquids in the microwave - the centers can be scalding hot while the outside is cool to the touch.
- Don't heat baby bottles or formula in the microwave. The center can be scalding while other parts are cool to the touch.
- Remove tablecloths - children can pull everything onto their heads by yanking on the cloth.

### **Bathroom:**

- Keep all prescription and nonprescription medications, and all cleansers, toiletries, cosmetics, razor blades, any product that is labeled "keep out of the reach of children" and other hazardous items out of children's reach in locked cabinets.
- Be sure that all tub and shower areas have non-slip mats.
- Set hot water heater for below 120 degrees Fahrenheit to help prevent scalding. Test water temperature with the inside of your elbow before bathing young children. Babies and young children should be bathed in water that feels warm but not hot.
- Always supervise children under six in the bathtub. Small children can drown in just a few inches of water.
- Keep any bathroom electrical appliances away from water sources (e.g. bathtubs, sinks) and out of children's reach.
- Put toilet lid locks on all toilets if you have a child under 3 years old.

### **Bedroom and Living Areas:**

- Cover all electrical outlets with clear childproof plastic covers.
- Cover all radiators with secure radiator covers.
- Look for hard sharp edges (fireplace hearths, sharp corners in the home or on furniture) and install foam padding where children could bang their heads in a fall.
- Heaters, fireplaces or woodstoves must be surrounded with childproof screens.



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- Make sure all toys are safe, with no sharp edges, and are not a choking hazard (e.g., small button eyes, detachable pieces, strings, ribbons, etc.)
- Keep small items like coins, nails, buttons, and keys out of children's reach.
- Install safety gates (not accordion-style) on top and bottom of stairs.
- Gates should have a pressure bar or other fastener that is too strong for the child to release.
- Keep all houseplants out of children's reach. Poisonous plants should be given away until children are older.
- Keep all alcohol in a cabinet that is kept locked at all times.
- Cover all trash containers securely. Young children are likely to rummage through the trash and come upon dangerous items like glass, etc.
- Wrap curtain cords, venetian blind cords, etc. up out of children's reach. Children can strangle themselves on these cords.
- Be sure curtains are securely fastened so children cannot pull them down or pull curtain rods onto their heads.
- Place window guards in open windows - these should be so sturdy that children cannot force or push them out.
- Do not use walkers. Children can fall down stairs or run into furniture. Jumpers or swings are safer alternatives.
- Never leave your child unattended on a table or bed. Always have one hand on your child when he is on a high surface.

You are probably thinking to your self, “How in the world can I ever provide this kind of childproofing in my home!” It seems daunting but don’t forget all of these safety suggestions have harmed or killed a child when they were left unchecked. Do what you can and you will be surprised how very little effort it takes to provide a home that is safe for your children as well as your neighbors’ children.



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