



Education

Childproofing Your Home

One of the most important steps you can take to protect the health and life of your child is to childproof your home. Perhaps the best way to do this is to take a "baby's eye view." Crawl from room to room so you can spot the sharp corners, uncovered electrical wall outlets and extension cords, hanging cords to lamps and other appliances, and loose objects which might easily fall.

The following is a quick checklist for childproofing areas in your house. Remember, however, that every child and home are different. Check your home carefully. **AND NEVER LEAVE YOUR BABY OR YOUNG CHILD UNATTENDED!**

Kitchen

- Turn handles of all pots and pans to the back of the stove so your child can't reach them. Use the back burners of the stove when possible. The best way to avoid accidents is to keep your baby in his playpen or high chair while you cook. Do not allow children to play on the kitchen floor while you are cooking or baking.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen and near any fireplaces. Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach.
- Avoid using tablecloths that can be pulled down.
- Keep appliances and their cords away from the edges of counters or table tops. All cords should be coiled up and tied.
- Put safety latches on drawers and cabinets. If you have room, you can let your child have one cupboard of his own filled with pots, pans, and large plastic bowls.
- Store cleaning products and all other poisonous chemicals in a high cupboard out of a child's reach. Make sure it has a lock or safety latch.
- Keep knives and sharp objects in a drawer or cupboard out of your child's reach.
- Vacuum up broken glass right away and then use a wet paper towel to clean up small slivers of the glass on your floor.
- Keep hot drinks out of reach of your child. When handling hot liquids or foods, check to see where your child is **BEFORE** you pick up the tea kettle or pan. You do not want to trip and spill anything hot on your child.
- Keep aluminum foil or plastic wrap out of reach. The jagged edges on boxes can cause cuts.

Bathroom

- Keep all drugs in a locked cabinet out of children's reach. Aspirin is one of the most common causes of childhood poisoning. Return all medicines to the proper container and put them in the cabinet after you use them.
- Keep shampoo and soap out of your child's reach.
- Keep hairdryers and curling irons unplugged. Keep all electric appliances away from water to avoid electric shock.
- Lower the hot water heater temperature to 120°F (48.9°C) to prevent scalding. Always check water temperature before putting your child into bath water or under a faucet.
- Dispose of pills, razor blades, and other dangerous items in a covered wastebasket out of children's reach, such as in a latched cabinet. Wastebaskets are fun places for children to explore.
- Always leave the toilet lid closed. Use lid locks or keep the bathroom door closed to keep children safe. Put a hook on the outside of the bathroom door or a plastic cover on the door.
- Use plastic or paper cups and containers in the bathroom so there is less chance of broken glass.

Furniture

- Put corner and edge bumpers on sharp edges of furniture such as coffee tables, end tables, and your fireplace hearth.
- Put away all delicate, breakable, and valuable items from tables and shelves until your child is well past the curious/destructive stage (4 to 5 years old).
- Heavy objects such as TVs, lamps, or stereo equipment, should be pushed back from the edge of furniture, fastened to the wall, or kept out of reach so the baby doesn't accidentally knock them over when trying to crawl or stand.
- Fasten bookcases and other movable furniture pieces to the wall with a wall anchor so your child can't pull the piece of furniture over on himself.
- Empty all diaper pails, ice chests, buckets, or other liquid containers right away to prevent drowning.
- Strap children securely into infant carriers, high chairs, and changing tables. Store ointments, creams, safety pins and all other baby changing items out of reach.
- Keep plants out of children's reach.
- Hang mobiles and dangling toys out of the baby's reach. The string should be no more than 12 inches long. Remove the mobile as soon as your baby can stand.
- Do not use baby powders and talcs near a blowing fan or let the baby play with the container. Babies can choke on the dust.

Floor

- Check the floor area daily for small objects that a baby could choke on such as pins or small bits of food such as popcorn and peanuts.
- Make sure portable heaters are well ventilated and protected by safety guards.

Outlets and Cords

- Cover unused electrical outlets with plastic caps. You can also get boxes to cover outlets that are being used. Where possible, place furniture in front of outlets and cords.
- Either avoid using extension cords or tape cords down. Keep phone cords out of children's reach.

Doors and gates

- Install baby gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Also use safety gates in front of forbidden rooms or areas. Safety gates that fasten to the wall are safer than the gates held against the wall by pressure.
- Use toddler-proof locks on doors and screens. Keep outside doors locked at all times, even when you are at home.
- Put decals on glass doors or window to prevent your child from bumping into them.
- Put a fireplace door lock or gate around your fireplace.

Windows

- Keep all cords from drapes or blinds out of reach or use a cord wind-up device.
- Install window guards or netting to protect your child from falling out of a window.

Outside Areas

- Store tools out of reach of young children. Cover sharp edges. Unplug electrical tools when not in use.
 - Keep paints, pesticides, and other chemicals out of children's reach. Label properly and dispose of unused chemicals.
 - Watch children and never leave them alone around water, including wading pools, swimming pools, spas or hot tubs, ponds, lakes, streams, or any other open water.
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