

Keeping Children **Safe at Home**



Be Aware. Be There.



Financial assistance by Health Canada

Tips to Keep Children Safe



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**For more information, please contact the
Regional Niagara Public Health Department
Injury/Substance Abuse Prevention Program at
905-688-3762 or toll free at 1-800-263-7248**

Hazards depicted in photos were created digitally. At no time were children placed in danger during photography.

Children are often injured inside their own home. About 90 percent of these injuries are predictable and preventable. Not only can parents and caregivers try to create a safe home by making sure unsafe things are locked away and out of reach, but also there are simple tips adults can use.

Supervision

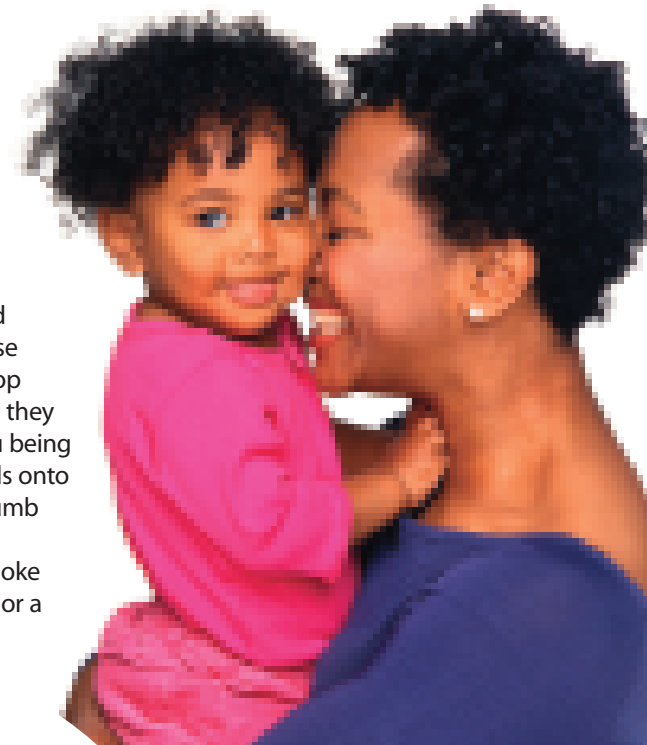
No matter how safe you try to make your home, there is no substitute for supervision. Try to never let your child(ren) explore or play out of your sight. Children are sometimes faster than we think and can get into serious trouble quickly.

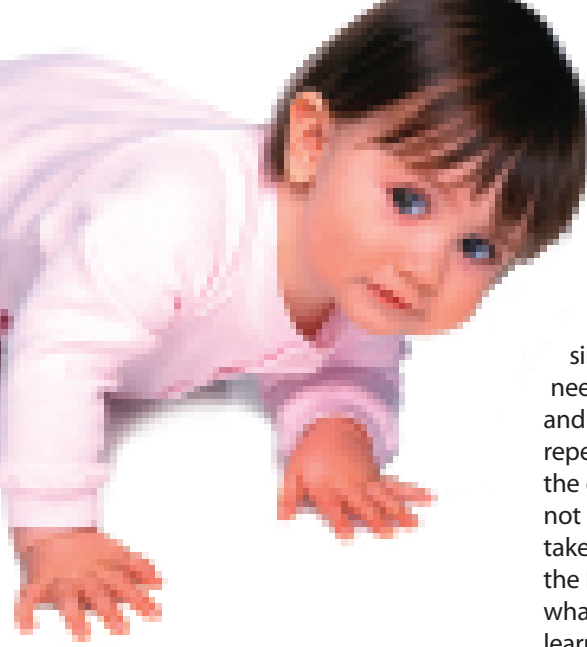
Adjust to Change

Your child will amaze you every day. Since children grow up and change so quickly, it is important to look at the new skills they are learning and make changes to your home as needed. For example, when a child first learns to climb up and down stairs, you may want to use the proper safety gates at the top and bottom of the stairs so that they cannot try to climb without you being close by. When a child first holds onto small objects between their thumb and finger, check the floors and carpets for things they could choke on, such as a button, paper clip, or a plastic tip cut off a milk bag.

Set Limits

Setting consistent and well-defined limits helps children to understand the rules of the house, know what is expected of them, and feel secure in their home. Once you have set a rule, it's important to continue to have the same rule day after day. Lots of changes are confusing and children may try to test your limits more often. Making a few rules that are firm and fair helps children not only know what behaviour you expect from them, but also teaches self-discipline.





“jump on the floor, please,” if they are trying to jump on the couch.

Repeat, repeat, repeat

Young children are learning every day by exploring the world. Try to be patient and persistent since learning takes time. You may need to repeat the desired action over, and over, and over again. You may repeat yourself only a few times before the child understands that something is not allowed within the home or it may take months of repetition. Whatever the length of time, repeat to your child what positive action you want them to learn and eventually your efforts will be rewarded. Remember, it never hurts to say it again.

Choose Your Battles

Take the time to decide which rules are important to you and limit the risk for serious danger. If you have too many rules, children may feel that they cannot freely explore and play in the home, which is a happy and healthy activity. Too many rules may make children feel that you are never happy with them. A few examples of choosing your battles includes: jumping on the couch would not be allowed in the home, but jumping on couch pillows on the floor would be ok; a child may be told not to touch the stove, but is allowed to help in the kitchen by pouring things into a mixing bowl, and; a child may not be allowed to throw food in the kitchen but can throw a ball in the living room.

Keep to the Point

Keep the rule nice and simple. The rule should be about the action that you want the child to do. Children won't listen for very long so try not to lecture. For example, tell the child,



Reward Positive Behaviour

When a child follows one of your rules, even if they need reminding or carries out the action on their own, it is important to acknowledge the positive behaviour. This can be done through hugs, kisses, high-fives, smiles, and praise. It is important to acknowledge

the behaviour instead of the person. Saying, “good boy/girl” or “bad boy/girl,” may make the child feel that there is “bad” inside of them. Talking about the behaviour avoids this and gently reminds children of the correct behaviour you want them to use. Try saying, “good listening;” “great jumping on the floor” when they are not jumping on the couch, “thank you for waiting for daddy before climbing up the stairs;” or “good job cleaning up your toys.”

Redirection

If a child is trying to do something unsafe, show them another action. This helps to keep things positive instead of focusing on the negative. If a child is attempting to play with the stove, show them a low kitchen cupboard that is full of things that they can safely explore and play with, such as pots, pans, plastic bowls and spoons.

Offer Choices and Follow Through

If a child is doing something unsafe and you cannot redirect them towards a more positive behaviour, try offering the child choices. For example, if the child would like to jump on the couch, offer the child the chance to either jump on couch cushions on the floor or to practice jumping over a line or soft, small toy on the floor. This allows the child to still practice their fun jumping skills but limits the risk of an injury occurring. If you decide to offer choices, it's important that you follow through on your offer.



Be an Example

Children watch everything that adults and other children do and say. Model good behaviour and follow the same rules that you ask a child to follow. However, when it comes to touching things that an adult can touch and a child cannot (e.g., stove, knives), explain to the child that they are for grown ups only because they can hurt kids. Let the child play with something special that only he or she is allowed to play with and that an adult would have to ask permission to use. Avoid attracting attention to hazards, such as electrical outlets, by using these things when children are not watching you.

Make Safety Fun

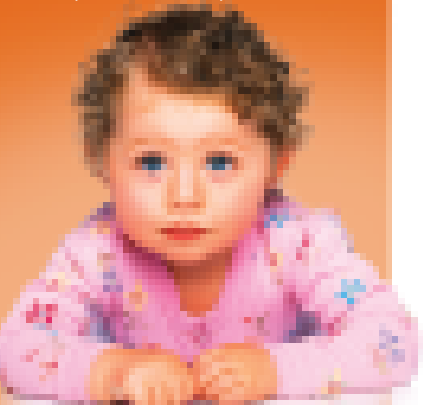
Let children play and explore the world. This freedom is important to a child's growth and development. Although safety is important, children do not have to live in a bubble. Giving children fun, alternative activities to unsafe ones is a great start.

Please take the time to go through each room of your home and see if it is safe for a child to explore and play. As you go through the lists check: **Yes**: if this is something you have already done in your home to make it safer for children **No**: if this is something you have not yet done in your home **N/A** (not applicable): if this does not relate to your home.

Start Here!

What is my "child's level"?

Your "child's level" is everything that your child sees from their height or is able to touch. To check if anything can hurt your child at their level, lie down on the floor to see what they see and touch what they touch. Do you see anything while lying on the floor that could hurt your child? Look for a button under the bed or a plastic tip cut off a milk bag under the fridge that could cause them to choke. Remember, little hands can reach into places adults usually can't. Next, sit on the floor and see what the world is like through your child's eyes.



I have gotten down to my child's level to check for anything that might hurt him/her.

YES NO N/A

For a young child, I removed everything from my child's level that could cause him/her to choke such as buttons, paper clips, play dough, coins, small toys, grapes, raisins, hard candy, nuts, and the tips cut off of milk bags.

YES NO N/A

I placed all of my plants out of reach and got rid of all plants that are poisonous.

YES NO N/A

I fastened heavy or tall furniture (e.g., bookshelves, dressers, stoves) to the wall/floor with brackets to prevent the furniture from tipping over.

YES NO N/A

I placed the heaviest items on the bottom of shelves and lighter items near the top.

YES NO N/A

I inserted outlet plugs or placed outlet covers over all electrical outlets.

YES NO N/A

I limit the number of electrical cords plugged into one outlet in order not to overload the circuit and/or cause an electrical fire.

YES NO N/A

Where to start? Tackle a different room one day or week at a time. By taking a few minutes here and there to go through the lists, your home will be safer sooner than you think. **Before you forget, make changes to danger areas right away.**

I checked all electrical cords, even extension cords, and put in the garbage any that were frayed or cracked.

YES NO N/A

I placed out of reach all sharp and breakable objects such as knives, sewing needles, ashtrays, ceramics, and glass.

YES NO N/A

I placed out of reach everything that could cause my child to be strangled or suffocate such as ribbons, string, latex balloons, window blind cords, and plastic bags.

YES NO N/A

Important and emergency phone numbers are kept by the phone(s).

YES NO N/A

I stocked my first aid kit with supplies within the past six months.

YES NO N/A

I closed all windows in the above-ground rooms so that children could not push the screen free and fall out the window.

YES NO N/A

I never place children in a baby walker with wheels.

YES NO N/A

What does "out of reach" mean?

"Out of reach" means that a child is unable to get to that object. So, if a child can stand, then "out of reach" means they cannot touch something while standing on their tip toes and stretching up through their fingertips. For children who love to climb, it means that they cannot reach that dangerous object by climbing onto furniture or counters.



Living Areas

Quick Tip

Teaching Children to call 911

Start by showing a child pictures of police officers, fire fighters, and paramedics and explain how these people help families. Using a toy or disconnected phone, teach how to dial 911 and say "help". Next, put a sign with 911 and pictures by the phone or a picture next to the speed dial number programmed to dial 911. Children do not need to know their address or telephone number; the 911 operator can trace the call.

I placed all the floor standing lamps behind solid furniture (e.g., couch) to prevent children from tipping lamps over.

YES NO N/A

I placed a barrier in front of the fireplace/wood burning stove.

YES NO N/A

I only run the gas fireplace at night so that the glass panel has plenty of time to cool down. This way, children are not burned when they touch the glass panel.

YES NO N/A

I store all fireplace tools in a locked closet or a room that children can not get in to, such as the basement.

YES NO N/A

I fastened the bookshelves to the wall/floor with brackets.

YES NO N/A

For young children, I removed and placed in storage (e.g., the basement) my rocking chair so that the child's small fingers and toes could not be pinched between the wooden rocker and the floor.

YES NO N/A

I fastened the footrest on the reclining chair closed so that it could not be raised and young children cannot be trapped underneath.

YES NO N/A

I inserted a VCR protector into the VCR so that little hands, toys, or food can not get trapped inside.

YES NO N/A

I placed corner guards on any furniture with sharp edges (e.g., glass top coffee table).

YES NO N/A

I placed all candles in sturdy holders out of reach from children and away from curtains, lamp shades and other things that can easily catch fire.

YES NO N/A

I cut all the candle wicks short to prevent high flames.

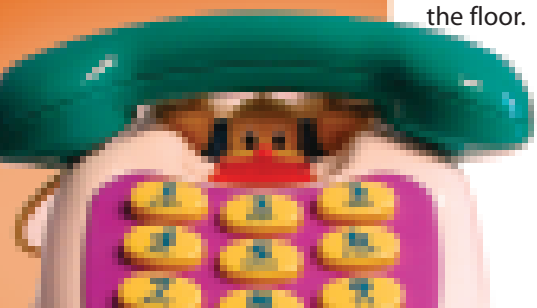
YES NO N/A

I never leave burning candles in a room with no one in it just in case a fire starts.

YES NO N/A

TeleHealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000)

The registered nurses at this number are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If a child has been hurt and you are not sure if they should be taken to the hospital, these nurses can help you to decide if you should go. These nurses can also answer other questions about seeing a doctor if your child is sick.



Bathrooms

Quick Tip

Medications

Please lock away all medications, including vitamins and herbs, in a cool and dry area. Also, heat and moisture in the bathroom could break down the medication. This means that the bathroom may not be the best room in your home to store medication.

I locked up all medications, vitamins, herbs, cosmetics, and household cleaners in a cool, dry area.

YES NO N/A

I brought all of my outdated and unneeded medications to my pharmacist within the past three months for safe disposal.

YES NO N/A

I placed out of reach, or locked up, all sharp objects such as scissors, nail clippers, nail files, and razors.

YES NO N/A

When small electrical items (e.g., hair dryer, curling iron, electric razor, etc.) are not being used, I unplug the appliance, coil the cord, and place it out of reach.

YES NO N/A

I placed a non-skid rug on the floor in front of the bathtub/shower.

YES NO N/A

I placed a slip resistant mat on the floor of the bathtub/shower to prevent anyone from slipping.

YES NO N/A

I never leave a child alone and unsupervised while there is water in the bathtub.

YES NO N/A

Every time before a child goes into the bath/shower, I test the water temperature to make sure that it is not too hot. This prevents the water from scalding their skin.

YES NO N/A

I checked the towel bars to make sure that they are fixed firmly to the wall.

YES NO N/A

I never let anyone using the bath/shower use the towel bar as a grab bar.

YES NO N/A

I do not use toilet bowl disinfectants that stay in the toilet tank and release chemicals with every flush.

YES NO N/A

Around young children, I keep the toilet lid closed so that they cannot fall in, play with the water, or place toys in the water.

YES NO N/A

Everyone in my home closes the bathroom door when not in use to prevent young children from playing inside.

YES NO N/A

Quick Tip

Hot Water Tank

Set your hot water tank thermostat to 120°F or 49°C. If you do not have a number setting, please set it to low. By lowering the temperature of your hot water tank, you lower the risk of a child and adult being burned or scalded by hot water. Do not worry, the water is still hot enough to take hot showers.



Bedrooms

Quick Tip

Books

Keep many books in a low place so a child can easily reach. If books are too high, both heavy and light books could hurt a child when they are trying to grab books from a shelf or table top. Always keep books around for a child; it helps them to develop a love for reading early in life.

Cribs

I checked to make sure the crib was safe. A safe crib has a label on it that states it was made after 1986 and there are no broken parts, loose parts, or missing pieces.

YES NO N/A

I keep the side rails in the highest position at all times

YES NO N/A

I took out all bumper pads, thick comforters, pillows, and stuffed animals from the crib. This way a child can not stand on these things and climb over the bars.

YES NO N/A

I put the mattress in the lowest position possible to prevent a child from climbing up and over the rails.

YES NO N/A

The mattress fits snugly in the crib. When the mattress is pushed all the way to one end and then to one side, the widest gap between the mattress and crib bars is less than 3cm wide.

YES NO N/A

I took out of the crib all mobiles and crib toys once my child was able to reach these things.

YES NO N/A

Kids of all ages

Beds and cribs are not placed under windows.

YES NO N/A

I always coil the blind cords around a rope cleat at the top of the window

YES NO N/A

Pictures and shelves on the wall are not above a crib or bed so that they couldn't fall onto a sleeping or playing child.

YES NO N/A

I only allow children over six (6) years old to climb into and/or sleep in the top bunk of a bunk bed.

YES NO N/A

I fastened the dresser to the wall or floor with a bracket.

YES NO N/A

I never leave a child alone on a change table.

YES NO N/A

I let children only play with toys that are age appropriate for them.

YES NO N/A

I keep toys on a low shelf or in lightweight boxes/bins/chests that have no lid. If there is a lid, I made sure that there are air holes on two or more sides of the box.

YES NO N/A

Quick Tip

Cleaning Up Toys

Encourage children of all ages to clean up their toys when they are done. This way adults and children can not trip and fall over a toy. Cleaning up toys teaches young children about open/close, in/out, sorting, shapes, and colours. It teaches older children independence and responsibility.



Kitchens

Quick Tip

Stove/Oven

To keep children away from the oven or stove, try using masking tape to mark an area on the floor that is a few inches out and around the stove. Teach children not to cross that line because inside is for grown-ups only.

I keep all sharp objects out of reach or locked away such as knives, blender blades, scissors and aluminium foil cartons with sharp edges.

YES NO N/A

I store alcohol, tobacco, and lighters out of reach from children.

YES NO N/A

I placed all of the heaviest objects (e.g. pots, pans) in the bottom cupboards.

YES NO N/A

When small electrical appliances are not being used, I unplug the appliance, coil the cord and place the cord out of reach.

YES NO N/A

If I keep grocery bags, I tie the bag in a loose knot while being stored so that a child can not pull it over their head.

YES NO N/A

I use placemats instead of tablecloths so that children cannot pull things from on top of the table down upon themselves.

YES NO N/A

While cooking on the stove, I always turn pot and pan handles to the middle. This prevents hot things from being knocked over onto a person or the floor.

YES NO N/A

While cooking, I use the back burners first before I start using the front burners.

YES NO N/A

I keep the lid on the garbage can closed and locked. If I cannot lock the lid I keep the garbage can in a locked cupboard.

YES NO N/A

I keep all cleaning supplies and poisonous chemicals in a locked cupboard.

YES NO N/A

I have a fire extinguisher mounted on the wall and ready to use.

YES NO N/A

Everyone uses a sturdy step stool to reach objects on high shelves.

YES NO N/A

For younger children, I always fasten the straps tightly on the highchair or kitchen booster seat to prevent children from sliding out underneath the tray.

YES NO N/A

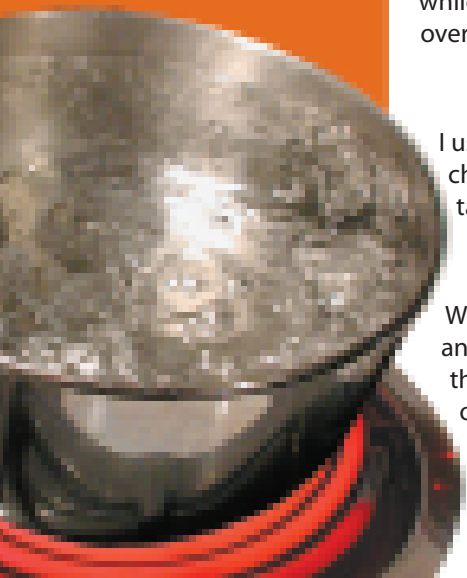
I always check the temperature of warmed foods or drinks before giving it to a child to make sure it will not burn them when they eat or drink.

YES NO N/A

Quick Tip

A place for kids

Make a bottom cupboard, furthest from the stove, a place that is child friendly. You can store plastic mixing bowls and containers, old pots, and spoons there. Children may use these things to imitate you in the kitchen, make music, build towers, or something else imaginative. This makes a mess, but is safer than children exploring where they could get hurt. This activity also helps develop creativity and problem solving skills.



Stairs and Hallways

Quick Tip

Crawlers and Toddlers

Until a child is over 2 years old, it is important never to let them crawl or walk up and down the stairs without an adult going with them. Young children are just starting to learn how to balance themselves and work all their muscles. This means that they fall a lot. This unsteadiness makes stairs a very unsafe place for them to be alone.



I checked to see that all lights in the stairwell(s) and hallway(s) are working and make everything well lit.

YES NO N/A

I have a nightlight in the stairwell or hallway to light up where people walk at night.

YES NO N/A

I removed any objects from the stairs to prevent someone from tripping.

YES NO N/A

I checked the railings to make sure that they are fixed firmly to the wall or floor.

YES NO N/A

I checked to make sure that the railings go past the top step and past the bottom step.

YES NO N/A

I have a smoke detector on each floor of my home.

YES NO N/A

I have changed the battery in every smoke detector within the past six months.

YES NO N/A

I have a carbon monoxide detector on each floor of my home.

YES NO N/A

Safety Gates

For children under the age of two, I use a hardware mounted safety gate at the top of the stairs to stop children from going down the stairs without my supervision and to prevent children from falling down the stairs. This gate is installed directly into the wall stud or door frame.

YES NO N/A

I never use pressure mounted safety gates at the top of the stairs.

YES NO N/A

I use a safety gate at the bottom of stairs to stop young children under the age of two from climbing up without my supervision.

YES NO N/A

I always make sure that the safety gate(s) are closed and locked when being used.

YES NO N/A

I checked the label on my safety gate and it states that it was made after 1990.

YES NO N/A

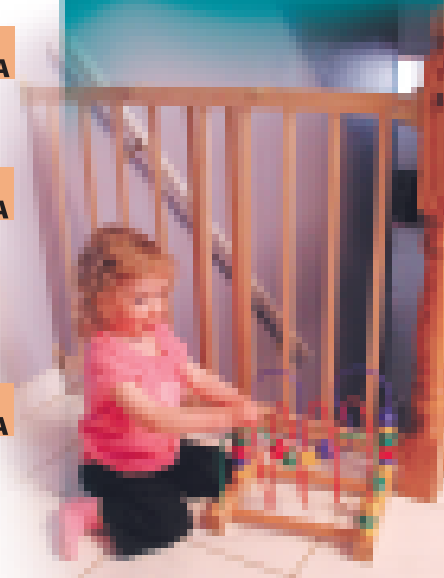
I removed all safety gates once my child turned two years old or I removed the gate right after my child tried to climb over the gate.

YES NO N/A

Quick Tip

Safety Gates

Older safety gates made **before 1990** do not meet current Canadian government safety standards and are not safe. Look for the date it was made on a sticker or label attached to the gate.



Congratulations!

You are on your way to making your home safe for children. Keep up the great work. Continue to watch what your child does and set rules that work for you.

Remember that as your child gets older, he/she will develop more skills, grow taller, and explore the home more. You may need to go through the checklists again and again. Each time you go through the checklist there may be different changes to make to your home in order to keep it safe.

Thank you for taking the time to make your home a fun and safe place for children to explore, play, and learn.



Important Numbers:

Life Threatening Emergency Help

911

(24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Regional Niagara Public Health Department's Parent Talk Line

905-688-8248 ext. 7555

1-888-505-6074 ext. 7555

(Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)

TELEHEALTH Ontario

1-866-797-0000

(24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Ontario Regional Poison Information Centre

1-800-268-9017

Websites of Interest:

Regional Municipality of Niagara

www.regional.niagara.on.ca/safetyhouse

Safe Kids Canada

www.safekidscanada.ca



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