



# Home-Safety Checklist

**For Families with  
Young Children**

This safety checklist is designed to help you protect your children—and everyone else in the family—from unintentional injuries. It is designed to be an easy, room-by-room survey that will quickly point out possible dangers. When you find a hazardous situation, change it—now!

Of course, no checklist will identify all the possible dangers, so use this process to look for other hazards. After you have read through the listed items for a room, take a few minutes to look at the room from the viewpoint of a child.

- Get down at toddler level and survey the room.
- Remember that anything that fits in a child’s mouth will probably be put in.
- Look for climbing opportunities and things that can be pulled down from above.
- Watch for sharp corners, protrusions, and objects a child might fall upon.
- And keep in mind whatever special talents your children have shown—from prying off air vent covers to spotting loose carpet tacks.

If you answer “no” to any item in the following checklist, you have found a dangerous situation that you should change.

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## KITCHEN

\_\_ Are there safety latches on cabinet doors?

Are cleaning supplies stored:

\_\_ separately from foods?

\_\_ in locked cabinets out of reach of your child?

\_\_ in their original containers?

\_\_ Are vitamins and medicine out of your child’s reach?

\_\_ Are food treats and other attractive items stored away from the stove?

Are these dangerous objects out of reach:

\_\_ knives and other sharp objects?

\_\_ hot food, beverages, and glassware?

\_\_ serrated boxes of plastic wrap and aluminum foil?

\_\_ Is the tablecloth folded or secured so it can’t be pulled down?

\_\_ Do you keep hot food and beverages out of the hands of adults who are holding children?

\_\_ Do you keep pot handles turned away from the stove so children can’t reach them?

\_\_ Do you test the temperature of foods (especially microwave foods) before serving them to your child?

\_\_ Do you keep your child in a safe place while cooking?

- Do you keep toys and play activities out of the kitchen?
- Does your child's high chair have a wide base and a harness?
- Do you avoid serving your child peanuts, grapes, hot dogs, popcorn and carrots?
- Are matches and lighters kept out of your child's reach?

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## BATHROOM

Do you have a one-ounce bottle of syrup of ipecac for use in a poisoning emergency? (Be sure to call your poison control center before giving syrup of ipecac to your child.)

Are medicines and cleaning supplies stored:

- In a locked cabinet?
- Out of your child's reach?
- In clearly marked and original containers?
- In containers with child-resistant caps?
- Are razors, scissors, and other sharp utensils stored out of your child's reach?

Are electric appliances:

- Unplugged when not in use?
- Positioned away from all water?
- Out of your child's reach?
- Is there a lock on the toilet seat?
- Is your child always watched while in the bathtub?
- Is there protective padding on the facet in the bathtub?
- Is there a nonskid mat in the bathtub?
- Is your water heater turned down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit?
- Do you check the temperature of water in the tub before you put your child in it?
- Have you installed anti-scald devices in your tub spout and showerhead?

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## YOUR CHILD'S BEDROOM

Does your child's crib have:

- Slats that are no more than 2-3/8 inches (6 cm) apart?
- A mattress that fits snugly against the frame (no more than two finger-widths between slats and mattress)?
- Sides that are 22 inches (56 cm) above the mattress?
- Secure, child-proof side locks?

Have you made sure that the crib has:

- no sharp corners or edges and no projections, such as posts?
- no broken, cracked, or loose parts?
- no loose plastic sheeting?
- no cords of drapery in the crib?
- no low cradle gyms or mobiles that the child can use to crawl out?
- no objects that could help your child climb out, such as a hamper, pillows, or stuffed animals, which should be removed once the child can stand?
- Have you placed the crib at least one foot from walls, furniture, radiators, heating vents, and windows?
- Does the changing table have straps to prevent falls?
- Does your child wear flame-retardant clothing?

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## PLAY AREAS

- Does the toy chest have no lid, a lightweight lid, or a safe-closing mechanism?

Are the toys appropriate for your child? Are they:

- without small pieces that can break off to be choked on?
- without sharp corners or edges?
- without any joints that can pinch fingers?
- without any projections that could injure an eye?
- of appropriate size and weight for your child?
- painted with nontoxic paint?
- with play value for your child, so they don't become objects of destructive experiments?
- Do you routinely inspect and dispose of damaged or unsafe toys?

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## WINDOWS

- Is access to windows blocked so that your child can't fall out?
- Do windows have safety bars (except windows leading to fire escapes)?

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## STAIRS AND RAILINGS

- Are there safety gates (not the accordion type) at the top and bottom of all stairways?
- Is there firm footing on the stairs (no loose carpeting, uneven steps)?
- Are the stairs well lit?
- Are the protective walls and railings on stairs, porches, and balconies sturdy and in good repair?

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## **ELECTRIC OUTLETS AND FIXTURES**

- Do all electric switches and outlets have cover plates?
- Do all unused outlets have no-shock, child-proof covers?

Are electric cords:

- out of your child's reach and out of traffic flow?
- neither frayed nor cracked?
- neither under rugs nor stapled to baseboards?
- Is the use of extension cords kept to a minimum, and are the unused outlets on the cord covered?

Does every light fixture:

- have a lightbulb in it?
- have a lightbulb of appropriate size and wattage?

If you use fuses, are they the correct sizes for your circuits?

Are space heaters:

- properly grounded and connected directly to an outlet?
- stable and protectively covered?
- inaccessible to your child?
- at least 26 inches from curtains, towels, carpets, papers, and furniture?
- used according to manufacturer's instructions and local fire ordinances?

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## **GENERAL LIVING AREAS**

Are dangerous items out of reach:

- plants (poison danger)?
- cigarettes and butts (poison danger)?
- loose change (choking danger)?
- purse and pocketbook contents (poison and choking danger)?
- balloons?
- matches and lighters?
- Are small rugs and runners tacked down or slip resistant?
- Are high-traffic areas well lit and free of obstructions?
- Have you checked to make sure there are no loose paint chips around the house?
- Are guns stored unloaded in locked cases and drawers and the ammunition stored separately?
- Is there at least one working smoke detector on each floor, and is there one in the hallway by the bedrooms?
- Are the smoke detectors checked and cleaned regularly?

- Are the batteries changed once each year?
- Do you have a home fire escape plan?
- Does it have two exit routes?
- Do you have a designated meeting place?
- Do you practice it in the dark, on your hands and knees?
- Do you turn on the smoke detector's alarm for your child to hear?
- Does your child know how to "stop, drop, and roll" to put out clothing that is on fire?
- Is there a working fire extinguisher to handle small fires, especially in the kitchen?
- Do you have your chimney inspected and cleaned every year?
- Are there screens on safety rules on any fireplaces, wood-burning stoves, or heaters?

Are emergency numbers posted by the phone:

- family physician?
- poison control center?
- ambulance?
- police?

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## **BASEMENTS AND GARAGES**

- Do child-proof latches control access to the basement and garage?
- Are volatile liquids, such as cleaning solvents, tightly capped and away from the furnace, hot water heater, and other ignition sources?
- Are you sure that no gasoline is stored in the basement or your garage if it is attached to the house?
- Do power tools have guards in place, and are they unplugged when not in use?

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## **OUTDOOR PLAY AREAS**

- Do you supervise your child's outdoor play?
- Does your child's play area:
- have an impact-absorbent surface like pea gravel or wood chips?
  - have a fence around it?
- Do you regularly check the play area and remove poisonous plants and berries?





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