



HOW-TO BOOKLET #3400 CHILD SAFETY



TOOL & MATERIAL CHECKLIST

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Outlet Covers | <input type="checkbox"/> Appliance Latch | <input type="checkbox"/> First-Aid Kit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drywall Anchors | <input type="checkbox"/> Angle Braces | <input type="checkbox"/> Smoke Detectors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Extinguishers | <input type="checkbox"/> Cabinet Lock | <input type="checkbox"/> Window Lock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slide Drawer Latch | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet Lid Lock | |

Read This Entire How-To Booklet for Specific Tools and Materials Not Noted in the Basics Listed Above.

There is no substitute for adequate supervision. Most parents look forward to the time when their children understand and can be expected to follow safety rules. Meanwhile, have reasonable expectations of your young child and remember that “kids will be kids.” No matter what your beliefs are about child raising, it is you—not your child—who must be counted on to provide a safe environment.

Post emergency numbers by each phone. Essential numbers include a poison control center, medical doctor, ambulance service, hospital, police and fire department. Teach a child to use the phone and how to access emergency help, usually by dialing 911. Make sure a child knows his/her name, phone number and address.

Have a first-aid kit handy. A first-aid book with a quick-to-use index is a necessity. A parent needs to learn and practice basic medical procedures such as artificial resuscitation for infants and children.

Check out information resources in your community. Some helpful sources are: A city or school district’s adult school program (i.e., “Baby and Me” classes); your pediatrician or pediatric nurse practitioner; county social services department (children’s services division); and the education or community services department of a nearby hospital.

DROWNING

Open, liquid-filled buckets can be lethal. Especially dangerous are five-gallon, straight-sided, industrial ones. The child bends over for a look, perhaps reaching into a liquid, and falls in. After falling in headfirst, the child’s upper body weight keeps the bucket from tipping over. The child cannot get free and drowns. It can literally take just a minute (**Fig. 1**).

Bathtubs are another danger. Bath aids can be helpful, but no substitute for supervision in the tub. Bathtub “supporting-ring” devices were in use for dozens of infants left unattended who drowned. Install effective toilet lid locks to keep children out.

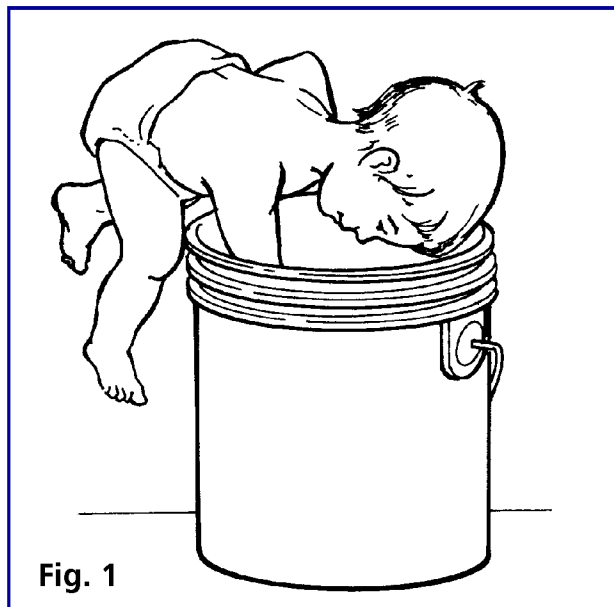


Fig. 1

Surround pools with a fence and locked gate.

Swimming pools or hot tubs should also have covers, alarms, and proper lighting.

Remember: A little one can drown in just inches of water. It makes no difference whether it's a bucket catching drips from a leaky roof, a fish tank, or a diaper pail with liquid on the bottom.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

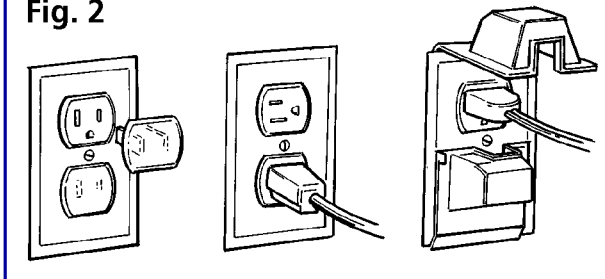
Do not leave electrical appliances plugged in near water. Even if you always unplug the appliance and move it out of reach, what about guests in your home? You must protect your child from this mistake.

You can install ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) in areas where water sources are near electrical outlets (or better yet, throughout your home). These safety devices will break the electric circuit when an abnormal current or overload is detected. Less expensive is to purchase portable plug-in GFCIs. Try to determine risk areas: A cat can knock a lamp into an aquarium while a child is fishing with their fingers. Even electric blankets can be hazardous; in combination with urine, they can cause a serious shock.

Cover electric outlets. To prevent shock or burn injuries if a child sticks a hairpin, key, or other metal item into an outlet, install safety outlet plates or guards on accessible outlets (**Fig. 2**). Children may learn to pull out plastic outlet plugs; consider changing to an outlet with a cover. You can also position immovable furniture so children can't reach outlets. When inserting electrical plugs into outlets, make sure no part of the prongs are left exposed.

Electrical cords can cause burns, shocks, and strangulation. Replace frayed cords. Eliminate unnecessary extension cords. Use cord shorteners to tie long spans of wire. If you use a clamp apparatus to keep a table lamp from falling over, the table must be secure, or the lamp and table may be pulled over. Finally, never allow a child to put an electrical cord in their mouth; injuries can result from simply sucking, not even biting, on a cord.

Fig. 2



Electricity is in every room of your home and outdoors as well. Don't overlook a home office, guest room, basement, and other areas intended to be off-limits to children.

CHOKING

Food is the most common cause of choking and suffocation. An infant or young child can choke on everything from soup to nuts. A child cannot be left alone when eating and drinking.

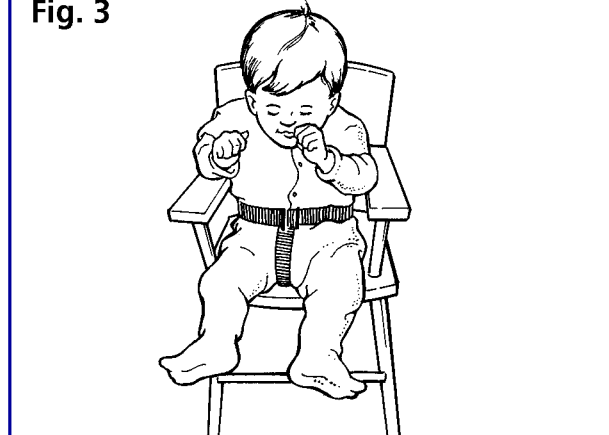
Be aware of small toys and other household objects. If the widest part of any item fits inside a typical toilet paper roll (1¾-inch diameter), consider it a "chokable" item. A very young child is at risk for choking, aspirating, or ingesting an item of this size. Marbles or small balls can block a child's windpipe and suffocate them. Earrings, jigsaw puzzle pieces, and small toys intended for older kids are among the many items to keep out of reach.

Balloons that are not inflated, as well as popped balloon pieces, have killed hundreds of children. An inflated balloon can cause death too. If a child is mouthing it and it pops, air can propel the balloon into the mouth, where it can lodge on the esophagus. Teach children of all ages not to chew on any balloon.

T-shaped plastic tags from new clothing are hard to see—for everyone but an inquisitive baby. They're impossible to see on an X-ray, though they can cause a fatal obstruction in a child's airway.

Even rubber tips on doorstops can be pulled off and choked on. Always be aware of what a child can put in their mouth, because they will!

Fig. 3



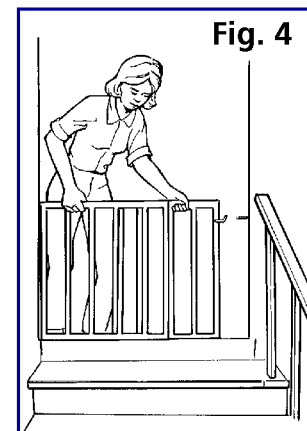
FALLS

Safety straps prevent falls. Many infants have fallen from a stroller, baby carrier, high chair, changing table, or similar device when the safety strap was not in use (**Fig. 3**). Using a safety strap also prevents a child slipping into a stroller or high chair leg opening where they can become trapped. Always read the safety guidelines and instruction that come with these devices.

Falls often occur on stairs, decks, and porches. Install adequate lighting, sturdy railings, and protective fencing. As building codes dictate, staircase balusters, porch and deck railings, and fence pickets should be spaced no more than 4 inches apart so a child's head cannot become trapped.

Use safety gates. Buy safety gates cautiously, the accordion-type gates (with diamond or V-shaped openings) can pinch fingers or trap heads. Remember that gates and other safety apparatus are not a substitute for supervision (**Fig. 4**).

Fig. 4



If your baby uses a walker, remove throw rugs and allow the walker only where flooring is smooth. Uneven surfaces like carpet edges or raised thresholds can make the walker topple over and cause head injuries. Be extra cautious about stairs and heat sources.

Don't place furniture below windows; it could enable a child to climb and fall out. Windows, especially above ground floor, need to be secure. Install childproof latches or locks so windows open only partially. Open windows from above, not below. Do not trust a screen to keep a child in. In all sliding windows, add locks that allow only a 4-inch opening.

Place skidproof rugs or mats near shower and other glass doors, to prevent falls compounded by broken glass. Put decals or colored tape at both child and adult eye-levels wherever it might not be apparent that a glass door is closed. Install child- and adult-height handrails in the bathroom.

FIRE-RELATED SAFETY

Hazards abound near fireplaces. Coals and ashes can be hot a full day after a fire. Coals, ashes, and soot can choke and poison if ingested or inhaled. Glass fireplace doors offer protection but also get hot. Iron gates can fall forward. Create a securely erected barrier to keep your child from fireplaces and wood stoves. Keep fire-tending irons out of reach.

Keep lighters away from children. Disposable butane lighters, even when they no longer produce flame, can produce sparks. A spark can ignite a bedspread or other flammable material. Select safety (not strike-anywhere) matches.

Blankets or pillows falling against a hot night-light bulb can start a fire. Buy a newer night light with a cooler, mini-neon bulb. Look for the Underwriters Labs (UL) approval mark. A shielded light will help keep little fingers from getting at the bulb. Try to use an outlet other than a baseboard, so a child cannot touch the plugs.

Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are necessities. Test detectors monthly, and change

batteries as needed. Check and service extinguishers regularly, and show family members and child-care helpers how to operate them. Place a smoke detector just outside every bedroom, with at least one on each level of the house.

Plan fire escape routes, have escape ladders, and keep exits clear. As soon as your child can understand, explain what to do in case of fire, and how to get help. (It's common for little ones to fearfully—and fatally—hide from fire.) Have a fire drill. Teach the stop-drop-roll technique. Most of all, do not leave your child unattended in your home.

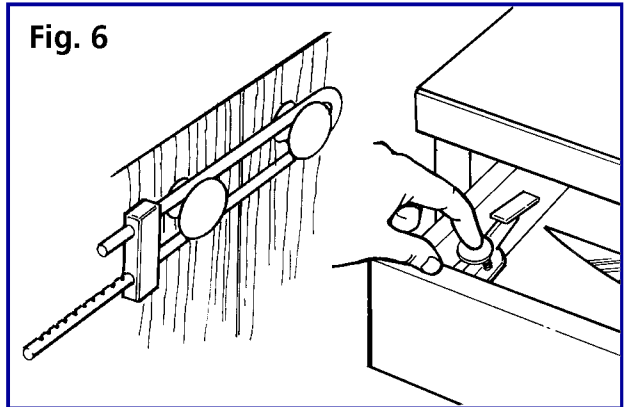
FURNITURE

Large furniture poses dangers. Children must be prevented from pulling over heavy furniture. Fasten cabinets, bookshelves, china closets, and similar pieces securely to the wall with angle braces or spreading drywall anchors (**Fig. 5**). When a child is small, store away furniture that can't be secured or poses other dangers. Establish house rules, such as "Chairs are for sitting" and "No jumping on the bed." Don't allow hiding in or under furniture.

Recliner chairs have trapped the heads of small children (between the leg rest and seat) causing severe brain damage or death. Even children not yet walking can be strong enough to push a recliner closed. Examine furniture for proper construction and assembly.

Cover exposed sharp points with foam. Put "corner cushions" on sharp edges of furniture, countertops, and cabinetry.

Children must be kept out of certain areas. Pressure-release latches for cabinet doors, spring-loaded latches for drawers, and U-shaped cabinet

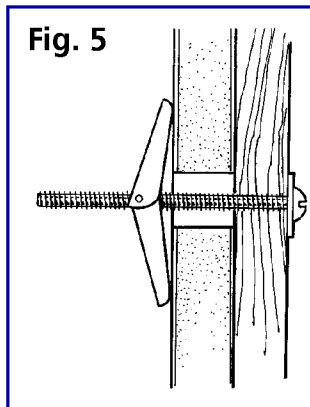


slide locks are available to help protect your child and your things. Some latches not only keep children from opening, they also require an adult to do the closing. These types prevent small fingers being pinched (**Fig. 6**).

All toy chests are not equally safe. The best chests have lightweight, removable lids or sliding doors; no latch or lock; and ventilation on at least one side and on the lid. Risk of strangulation, suffocation, or impact injury (i.e., a broken neck) can be lessened by installing a spring-loaded lid-support mechanism. Inspect the mechanism regularly to see if it's working correctly.

Choose appropriate furniture. Thousands of injuries and deaths from entrapment and strangulation have resulted from conventional beds, waterbeds, bunk beds, cribs, and playpens. Educate yourself about proper slat sizes; menacing cornerposts; decorative knobs; guardrails; hardware failures; improper mattress or box springs support; and other perils. Be extra cautious about used furniture not subjected to today's regulations.

Mesh drop-sided playpens and portable cribs have also resulted in suffocation when an infant rolls over and is trapped in the mesh. Never leave the drop side down on a playpen or crib while a child is inside. Infant cushions and pillows are unnecessary and can cause suffocation deaths.



Examine rooms intended for adults, older siblings, and guests too. On holidays, consider safety as you put up decorations and rearrange furniture. When travelling, evaluate and eliminate dangers as you would in your own home.

POISONOUS SUBSTANCES

Safety latches and locks are critical. To prevent the ingestion of poisonous substances, purchase medicine cabinet inserts or containers that can be securely locked.

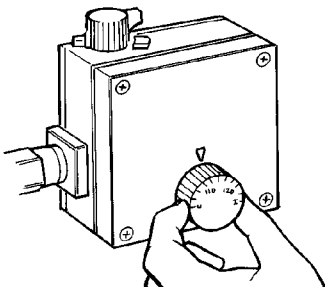
Child-resistant caps are not childproof. Like most child safety measures, they aren't guaranteed to stop your child, but are intended to slow them down so you can catch up! Besides regular medicines, the new transdermal patches are a risk; dispose of them properly.

Cosmetics, toiletries (even mouthwash), and pet care products must all be kept out of reach. Even herbs may be perilous; the same is true of some food supplements (i.e., iron tablets).

Some plants are poisonous, even when a part of the plant is edible. Give away houseplants that are highly toxic to ingest or to the skin. Be vigilant while gardening with children.

Securely store all cleaning supplies. Have only a few basic cleaning products, and keep them away from children. Keep products in their original containers with the manufacturer's ingredients label. If you prepare cleaners from concentrates or household ingredients, do not store them in containers attractive to a child (i.e., a plastic "honey bear").

Fig. 7



If a child should ingest a poison, call a poison control center for information before administering any treatment.

SCALDS AND BURNS

Prevent water scalding. Keep your water heater set at 110 to 120 degrees (Fig. 7), and bathe children at 102 degrees. Showers are subject to sudden bursts of hotter water; equip showers and bathroom faucets with anti-scald mechanisms.

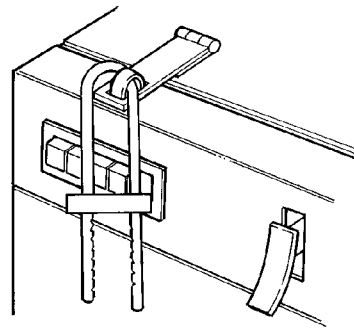
If you bathe a baby in the kitchen sink, do so when the dishwasher isn't running. Some dishwashers superheat the water. If yours is plumbed so it can back into the sink, baby can be scalded almost instantly. Dishwasher steam can burn too; put an appliance latch on the dishwasher (as well as the oven door and other appliances) (Fig. 8).

Use knob covers that prevent children turning on ranges. Use pots on back burners when possible and turn cookware handles out of reach. Do not store food above or around a stove. Place toaster ovens and coffee makers out of reach. With microwave ovens, even if a dish is cool, its contents may be hot! Never use a microwave to heat a bottle.

HIDDEN HAZARDS

Secure or eliminate strangling hazards (Fig. 9). These consist of window blind or drapery cords, wall decorations with ribbons or streamers, laundry bag strings, bibs, loose clothing (especially on backyard play equipment), playground cargo nets, and similar items.

Fig. 8



Properly discard plastic. Despite warnings, children still suffocate from plastic. Knot plastic bags before disposal. Never let a child play with plastic items, such as dry-cleaning bags or garbage bags. Never allow an infant to sleep on a plastic covered mattress.

Remove doors from discarded or unused refrigerators, freezers, dryers, or coolers so children cannot be trapped inside and suffocate. If you cannot remove the door, put a chain and padlock around the appliance so the door cannot be opened.

An electric garage door opener should reverse or stop when resistance is encountered. Disconnect non-reversing garage door openers. Check its operation frequently to be sure it works properly. Relocate the wall switch out of children's reach. Keep the remote control locked in the car and away from children.

Always exercise gun safety: Keep it unloaded, disassembled, and out of the sight and reach of a child of any age. Store ammunition in a separate place. Every day a child under age 14 is killed in the U.S. by a handgun, often by accidents in the home.

Fig. 9

