

# Childproofing Basics



## **In the kitchen:**

- Keep hot foods and liquids away from young children. The vast majority (95 percent) of microwave burns among children are scald burns. Microwave burns are typically caused by spilling hot liquids or food, and injuries are primarily associated with the trunk or the face.
- Use the back burners on the stove and turn pot handles toward the back of the stove.
- Keep glassware, knives, appliance cords, placemats and tablecloths out of reach and away from the edge of counters and tables. If your child is visiting someone else's home, ensure dangerous items are stored out of reach during your child's stay.

## **In the bathroom:**

- Set the thermostat of your hot water heater no higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit to reduce the chance of scald burns. It takes just three seconds for a child to sustain a third degree burn from water at 140 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Lock medicine cabinets. Even items as seemingly harmless as iron pills and mouthwash can be dangerous for a young child.
- Install toilet locks. Unlike adults, children's weight is concentrated in the top half of their bodies. When they lean into a toilet bowl, they may lose their balance, fall forward and drown in as little as 1 inch of water.
- Request child-resistant packaging. But keep in mind that child-resistant containers are not childproof. These medicines still need to be locked up out of a child's reach.
- Remove sharp utensils and appliances. Razors, scissors and blow dryers are better kept in an adult's bedroom, locked out of children's reach.

## **In the bedroom:**

- Beware of old cribs. Baby furniture built even a decade ago might not meet some of today's safety standards. Sharp edges, corner post protrusions and dangerously spaced slats can be deadly.
- Keep cribs and low-standing furniture (beds, bookshelves, toy boxes, chairs) away from windows, preferably against another wall.
- Infants and toddlers can pull on inner or "lift" cords of window blinds creating loops large enough to pull around their necks and strangle. The problem occurs when a corded window blind or shade is lowered but not locked into position. This leaves a small amount of slack on the inner cord and the child can pull it around her neck. Always lock blinds whether they are up or down.

## **Around the house:**

- Check for fire hazards. Look for frayed electrical wires or flammable materials near heat sources such as space heaters. Never run electrical cords under rugs. Make sure that your home, and any home your child visits, has working smoke alarms in every sleeping area and on every level.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors in every sleeping area and check batteries often. Exposure to even low levels of this poisonous gas can be fatal to a small child.
- Use safety gates. Stair falls tend to result in severe injuries. Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs to keep infants and toddlers out of harm's way.
- Cover all unused electrical outlets.
- If firearms are kept in the house, keep them locked, unloaded and stored out of reach. Secure ammunition in a separate, locked location.
- Install window guards on all windows that are not emergency exits. Window guards can be purchased at your local hardware store.  
Young children love to climb on furniture and use drawers and shelves as steps. However, children can sustain crush injuries as furniture can easily tip over on them. Secure bookcases, shelving, and heavy furniture to walls with brackets and anchors. When storing items, put heavier items on bottom shelves and in bottom drawers.
- Large items such as TV's, microwaves, fish tanks and appliances can topple off stands and fall on children. Use broad-based carts for TV's and appliances. Secure carts and appliances to walls. Avoid using pedestal tables to hold heavy items.
- Supervise children and toddlers at all times around furniture.

For additional home safety information, visit [www.safekidsspringfield.org](http://www.safekidsspringfield.org)