

# SAFETY AND INJURY PREVENTION



NATIONAL CENTER ON  
Early Childhood Health and Wellness

Tips for Families from the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness

## Safety and Injury Prevention for Young Children Is:

- Making sure children have safe places to grow and learn
- Protecting children from danger
- Teaching children what to do to be safe

### Why Is It Important?

#### *Children Like to Explore But Need:*

- Safe places to play
- Adults who watch and listen so they can prevent an injury before it happens
- Opportunities to practice new skills safely

#### *When Children Are Safe, They Are More Likely To:*

- Be injury-free
- Focus on learning
- Explore new situations with confidence



## Things You Can Do to Help Your Child

- **At Home:**
  - Keep all medicine, cleaning and harmful products away from children.
  - Use cabinet locks and electrical socket covers.
  - Use safety gates on stairs.
  - Use cribs with fixed sides rather than drop sides.
  - Keep cribs away from windows and blind cords.
  - It is best to use cordless window coverings, if possible. If not, keep cords tied high out of children's reach.
  - Put babies to sleep on their backs in a crib with no soft blankets, pillows or bumpers.
  - Keep children away from hot foods and liquids.
  - Turn pot handles to the back of the stove.
  - Set your water-heater thermostat to 120 degrees or less.
  - Keep children away from heaters or fires.
  - Have a smoke alarm on every floor. Replace batteries in the spring and fall.
  - Get a carbon monoxide detector, if you do not have one.
  - Check with your local fire station to see if they can help you find a smoke alarm or carbon monoxide detector.
  - Ask your pediatrician about foods and small objects that can cause choking.
  - Make and practice an escape plan.

## Things You Can Do to Help Your Child

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### ● Outside:

- Use sunscreen.
- Teach your child to stay out of the street.
- Look for playgrounds with soft surfaces instead of dirt or grass.
- Watch your child closely on the playground.
- Remove drawstrings from clothing.
- Keep shoelaces short and tied.

### ● Water Safety

- Know that a child can drown in any amount of water that covers his mouth and nose.
- Always stay within arm's reach of your child if he is in or near water.
- Learn to swim, and take your child to professionally supervised swim lessons.
- Use four-sided fences with self-latching gates around pools.
- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

### ● Car and Truck Safety

- Choose a car seat that is right for your child's age, height and weight.
- Choose a seat that fits in your car or truck and use it all the time.
- Ask your Head Start staff where you can go in your community to learn how to install your child's car seat safely.
- Be sure that children younger than 13 only sit in the back seat.
- Never leave your child in a car without an adult.
- Teach children that vehicles are never safe places to play. Even if the windows are open, young children can become dangerously overheated within the first 10 minutes.

