

Chapter 27

Child Proofing Your House From Danger

Goal: *To increase parents' use of an effective alternative to spanking as a form of punishment.*



Child proofing is a term describing the actions parents take to make the living conditions of a house safe for a child.

Why Child Proof?

Children, especially young toddlers, love to explore. Touching, pulling, grabbing, and eating are just a few of the ways young children explore their environment. Since toddlers are generally too young to know what is safe to play with and what is potentially dangerous, parents child proof a house to protect children from becoming hurt, or in some instances, even killed. Child proofing prevents dangerous interactions.



Parents also child proof their house to enhance the positive interactions they have with their children. ***A house where dangerous objects are out of reach is a house where parents aren't constantly saying "No"!***

Is Your House Child Proofed?

You probably wonder at times whether your house is safe enough for your toddler to play in without a high risk for injury. There are two things you can do to see if your house is safe for toddlers:

1. Get down on your hands and knees and view the world as a toddler. What you can pull, grab, bite, so can your child. Move tempting and dangerous objects out of reach.



2. Watch your child as he explores his environment. Walk with your child through the house and notice what he notices. Can he reach that shelf? Can he push that button? You'll soon find out by watching him. If he can reach objects he shouldn't, it's time to better child proof your house.

Once Child Proofed, Always Child Proofed?

Right? Wrong! Babies grow along with their ability to reach for objects, climb on furniture, open drawers, and walk up and down stairs. You will continually need to modify your house as your child continues to grow. The good news is that as your child grows older, he's also learning what is safe and what isn't.

Common Dangers

1. **Paint chips.** For young children, everything goes in their mouth. Many older homes have been painted with lead-based paint which can be toxic to young children.
2. **Cigarette butts.** Nicotine can kill a child if eaten.
3. **Plants.** Some plants can be poisonous.
4. **Open containers of alcohol, and beer cans.** Alcohol can cause permanent brain and liver damage to a young child.
5. **Cigarette lighters and matches.** Burns from cigarette lighters and matches are a common injury in preschoolers.

Family Home Practice Assignment

Use the Home Safety Checklists on the following pages to modify your home, making the house safe for your child to explore.

Notes and Comments:

Home Safety Checklist #1

The following checklist is designed to ensure your house is safe enough for your child to play in with only minimal risk of injury. Take some time now to go over this checklist, room by room, to make your house safe for your child. Make it a habit to recheck your house at least once a month.

Action Needed

Check when completed

ALL ROOMS

1. Put electric outlet covers on all unused outlets. _____
2. Put a gate across all stairways, top and bottom, until child can handle stairs. _____
3. Remove or pad sharp corners on furniture and appliances. _____
4. Remove throw rugs on tiled floors. _____
5. Use non-skid floor wax on wood, tile, or linoleum floors. _____
6. Keep all plants out of baby's reach. _____

KITCHEN

1. Put all cleaning supplies on a top shelf out of children's reach. _____
2. Install safety locks on all kitchen cabinets below waist level. You may want to keep one cabinet with pots, pans, and unbreakable bowls unlocked for child's exploration. _____
3. Turn pot handles toward back of stove when cooking. Use the back burners on stove for cooking. _____
4. Take knobs off of gas range when not in use. _____
5. Have a secure cover for the garbage can. _____
6. Install safety locks on kitchen drawers with knives and other sharp utensils. _____
7. Keep all breakable bowls out of the cabinets with the pots and pans. _____
8. Remove throw rugs from kitchen floors. _____

BASEMENT, GARAGE, ATTIC

1. Throw away all old paints you're not using. Store paint thinners, paint, stains, on a high shelf. _____
2. Store all tools in a locked tool chest or shelved out of reach. _____
3. Lock all doors securely. _____
4. Keep garden tools, lawn mowers, snow blowers out of reach of young children. _____
5. Keep keys to electric machines safely out of reach. _____
6. Take doors off of old refrigerators and freezers. _____
7. Store pesticides and fertilizers on high shelves out of reach of children. _____