

# Safe and Secure



A Guide to Prevention of Injuries to Preschoolers



# Safe and Secure

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# Safe and Secure

## Introduction

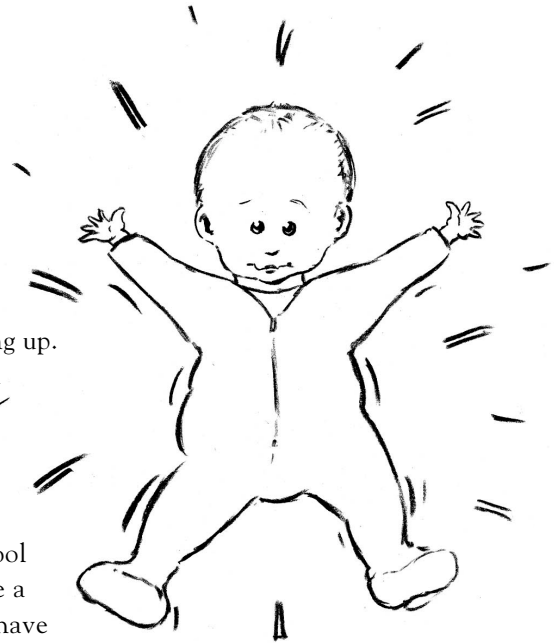
For children, tumbles and 'small hurts' are just part of growing up. The 'big hurts' are the ones we try to prevent. Children need protection in their early years when there are many exciting things to taste and places to explore. Your child is new to this world and does not yet understand how to be safe.

This booklet has been written to help you guide your preschool child safely through the early growing years when injuries are a common occurrence. The safety suggestions in this booklet have been collected from a wide range of sources on child safety. If you are unable to find a safety product mentioned or want more detailed information on a subject, contact your Regional Health Authority.

This booklet can be used as an ongoing safety reference. It is laid out in five sections. The first section has **general safety information**, which applies to all preschool children and infants. The following four sections outline **safety needs specific to different age groups** because children require different kinds of protection at different ages.

Although the booklet is divided into specific age groups, these groupings are intended only as guidelines. Remember no two children are alike. Your child may need more or less supervision and guidance at a particular age than other children. Use your best judgement and your own knowledge of your child in using these guidelines to provide a safe environment.

Most safety measures apply to young children. As your child grows through each stage however, it is a good idea to reread this booklet to remind yourself of the safety tips to keep your child **Safe and Secure**.



# All Age Groups

Safe and  
Secure

All Age  
Groups



# Safe and Secure

Children need protection in their early years when there are many exciting things to taste and places to explore. Help keep them from danger by making their world as safe as possible. Some safety measures apply to young children of many ages. As your child grows through each stage, it is a good idea to reread this section to remind you of safety tips to keep your child Safe and Secure.

If you remember to keep a closer eye on your child during these times, there is much less chance of an injury occurring.

For current ratings of child safety products please consult:

- your local Regional Health Authority
- Product Safety Office (see resources)

## Be prepared

Keep these emergency numbers by your telephone:

**Poison Centre: 670-1414 (Calgary)**

**1-800-332-1414** - toll free across Alberta

Ambulance: \_\_\_\_\_

Fire: \_\_\_\_\_

Police: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Your address/land location \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your phone \_\_\_\_\_

*(In an emergency it is easy to get mixed up, or your baby sitter may not remember these.)*

Learn first aid and child safety from The Canadian Red Cross Society or St. John Ambulance (listed in the Resource section at the end of this booklet). Knowing the proper way to do the Heimlich manoeuvre, and to give mouth-to-mouth and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) could save your child's life.

Many injuries in the home occur during a change of routine or a stressful event. Some particular danger times are when:

- your child is hungry and tired before mealtimes,
- someone in the family is ill,
- you are moving to a new home,
- you are in a hurry,
- you have visitors.

## Safety in the car

One of the earliest chances you have to protect your baby is your first car ride together. Injuries from car collisions are the leading cause of death in children. Car seats, used correctly, have been proven to prevent many injuries. By using a car seat each and every time, your child will accept this as the only way to travel. Call your nearest health services centre for information and assistance.

The Alberta Motor Association reports that correctly installed car seats can reduce the risk of death by 71%, but they go on to quote a recent Transport Canada survey which revealed that less than 40% of child restraints are used properly.

- According to the Alberta Traffic Act 1999, all children under the age of six years or weighing less than 18 kilograms (40 pounds) must be secured in a Canadian-approved (CMVSS), and correctly installed child car safety seat.
- **Follow the manufacturer's instructions for both your vehicle and your car seat when installing your car seat, for proper use, and for transferring the car seat from one vehicle to another.**
- Your arms will not hold your baby in a collision or sudden stop, even at slow speeds. Always use a child car seat.
- The types of child car safety seats available in Canada are: infant rear facing only; toddler convertible seats that can be rear facing for infants and forward facing for toddlers; combination



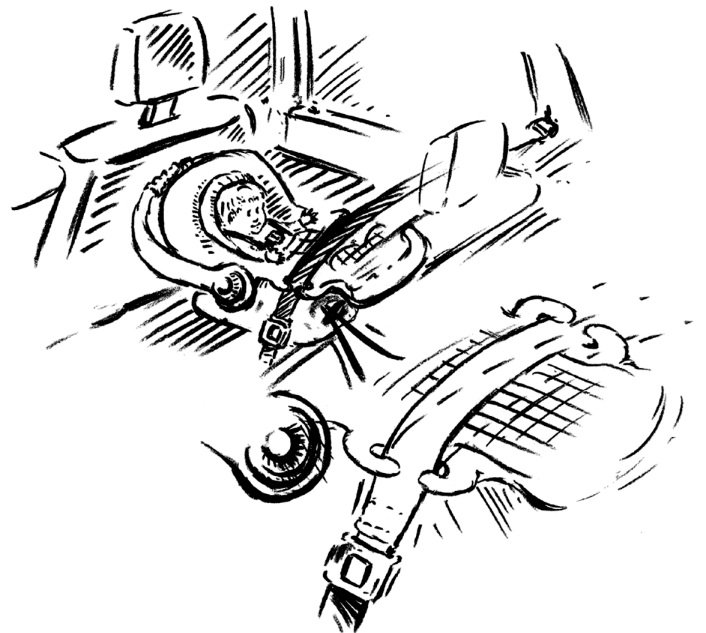
seats that can be changed from toddler to booster by removing the internal harness; booster only seats; and car beds for premature infants.

- Be sure you buy a seat appropriate for your child's weight and one that will fit your vehicle.
- Contact one of the resources listed at the end of this booklet or your local health centre for more extensive information on correct use of child car safety seats.
- Most manufacturers recommend replacing a child car seat every 6-10 years because plastic fatigue may occur after that time, causing it to break easily. Many car seats now have expiry dates on them.
- If your car seat has been in use during a collision, destroy it so it cannot be used again. (Most manufacturers or insurance companies will replace car seats which have been involved in a collision.)
- It is safer not to buy a used car seat but if you do:
  - *check to make sure all parts are there (eg. chest clips, locking clips)*
  - *check to make sure it has never been in a collision and refer to the resources at the end of this booklet for guidance*
  - *write to the manufacturer who may be able to send you an instruction sheet for safe use*
- Baby or infant cuddle seats are not acceptable as infant car seats.
- check to make sure it hasn't been recalled. (call AMA 1-800-222-6578)

There are several mistakes that are often made when using child car seats. Using a child seat incorrectly can be as unsafe as not using one at all. The following points highlight these by explaining correct use.

- Be certain the forward facing car seat is secured properly to the vehicle with a tether strap and anchor bolt.
- Use the vehicle seat belt to secure the car seat snugly in the vehicle.
- Use a locking clip to lock the continuous loop type of seat belt when you use it to secure your child in the car seat. Check your vehicle owners manual to ensure you need to use one.
- Cover your baby in blankets **after** the child is secured in the car seat with the internal harness system.

- Always use the rear facing infant seat in the rear facing position. Do not convert it to a forward facing seat unless it is designed to be used this way.
- Be sure the seat harness is not twisted and that it is set to fit snugly.
- Keep infants rear facing as long as possible up to the maximum weight specified by your car seat (20-25 lbs)
- Thread the harness straps exactly according to instructions and double back all loose ends.
- The chest clip should be positioned at armpit level.
- Harness straps, as well as the tether strap, which go through a strap slide must be doubled back to reduce slipping under tension.
- Use the harness on a car seat even if the seat has a shield. The shield will not hold your child in a collision.
- Be sure the crotch strap is secured properly.
- Do not recline the car seat unless this is clearly indicated in the manufacturer's instructions.
- Never allow your child to ride unrestrained, even if it means enduring tears or complaints.
- Never use any type of seat that is not a **Canadian approved** child safety seat. (A CMVSS label on the seat will confirm this approval.)
- Never alter or modify the safety seat or tie knots in the webbing.
- NEVER place your baby or any child in front of an airbag.
- If your child is crying it is better to pull over off the road to attend to him/her. Do not remove them from the car seat while the car is in motion.





# Safe and Secure

Cars hold many dangers for children.

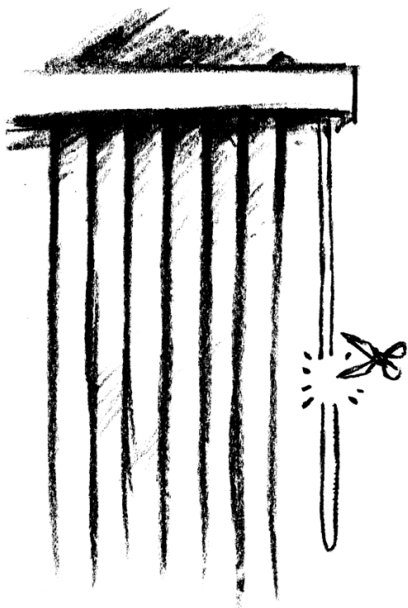
- Never leave your child alone in a car. An errand of “only a few seconds” may take longer than expected.
- Walk around your car before backing up to be sure there are no children in the driveway.
- Car mirrors are available to help you supervise your child in the car seat. A mirror can be set so you can see your child whether the seat is front or rear facing.
- Remove or secure all loose cargo that may become a projectile in a crash.

## Safety around home

### Throughout the House

Many safety tips apply to every room in the house.

- Be very aware of lamp, curtain, telephone and other hanging cords, which can get caught around a child’s neck and cause choking. Some people cut off the loop portion of curtain cords and devices are available to shorten hanging cords.



- Use carbon monoxide testers.
- Use smoke detectors on every level of the dwelling. Test them often and change the battery every 6 months.
- Put safety latches on all cupboards where harmful products are stored. (See page 9 for more information about poison prevention.)
- Put covers over all electrical outlets.
- Set the water heater at no more than 49°C . See page 12 for more information about controlling the hot water temperature.
- Learn the names of the plants that you have. Keep any that are poisonous out of the reach of children or, better still, give them away. (See page 11 for a list of some common harmful plants).
- Watch constantly for things that could cause injury. Check for:
  - *small objects that could be swallowed or stuck in a child’s ears or nose*
  - *objects with sharp or rough edges*
  - *hanging plants that will become within reach of a growing baby*
- Discard plastic bags as soon as they are emptied. As an extra safety measure, tie a knot in them first. Young children love to play peekaboo and can suffocate in a plastic bag.
- Check that handrails on all stairs are secure.
- Keep extension cords out of reach.
- If you have a mechanical garage door opener, be sure it includes a sensor. The door will reverse direction if the sensor detects a child, pet or toy in its path.
- Never shake or toss your baby. Severe brain injury, even death, can result from any jerking which makes the head snap.
- Use caution when using second-hand cribs, strollers, car seats, playpens, stove guards, balcony guards or gates. If they are old, they may have been manufactured before government safety standards were established in recent years. Contact one of the Product Safety Offices listed at the end of this booklet for information about current standards and recall information.



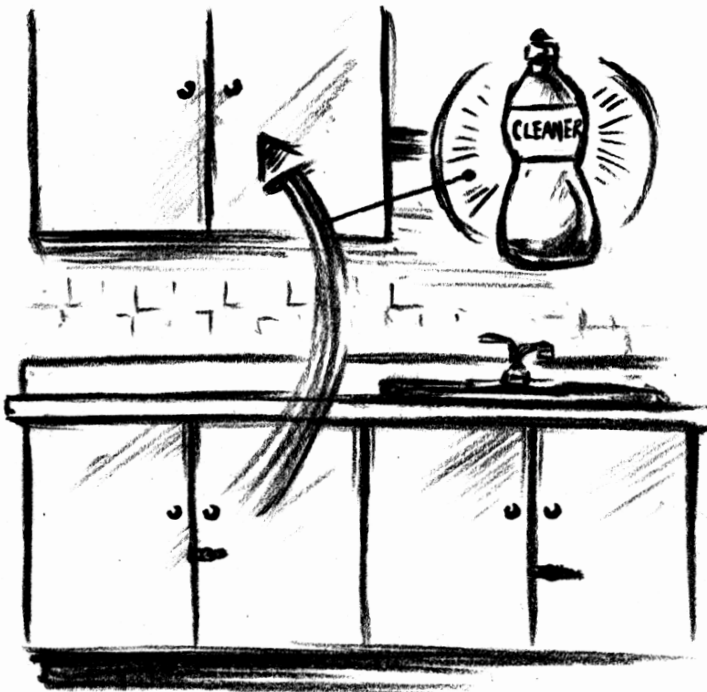


- Never leave a gun loaded, and always keep all guns and ammunition locked away securely and separately.
- Do not let young children play around exercise equipment which may have unexpected dangers. For instance, a crawling baby had a finger cut off when it was caught in the chain of an exercise bike as an older child started to peddle.

## *In the Kitchen*

There are many ways to make the kitchen a safer room.

- Store anything which might be a poison away from all foods. (See page 9 for more information on poison prevention).
- Store poisons, including cleaning agents and medicines, in a locked cupboard in original containers and out of your child's reach.
- Roll up electrical cords so they are out of reach.



- Put appliances at the back of the counter or in cupboards with safety latches on the doors.
- Wipe up spills right away.
- Store sharp and pointed objects, such as scissors, skewers and knives, where they cannot be reached.
- Keep the doors of ovens, dishwashers, refrigerators, and washers and dryers closed.
- Place pet food and water dishes where your young child will not be able to sample them, or fall face down into them.

## *In the Living Room*

Living rooms and family rooms have their share of dangers for children.

- Keep traffic areas and exits free of furniture and obstructions.
- Choose coffee tables and other pieces of furniture with rounded edges, or cover sharp edges with foam or plastic corners made for this purpose.
- Securely fasten a screen or hearth protector in front of the fireplace.
- Remember a visitor's purse or bag might contain harmful pills or a lighter, so keep purses out of reach.
- Check the size of the opening on your recliner chair when the footrest is raised. Anything wider than 12.5 cm (5") is dangerous. Children have died when lying across the footrest, which dropped and trapped their necks in the space. There should be a bar across the opening.
- Heavy pieces of furniture, like bookcases, should be securely bolted to the wall.



# Safe and Secure

## *In the Bathroom*

The bathroom is a room that has its own special dangers. Check the information on page 12 about preventing burns and scalds.

- Keep all medicines in child-proof containers and lock them away. (Child-proof bottles can be opened by small hands. It just takes a little longer.)
- Keep the diaper pail out of reach.
- Lock cleaning supplies, shampoos, soaps and grooming aids out of your child's reach.
- Keep the toilet lid closed. Toilet locks are available to secure the toilet lid and protect your child from the risk of drowning in the toilet bowl.
- Store electrical appliances, such as hair dryers and curling irons, out of reach.
- Soft, inflatable bathtub tap covers are available to help cushion your child against bangs on the spout.

## *In Bedrooms*

- Be prepared for night-time emergencies. Keep a flashlight and telephone by your bed.
- Put loose change, candies and other small objects out of reach when you empty your pockets. Children have choked to death on such objects.

Family members' bedrooms each can present dangers to a young child.

In adults' bedrooms:

- *Store small jewellery like earrings out of reach. They can be swallowed easily and cause your child to choke.*
- *Check the list on pages 10-11 for possible harmful products, and keep these and matches locked away.*
- *Check the furniture for stability.*
- *Many injuries occur when young children fall off their parents' bed.*

Children may try to climb on furniture in any room.

- In older children's bedrooms, be sure younger children cannot reach toys which could be harmful to them.
- In the baby's bedroom:
  - *Never leave your baby alone, even for an instant, while on a change table.*
  - *Choose sturdy, child-size furniture which is washable, with lead-free paint that does not peel or crack.*
  - *If you paint the furniture, use an interior paint suitable for children.*
  - *Bolt furniture to the wall.*

## *In the Basement and Utility Areas*

Basements and utility areas can be especially dangerous because so many harmful products are stored in the nooks and crannies where children love to play.

- Keep harmful products, such as turpentine, paint, bug killer and cleaning fluid, out of a child's reach.
- Store the electric iron out of reach and roll up the cord.
- Put sharp tools out of a child's reach.
- Use old fashioned cleaning products such as baking soda, vinegar and cornmeal. For more dangerous products, buy only the amount you need, then place the empty container in the garbage.
- Place cleaning products in a basket and take them with you as you clean. Take the basket with you if you stop to answer the telephone or door bell. Remember to put everything away out of reach when you finish.
- Remove the doors of unused hinged-door appliances, such as dryers and refrigerators. A child can easily crawl in and suffocate when the door closes.



## Safety from poisons

Each room in the house contains dangerous products that can harm curious young explorers.

- **If your child swallows any object which you are uncertain about, call the Poison Centre at 670-1414 (Calgary) or 1-800-332-1414 immediately. If you are in doubt, treat it as a poison.**
- Keep all chemicals out of sight and reach of children, in a locked cupboard.
- Learn about the warning labels on containers:
  - **Corrosive** - the product can burn and if it is swallowed it will burn the mouth, throat and stomach.
  - **Explosive** - the container may explode if it is heated or punctured.
  - **Flammable** - the product or its fumes can catch fire easily.
  - **Poison** - the product can cause serious illness or death if it is swallowed or, in some cases, breathed in.



Poison



Flammable



Explosive



Corrosive

- Teach children that these safety symbols mean: Danger! Do Not Touch.
- Chemical product containers, even if sealed or empty, are not toys. Never let children play with them.
- If there is anything in the instructions you do not understand, ask for help. Be sure the symbols and

- labels on containers are not removed or covered up.
- Store household chemicals and cleaning products in their original containers. It is very tempting for a child to taste something which is stored in a pop bottle.
- Never mix chemicals together. Some mixtures can produce harmful gases.
- Close the cap on the container tightly, even if you set it down for just a moment. Make sure child-resistant containers are as difficult to open as they are intended to be.
- Keep all medications in their original containers. If your child does swallow some of the medicine, you will be able to give the Poison Centre exact details.
- Be sure you read the instructions for any medication you give your child and measure it carefully. It is easy to give the incorrect dose.
- If you are giving your child medication, read the label fully each time you give a dose, even in the middle of the night.
- Do not call medicines "candy".
- Do not leave your child's medicine on a bedside table after you have put your child to bed.
- If your child's medicine is in a diaper bag, be sure the bag is always out of reach. It is easy to forget and place the bag beside your child on the back seat of the car, for example.
- Keep all chemical products out of sight and out of reach of children, in a locked cupboard.
- Contact the Poison Centre for more information about poison prevention in your home. (The phone number and address are in the Resource section at the end of this brochure).

Ipecac should be used only if you are told to do so by the Poison Centre. You may sometimes see the recommendation that you keep a bottle of ipecac syrup in your home to be used if your child has taken a poison. Ipecac syrup can be harmful. Never use it without calling the Poison Centre first.

Think about the rooms in your house and whether or not all of the following poisons are locked away out of reach.



# Safe and Secure

## Dangerous products in the kitchen

- detergent, especially dishwasher detergent
- drain cleaner
- scouring powder
- oven cleaner
- waxes and polishes
- disinfectants and air fresheners
- flavouring extracts, nutmeg, salt, cayenne, vanilla, baking soda, and other food additives
- window cleaners
- alcoholic beverages

## Dangerous products in the living room

- medications (left in purses and bags by visitors)
- cigarettes and remaining butts
- alcoholic beverages
- video and stereo cleaning solutions

## Dangerous products in bedrooms

- hair sprays
- nail polish
- face cream
- birth control pills
- anti-moth preparations
- cologne and perfume
- nail polish remover
- skin freshener
- sleeping pills

## Dangerous products in the bathroom

- all medications (both prescription and over-the-counter)
- rubbing alcohol
- antiseptics
- hair remover
- hair bleaches and dyes
- laxatives
- ointments
- shampoo
- aftershave lotion
- hair spray
- hair tonic
- bathroom cleansers
- toilet cleaners
- cosmetics

## Dangerous products in utility areas

- paints and removers
- auto waxes and polishes
- gasoline and motor oil
- turpentine
- dyes
- glues
- solvents
- barbecue starters
- weed killers
- insecticides
- lyes
- bleach
- detergents, fabric softeners
- drain opener
- mouse and insect poison
- veterinary medicines
- antifreeze
- windshield washer fluid
- fertilizers
- mothballs



## Dangerous indoor and outdoor plants

- Azalea
- Cactus
- Crocus
- Daisy
- Daffodil bulb (Narcissus)
- Dieffenbachia
- Eucalyptus
- Fox Glove (Digitalis)
- Holly berries
- Hyacinth
- Jack in the Pulpit
- Jimson Weed
- Larkspur
- Lilly of the Valley
- Mistletoe
- Monkshood
- Oleander
- Philodendron
- Poison Hemlock (Fool's Parsley)

- Pokeweed
- Potato (green part)
- Rhubarb leaf
- Rubber Plant
- Schefflera
- Sweet Peas
- Tomato leaf
- Tulip bulb
- Walnut (green shell)
- Water Hemlock
- Yew (needles more toxic than berries)

The following fruit pits and seeds are not poisonous if they are swallowed whole but if they are opened and chewed, they can be harmful.

- Almond
- Apple
- Apricot
- Cherry
- Pear
- Peach
- Plum

For many years, people have believed that Poinsettia is a poisonous plant. Although this is not the case, it can cause irritation of the mouth or skin.

If you are uncertain about a plant which is not on this list, call the Poison Centre (page 9) for more information. Also, if you are not sure of the types of plants you have, take a leaf or some identifying part to a local nursery for their help.

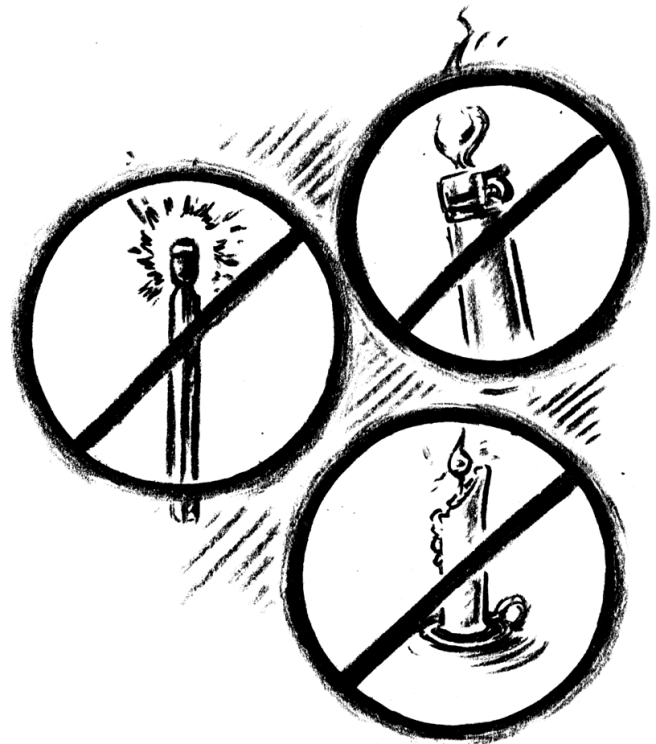




## Safety from burns

Young children can easily be burned. They may become curious and explore places where they come in contact with heat, such as scalding water or fire, or, they may fall against a hot object as they play.

- Plan and practice an escape route which will allow you to get your child out of the house quickly in case of fire.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen. Test it often as recommended on the label.
- Put matches, lighters and candles out of sight and out of reach.
- Turn all pot handles and spouts toward the back of the stove or counter. A metal alloy stove guard is available which fixes to the front of the burners to prevent little hands from reaching the pots. Also available is an oven latch to prevent children opening the oven door.
- Keep cords for electrical appliances, such as deep fryers, kettles and irons, out of reach.
- Use placemats instead of a tablecloth and place hot foods near the centre of the table so they are not easily pulled off.
- Keep snacks or goodies stored away from the stove so a child trying to climb up to get something will not fall on a hot burner.
- Set your hot water heater at no more than 49°C (120°F) to prevent scalds:
  - *A tub tap cover is available which prevents your child turning on the hot water tap.*
  - *If you wish to make the water adjustment more permanent, a temperature control valve is available which fits inside the tap.*
  - *A floating bath thermometer which doubles as a toy is available to show you the temperature of bath water.*
- Put a barrier around space heaters and wood stoves to prevent your child falling against them.
- Avoid drinking anything hot while holding your baby. It is very easy to spill onto a wiggling child.
- If you are a smoker, do not smoke when you are holding your child. Cigarette ashes burn! Remember too, babies breathe in the smoke you exhale and they suffer the same risks of second-hand smoke everyone else does.
- Keep your child away from the barbecue at all times. Even when it is not in use, it can retain heat for a long time or curious young hands might loosen fittings to a propane tank.
- A child-size fire escape ladder is available which will make it easier for your child to climb down in case of fire.





## Safety at rest time

### In the Crib

Government safety regulations for cribs were issued in 1986. Any made before that date do not meet safety regulations and should not be used. It is illegal to sell or advertise these cribs. Cribs made since 1986 must have the year of manufacture on them.

- If possible, buy a brand new crib for your baby which will meet all recent safety regulations, or get one made after 1986.
- If you do use a crib made before 1986, contact the Product Safety Office (listed in Resources at the end of this booklet) or your Regional Health Authority for more information.
- Keep the crib away from window blind cords which can strangle your child.
- Each time you change the crib sheets or move the crib, check that:
  - *there are no broken or missing parts*
  - *the mattress is firm and the mattress supports are securely in place*
  - *the mattress fits snugly against the slats of the crib to prevent your baby's head from being caught between the crib side and the mattress*
  - *Be sure that the crib sides are firmly locked when your child is in the crib*

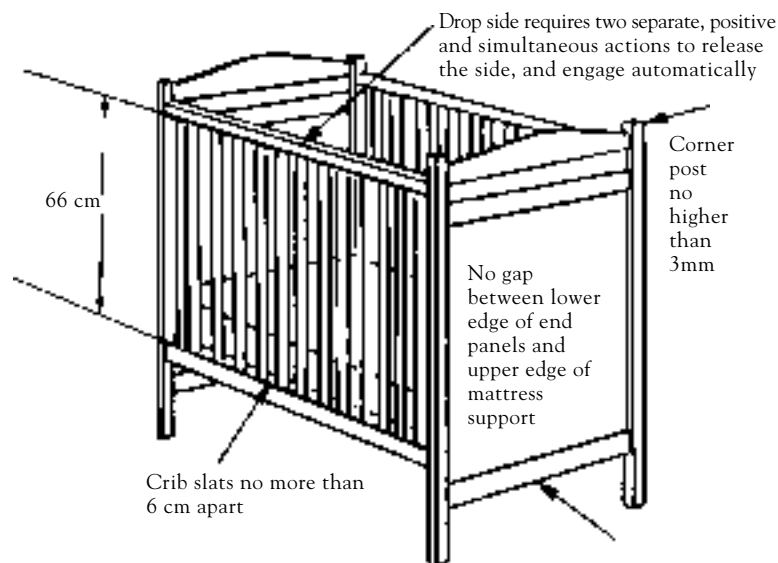
### Other Sleep Time Safety Tips

- Do not put your baby on a water bed. There is a chance of being bounced off, suffocating or becoming trapped down the side of the mattress.
- Inspect cribs you use when away from home to be sure they meet current safety standards.
- If you use bunk beds:
  - *do not permit a child younger than age six to sleep in the upper bunk. The child's head can become stuck between the mattress and guard rail and the child can suffocate.*
  - *be sure there is a guard rail*
  - *be sure there are no gaps between the mattress and the sides of the bed or the guard rail*

### With Soothers (Pacifiers)

Although there are safety regulations for soothers, you must still be on guard.

- It is dangerous to hang a soother around a baby's neck. The string could catch on something and strangle the child.
- Buy a soother made for the purpose. First choice is one that is all in one piece.
- If the soother is in two parts, tug at it often to make sure it has not become weak at the base of the ring.
- Do not use a baby bottle nipple and plastic collar taped or glued together. The nipple could separate and get stuck in your baby's throat.
- Check the condition of the nipple every day. If it becomes worn and chewed, a small piece could stick in your baby's throat. Early signs of wear are a sticky surface or white rings at the base of the nipple where it is stretched. Throw the soother away if either of these occurs.
- Some medicines may damage a soother so check it even more often if your child is taking any medication.





# Safe and Secure

## Safety at play time

### With Toys

Buy toys that are appropriate for your child's size and age. Most injuries from toys occur because the child is not able to play with the toy properly.

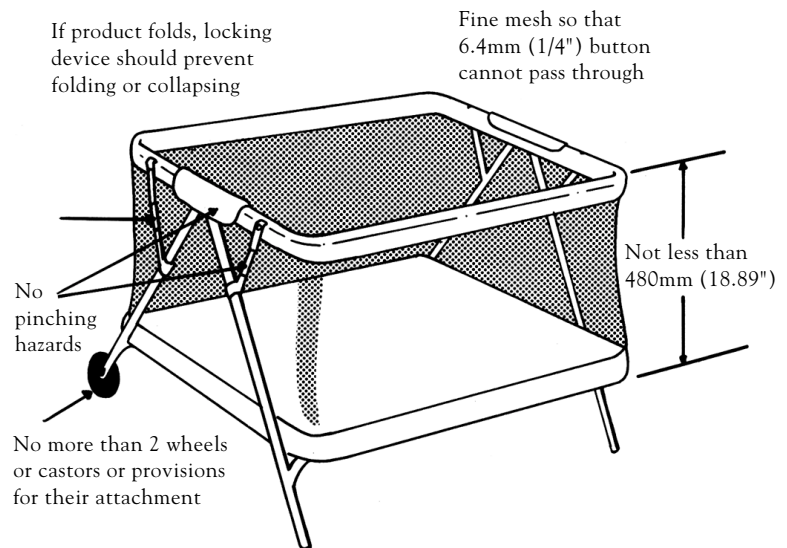
- **Balloons are very dangerous and have caused many deaths.**
  - Do not let a child younger than age two have balloons and keep a close eye on older children playing with them.
  - Do not leave balloons in the crib or playpen.
  - Do not let your child chew or suck on a balloon.
  - Throw away broken pieces which your child can choke on.
- Observe warning labels on toys. They are intended to prevent injuries to your child.
- Check that all toy edges are smooth.
- Avoid toys with buttons and removable eyes and noses. These should be painted or embroidered on.
- Check for springs that can catch fingers, toes and hair.
- Inspect toys regularly for damage and loose parts which might break off and be swallowed.
- Keep soft fabric toys away from fireplaces and heaters.
- Check that batteries in toys are installed correctly.
- Do not let your child take battery-operated toys to bed.
- Have one special place for toys and teach your child to put them back where they belong at the end of playtime.



- If you use a toy box, select one that is well ventilated in case your child becomes trapped inside it. Choose one which has a lid that can be propped up securely and pushed open from the inside. Check often that the hinges will hold the lid open.

### In Playpens

When your child is in a playpen, you can control the toys that you provide and the crawling space is confined. To be safe, the playpen should have the safety points shown in the illustration below.



Playpens are safe only if they are used wisely.

- Playpens made with wide mesh should not be used, because buttons and hooks on clothing can get caught.
- Playpens should not be used as a substitute for cribs, because they do not have the same safety features. They are designed for an active baby, not one who is sleeping and might get caught in the mesh or mattress.
- Do not use a playpen that has more than two castors. If your baby bounces about, the playpen could slide across a floor and into danger.





- If tears occur in the vinyl rails or the mattress pad, your baby may choke on the small torn pieces.
- Playpens should never be left partially collapsed when not in use, because your baby may crawl inside and suffocate.
- Remove large stuffed toys from the playpen. They can be used as a step to climb over the edge, leading to a fall.
- Once your child can climb over the edge of the playpen, stop using it.

## *Baby Walkers*

**Baby walkers are not safe.** They are not made in Canada, and it is against the law to bring them into the country.

- They can easily roll down a flight of stairs or against something hot, causing serious injury.
- They are often unstable and can tip.
- They can collapse easily.
- Little fingers can be jammed against furniture.
- Babies can travel very quickly toward injury before anyone can stop them and can reach items which normally would be out of reach.

Baby walker substitutes are available and are safer than baby walkers but should still be used with caution. One example is a seat that is set on a firm treadmill base so your baby can make the motions of walking while remaining in the same spot. Children may be injured if this is used energetically because the complete unit could slide across the floor into danger.

Exersaucers consist of a seat on a saucer base. The saucer can rock, tilt and bounce, or it can be made to remain stationary. Regardless of the walker or the substitute used, always check the manufacturers instructions for safe and proper use.

## *At Pools, Puddles, Lakes and Rivers*

Young children love playing in water but they do not understand the dangers.

- Keep your child within arms reach at all times when near water.
- Do not leave a bucket with water in it. Toddlers can get their heads and shoulders stuck, and can drown.
- Empty all water from hot tubs and wading pools when not being used.
- Enclose your outdoor swimming pool with a fence and a self-locking gate.
- Enroll your child in a swimming and water-safety course. You will both have fun while teaching your youngster about safety near water.
- Beware of a false sense of security if your child can swim. Young children can still bump their heads and drown in a small quantity of water.
- Tie up your child's long hair when in a hot tub so it will not become caught in the jets.

## *Safety at feeding time*

### *With the Microwave*

Use care when heating food in a microwave.

- The bottle or plate may feel lukewarm to the touch but the food may have hot spots which can burn your child's mouth.
- Shake or stir the container or food well to spread the heat evenly.
- Be sure the container you use is safe for the microwave. Many disposable bottle liners and other types of plastic should not be used in the microwave.



# Safe and Secure

## Safety at bath time

Bath time for children offers a chance for fun with water and bubbles in the bath. But there are also safety points to remember.

- Never leave your child alone in the bathtub or shower, even if your child is in a bathseat.
- Use a non-skid mat in the bathtub.
- Put cold water into the tub before adding the hot water. If by chance your water heater is set lower than 49°C (120 °F), there is less chance your child will be burned from the bath water.
- When you are finished running the water, turn the hot water off before the cold.
- Keep shampoo, soap, hair conditioner and bubble bath out of reach when children are in the tub.



## Safety with clothing

Childrens' clothing has been the cause of serious injuries and death from tripping, choking or burns.

- Remove all cords on your child's clothing. They can catch on furniture or play equipment, and choke your child. Choose jackets with breakaway hoods and mittens without strings.
- Select clothing that is a correct fit for your child to reduce the risk of a trip over a pant-leg or a droopy sock.

- Choose the more fire-resistant fabrics:
  - *heavier and tightly woven fabric is safer around fire than light, open-weave material*
  - *flannelette is not recommended as it burns easily*
  - *synthetic fibres such as polyester, acrylic and nylon do not ignite easily and tend to burn slowly*
  - *wool is difficult to ignite*
  - *close-fitting, short-sleeved or polo pyjamas are safest for nightwear*

Follow washing labels to be sure to retain continued fire protection.

## Safety away from home

The importance of keeping your child safe through proper use of child car seats was covered on pages 4-5, but there are other times when you are away from home and your child's safety needs attention.

### In the Baby Stroller

When you buy a stroller for your baby, keep the following points in mind.

- Be sure it is stable and will not tip.
- Check that the brakes work well. Strollers with a secondary lock-up system give extra protection.
- Check that the lock will prevent the stroller from folding or collapsing.
- Tug sharply on the lap belt to be sure it is attached to the frame and seat. The seat should not pull away when you do this.
- Feel all the edges to be sure there are no loose or torn parts.
- Many baby strollers are adjustable to fit young babies and then older children.
- Use a harness to keep your child secure.
- Do not use a stroller on an escalator.
- Avoid carrying heavy parcels on the stroller which will upset the balance.
- Use care when reversing the handle on a stroller where this is a feature. Be sure your child's fingers, or your own, will not be trapped.



## *With Infant Carriers*

Infant carriers are seats which provide a comfortable way to have your baby close by you, both at home and away, but these also have their share of dangers.

- Choose an infant carrier which cannot be tipped over when rocked.
- Never leave your child alone in one of these seats. Even though it should not be able to tip, your child rocking back and forth may cause it to slide to the edge and off a counter or piece of furniture.
- Do not use an infant carrier on a bed or other soft surface where it could tip.
- Always fasten the straps and adjust them correctly when using the seat.
- Never use the carrier as a child car seat in the car.

## *In the Sun*

Exposure to the sun for a prolonged time is not safe for anyone. A child's skin burns easily and needs protection from the sun even if the sky seems somewhat overcast. Severe sunburn in childhood creates a danger of skin cancer later life.

- In the sun, your child should be protected with the correct strength sunscreen, a hat, long sleeves and pants. (Sunscreen should not be used on babies younger than six months.)

## *While Visiting*

When you are visiting, especially in homes where there are no young children, you may need to take extra precautions.

- Be aware of dangers to your child from poisons, falls, drowning and burns.
- Portable bed guardrails which collapse for easy transport will keep your child from falling out of a full-size bed when you are away from home.

- Portable gates which are easily installed can keep your child from danger areas in homes which are not child-proofed. (See page 24 for more information).

## *On Bicycles with Passengers*

Many parents who enjoy bicycle riding like to take their children along with them, but there are some hazards in doing this.

- Do not take your child as a passenger on the seat of your bicycle. Children have been seriously injured when riding as a passenger and a foot becomes tangled in the spokes of the wheel or the bicycle chain.
- Do not carry your child in a front or back-pack while riding, because this can upset the balance of the bicycle.
- Use child carrier seats with extreme care. They can be dangerous, because they change the way the weight is distributed, and affect steering and braking if not used properly. Also, if the bicycle tips, the carrier seat will tip as well, throwing your child to the ground.
- Use bicycle trailers with care.





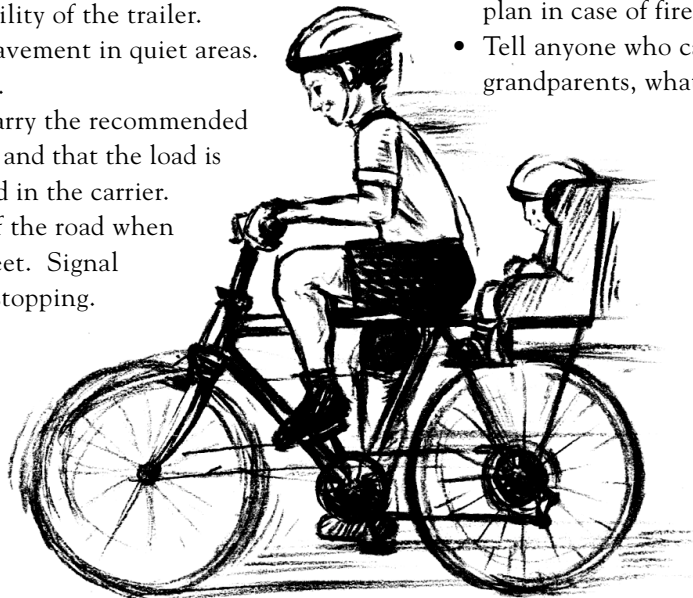
# Safe and Secure

If you use a bicycle carrier seat:

- *secure the seat firmly over the rear wheel*
- *use spoke guards to prevent hands and feet from catching in the wheel*
- *use a seat with a high back and sturdy harness to support a sleeping child*
- *children younger than 18-months-old should not be carried in a bicycle seat, because they are not strong enough to support themselves in an upright position*
- *use a harness to strap older children securely into the carrier seat*
- *always put a lightweight helmet on your child passenger. (See page 36 for more information about bicycle helmets).*
- *use a flag on the carrier*

If you use a bicycle trailer:

- Ensure the trailer is properly secured to the bicycle. Consult your trailer's instruction manual.
- Secure your child with the internal harness or seat belt correctly at all times.
- Ensure you and your child wear properly fitted, certified bicycle helmets.
- Mount a brightly-coloured flag at least three feet high at the back of the carrier. This increases the visibility of the trailer.
- Ride on smooth pavement in quiet areas. Avoid busy streets.
- Ensure you only carry the recommended load for the trailer and that the load is properly positioned in the carrier.
- Follow the rules of the road when cycling on the street. Signal before turning or stopping.



## Safety with babysitters

A babysitter keeps your child 'safe and secure' when you are not around, so choose this person carefully. It is best if you already know and trust the person, but if this is not possible, ask for references.

- Encourage your sitter to take a babysitter course.
- Tell the babysitter about allergies or other health problems your child has.
- Make sure that the sitter knows what to do in an emergency.
- Provide a list of emergency numbers, including a number where you can be reached and the number of a friend or relative in case you are not available.
- Show the babysitter where to find a first-aid kit, flashlight and other emergency supplies that might be needed.
- Tell your babysitter not to give your child any medication unless asked by you to do so, and specify what food your child may eat.
- Tour the house with the babysitter, pointing out possible hazards and special features such as stairway gates to be kept locked, or 'off-limits' areas for your child.
- Tell your babysitter details of your family escape plan in case of fire.
- Tell anyone who cares for your child, including grandparents, what you expect for child safety.

# Your Baby's First Six Months

Safe and  
Secure

Your Baby's  
First  
Six Months



# Safe and Secure

*Newborns need your total protection and care. Even in the first weeks, they can wiggle about.*

*At four months, they are rolling over, putting things into their mouths and pulling things over their faces.*

*By six months, they are starting to sit.*

*After you have settled into a routine with your new family member, review the first section of this booklet to remind yourself of safety measures you can take. As your baby's activity increases, the chance of injury also increases. Ask yourself, "Is my baby's world safe? Am I changing to meet the needs of my increasingly active baby?"*

## Safety at rest time

### In the Crib

As you review the section on crib safety (page 13), keep in mind your baby is very helpless.

Babies can suffocate when they are still very young and unable to lift their heads.

- Put your baby on his or her back on a firm flat surface. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is less common in babies who sleep on their back.
- Avoid soft mattresses, fluffy pillows, comforters, stuffed toys and bumper pads in the baby's crib, as they could prevent proper air circulation.
- Plastics, such as the manufacturer's mattress wrapping, may also reduce air circulation and should be removed.
- Remove your baby's bib during nap-time.
- Keep pets away from your sleeping baby. Even a crib will not necessarily prevent a dog or cat from smothering a baby by lying on the baby's face.
- Babies need to be warm, but they should not become too hot. If the room temperature is right for you, it's right for the baby, too.

## Safety at play time

### With Toys

During the first six months, your baby's sense of hearing, touch, sight and taste are developing. Your baby will start to take an interest in activities.

- Teethers, rattles, rubber squeeze toys and crib mobiles are excellent toys to use during these months.
- Watch for broken or cracked rattles. Discard any soft vinyl (PVC) teething toys and rattles made prior to 1999.
- Hang crib mobiles high out of your baby's reach and remove them at four or five months. By then, your child is grabbing at anything in reach and could become tangled in the cord.
- Do not use a jolly jumper until you are sure your baby's muscles are strong enough to support the head. Use the jolly jumper according to manufacturer's directions because most have weight restrictions.





## *With Water*

Very young babies are being enrolled in swimming classes these days. Consider the following before making your decision about young age swimming for your child.

- Some babies put their heads under water in a pool. If they swallow the water, they can become ill.
- Young babies are already at high risk for ear infections and this may be made worse by swimming in pool water.

## Safety at feeding time

Young babies have a few special needs when they are being fed.

- Warm your baby's bottle for a few minutes in a pan of warm water.
- Your baby's mouth can be burned easily. Do not use the microwave to heat bottles, because they heat unevenly.
- Test the temperature in a bottle by putting a few drops on your wrist. The temperature is correct if it feels warm but not hot.
- Hold your baby when feeding. Your baby can choke if sucking on a propped up bottle.

## Safety at bath & diaper time

Although bath-time can be fun for both you and your young baby, it is a time of many potential dangers.

- Check that the bath water is body temperature by putting your entire hand in it.
- Have all the necessary equipment with you before starting the bath.
- Keep one hand on your baby at all times when he or she is in the bath.
- Let the telephone or doorbell ring or wrap your baby and take him or her along. Never leave your baby alone in the bath.
- Stay right beside your baby when changing diapers, especially on a raised surface. Keep your hand on the baby's stomach at all times when on the change table. If you do not use a change table, a pad surrounded with a rail is available to hook over the edge of the crib and reduce the risk of your child falling.
- Keep safety pins closed and pins, powders and creams out of your baby's reach.
- Powder can easily get into your baby's lungs; many people choose not to use it. If you do use powder, shake it carefully into your hand, then apply.
- Cover the plastic on disposable diapers so that your baby cannot pull off bits of plastic and choke.



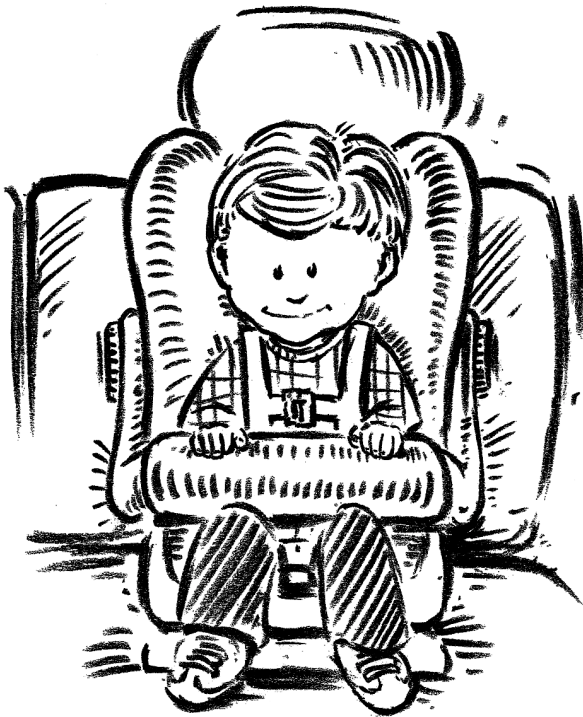


# Safe and Secure

## Safety away from home

### *In the Car*

When your baby is less than 9 kilograms (20 pounds), she/he must be in a rear facing car seat. The middle of the back seat is the safest place for them. Refer back to pages 4-5 for guidance on proper car seat use.



- Never use a rear facing car seat in a vehicle equipped with a passenger side air bag.
- If you are driving alone with your baby, put the baby in the back seat - use mirrors on the vehicle to keep an eye on your baby.
- To prop your baby upright in the seat, use rolled up towels on either side of the head. Props should never interfere with the proper positioning of the harness. Never place anything between the baby and the seat (under the child or between child's harness).
- Make sure your baby's back is flat against the car seat.
- Use clothing with legs so that the harness fits snugly. Ensure one leg is on either side of the crotch strap.
- In cold weather, wrap the blanket around your baby after doing up the harness.
- Be sure the metal clips are not too hot if the car has been sitting in the sun.

### *In the Sun*

Your baby's skin is very sensitive and will burn easily, even on a cloudy day. A baby younger than six months should not be exposed to direct sunlight.

- If you cannot avoid leaving your baby in direct sunlight, plan for the shortest possible exposure.
- Put a hat and light clothing on your baby to cover him or her during any time in the sun.
- Sunscreen is not recommended for use on babies younger than six months.
- Use window shades when needed to prevent sun coming through the car windows onto your baby.

### *In An Airplane*

- Call the airline directly regarding their current policy on the use of car seats in airplanes.



The Active Explorer  
Six to Twelve Months

Safe and Secure

The Active Explorer  
Six to Twelve Months



# Safe and Secure

*As your child gets a little older, the safety hints you have been practising still apply. Now there are also some new safety rules to meet the needs of your growing child. Between six and twelve months, babies learn to sit, creep, crawl and pull themselves up. Many injuries happen because babies move much more quickly than parents expect them to.*

As they learn to move around, their curiosity about the world around them increases. They begin to explore and put everything they touch into their mouths. They also begin chewing and biting things to relieve the discomfort of teething.

Babies keep practising what they learn, but their skills are far from perfect. At this stage, they are at high risk for injuries! Review the first section of this booklet for general safety tips, then read through this section for ideas to keep your crawling child safe.

## Safety around home

If you have not already done so, it is definitely time now to 'child-proof' your house.

- Get down on your hands and knees to see the world as your crawling baby does.
- Remember your baby is developing new physical skills all the time, so be thinking ahead as you are checking out your home.
- Babies by this age can respond to simple commands and learn the meaning of 'no' when they must be kept from harm.

### From Falls

Falls are the leading cause of injury to children. As soon as a child can crawl, doors and windows draw curious toddlers to see what is on the other side.

- Block all stairways with safety gates. (Safety gates made before 1990 are not safe, because they do not meet current regulations.)

- If you must use a gate made before 1990, avoid the accordion-style or any with openings in which your child's head could be trapped.
- Pressure gates should not be used at the top of stairways. Gates at the top of stairways should be mounted to the wall or railing.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully to install gates.
- Remove nearby chairs or anything a child might climb on to get to a window.
- Put child-resistant latches on all windows and screens.
- Do not rely on screens to protect your child from falls from windows. Window guards should be installed on windows your child can reach.
- If you have large areas of glass in lower doors or windows, consider having safety glass, which is laminated and strengthened, installed into these sections.



## Safety from poisons

Your crawling child can now reach lower cupboards, such as under the kitchen sink. This is a good time to reread page 9 for information about poison prevention, paying special attention to the following:

- It is essential to place all potential poisons, such as polishes and cleaners, out of reach and locked away.
- Install safety latches on cupboards, and keep all medicines and pills locked away.
- Use pill containers with child-resistant caps.

# The Active Explorer Six to Twelve Months



## Safety at rest time

### *In the Crib*

Your baby will still be in a crib, and the information about crib safety on page 13 still applies, but there are a few changes you should make to prevent injuries.

- Remove large toys which can serve as stepping stones for climbing out.
- Set the mattress at its lowest point.
- Remember to keep the crib away from other furniture, wall hangings or pictures, and window, blind or curtain cords.



## Safety at play time

Your child now will be sleeping less and is more liable to get into mischief.

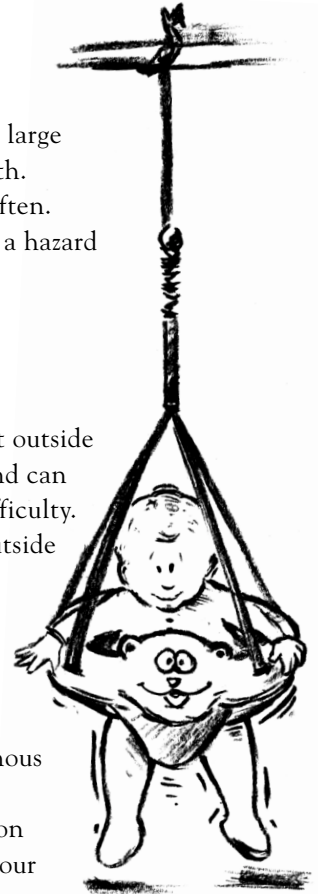
- Child swings, jolly jumpers and other types of bouncing seats which are assembled and installed correctly will often keep your active child secure and content, but remember, your baby needs many other activities and forms of exercise as well. Most jolly jumpers have weight restrictions. Check the instructions and do not use past the recommended weight.

- Children at this age enjoy household items, such as plastic measuring cups and large wooden spoons, to play with.
- Continue to inspect toys often. Swallowing parts of toys is a hazard with this age group.

### *In the Yard*

A child crawling on a blanket outside needs constant supervision and can easily get into unexpected difficulty.

- Try moving the playpen outside in the shade.
- Keep the yard free of hazards, such as garden tools, glass and yard care products.
- Check your yard for poisonous plants.
- Check back to the advice on page 15 about protecting your child around water.



## Safety at feeding time

### *In the Highchair*

A child who can sit alone is ready for a highchair.

- Choose a chair which has a wide base and less risk of tipping.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for setting up the chair.
- Use the restraints between the legs and around the waist. It is easy for a small body to slip under the tray of the chair.
- Be careful not to trap your child's hands when moving the tray.
- Keep the chair away from window, blind, and curtain cords and appliances.
- Do not allow older children to climb on the chair.



# Safe and Secure

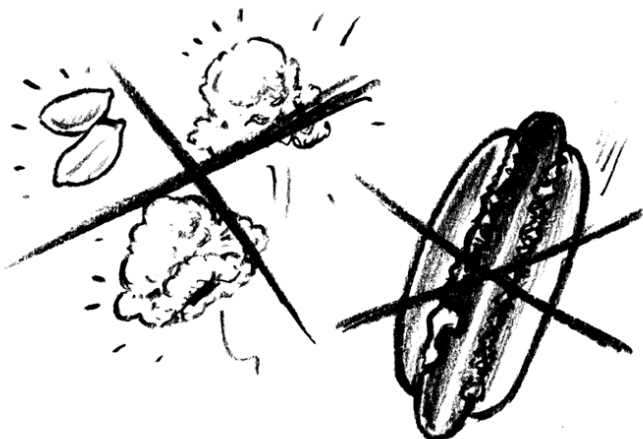
## With Eating

Children lack the big teeth they need to chew foods properly. Choking on food is a leading cause of death in children less than one year old.

- As your baby begins to eat solid food, start with puréed, then mashed and work up to small pieces.
- Avoid tiny or hard foods, such as peanuts or grapes.
- Stay close by in case you are needed.
- Do not use bibs with strings which could get caught and choke your baby.
- When your baby is teething, a soother or toast is better than hard vegetables that could get stuck in the throat.
- Use unbreakable cups and dishes, and a spoon rather than a fork to make the fun of learning to eat easy and safe.
- Some of the foods which are known to have caused choking in children and safety measures you can take are:

| Food                  | Safety Measure |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Wieners               | Avoid          |
| Other meats           | Grind          |
| Nuts                  | Avoid          |
| Popcorn               | Avoid          |
| Hard candy            | Avoid          |
| Fruit with seeds      | Remove seeds   |
| Fruits and vegetables | Shred          |
| Grapes                | Avoid          |
| Peanut butter         | Avoid          |

- Attend a First Aid course and learn what to do in the event of a choking episode.



## Safety at bath & diaper time

Many babies start to resist clothing and diaper changes about this age.

- Do not leave your wriggling baby alone, even for an instant.
- If you use a plastic seat in your baby's bath, do not rely on it to support your baby. Stay with your child at all times.
- Try distracting your baby with a toy.
- Keep safety pins and skin care products well out of your baby's reach.

## Safety away from home

### In the Car

The importance of using a car seat properly cannot be stressed too much. This is a good time to reread about correct use on page 4.

- A child who is more than 9 kilograms (20 pounds) and can pull to standing unassisted, is ready for the forward-facing child car seat. Your car dealer should be able to drill a hole for the tether bolt if one is not already present.
- Install the car seat in the back seat with the tether strap fixed **exactly** according to the manufacturer's instructions. Make sure the car seat is in a location specified in your vehicle owner's manual.
- If your child cries, he or she may just be frustrated by being restrained. Often the car movement will sooth your child. You may also try distracting your child by saying nursery rhymes, pointing at things through the window, or providing toys.
- Check that your child has not removed the chest clip or undone the harness clasp.

The Independent Toddler  
One and Two Years

Safe and Secure

The Independent Toddler  
One & Two Years



# Safe and Secure

*When your child reaches toddler age, it is a good idea to review all of the previous safety hints in this booklet, and then read on for new ideas about keeping this age group safe from harm. Toddlers are very curious, and exploring is their way of learning about the world around them. It is a time to experiment, to find out how things work and to do things "by myself." They will climb to amazing heights, just out of curiosity.*

At this age, children still do not understand the meaning of danger. For instance, a young child might get a shock from an electrical outlet, but go right back and start poking at it again.

Toddlers can follow simple directions, and they love to imitate their parents. If you practice safety yourself, you can explain to your child why you are doing certain things and watch as they try to copy what you do.

- Put your highchair away if it is no longer being used. Toddlers climb anywhere and the rungs of a highchair make a perfect, but dangerous, ladder.

By two years, your toddler is learning how to turn doorknobs. Therefore, balconies pose new dangers.

- Keep the balcony door locked.
- Always stay close when your child is on the balcony or porch.
- Keep chairs or anything your child might climb on away from railings.
- Consider installing a mesh balcony guard which prevents your child climbing up the balcony rails.
- Ensure that the balcony guards meet at the corners.

## Safety around home

### From Falls

As children start to walk and climb, they are clumsy and more likely to fall.

- Climbing on stairs is especially difficult for young children.
- Teach your child how to walk up and down stairs safely using the handrail but continue to keep safety gates on the stairs.
- Once your child can climb out of the crib, or is even showing signs of trying to do so, it is time to switch to a bed.
  - A youth bed with partial side rails is a good first step.
  - As your child gets older, the rails can be removed, leaving a regular single-sized bed.





## Safety from poisons

As a first step to protect your child, reread the general section on poison prevention (page 9) then consider a few more hints which apply to this age group. Toddlers are curious enough to try to swallow anything, even mothballs in the closet! By two years, a child loves to climb, open drawers and unscrew lids.

- During the toddler years, the potential for poisoning is at its peak!
- When giving medicine to your child, call it by its correct name and do not treat it as candy.
- Do not take your own medicine where your child can see you. Remember young children love to copy.
- Keep medicines out of purses or bags where a child might find them.
- Clean up leftover alcohol and ashtrays before going to bed. Young children can become very ill by a small amount of alcohol or can be poisoned by cigarette butts.

## Safety from burns

Now that your toddler can climb, stretch and reach most objects, any source of heat can be dangerous. The information on preventing burns (page 12) has increasing importance as your child becomes older.

- Teach the meaning of hot by saying "no - hot" sternly whenever your child seems tempted to touch something hot.
- Put away electrical tools and appliances. The curious toddler loves to take things apart and experiment.

## Safety at play time

Supervise young children playing with each other. They do not yet know how to play well together and can easily be hurt.

### *With Toys*

Many injuries to toddlers are caused because a toy is not suitable. Always follow the manufacturer's age recommendations - even if you think your child is "mature" for his or her age.

- For the one-year-old whose coordination is still developing, consider:
  - *push-pull toys*
  - *simple dolls or animals which can be dressed*
  - *stacking toys*
  - *blocks*
  - *sand and water toys*
- For the more vigorous two-year-old, good toys are:
  - *climbing toys*
  - *swings*
  - *toy cars*
- You are the best judge whether or not your child is able to ride a tricycle or use the slide in the playground.
- Teach your child that some toys can be unsafe. Be especially aware of:
  - *balloons which can cause choking if partially blown up or uninflated (see page 14)*
  - *small button batteries which are easily swallowed and are poisonous*
- Toddlers still swallow small toy parts or put them into their noses, so continue to inspect the toys often for loose parts.



## Safety at feeding time

Remember you should still supervise when your young child is eating.

- Teach your child to eat calmly, chew properly and not speak with a mouthful of food.
- Encourage your child to sit while eating.
- If your child is now in a booster seat or a hook-on chair, be sure the seat has a harness for your child and a way to fix it securely to a regular chair.
- Foods which were not recommended or needed shredding for children in the younger age groups, such as wieners and carrots, can now be cut into long pieces for your child to chew on (see page 26). (Do not slice them crosswise. The small pieces will be the shape that can get stuck in the child's throat.)

## Safety at bath time

Young children still do not understand the danger of drowning. They love water and would play in it for hours if permitted. Take a few minutes to refer back to the guidelines for bath time safety (page 16) and preventing scalds (page 12). For your child in this age group, the following points are also important.

- Continue with the rule to stay with your toddler at all times during bath time.
- Check again that the temperature of your water heater is 49°C (120°F) or lower. Toddlers enjoy turning taps and can be scalded.
- Begin to teach your child to stay seated while in the bathtub.







## Safety away from home

### *In the Car*

**Car collisions are the leading cause of injury and death during childhood.**

The information about child car seats (page 4) remains important as your child reaches this age.

As children learn to walk and talk, they rebel against many things as they try to be independent. Among other things, they fight against riding in car seats.

- If your toddler tests the rules by releasing the seat belt of the safety seat, be firm.
- Pull over and wait until your child is quiet, then firmly re-fasten the harness.
- It might take patience on your part, but your child will finally learn there is no choice in this matter.
- Children must remain in a forward facing car seat until they reach 40lbs.

For safety and a more relaxed trip in the car, here are a few guidelines you can follow.

- Always check that your child's hands are well inside the car so you don't close the door on little fingers. Having your child put their hands on his/her head while closing doors ensures fingers won't get caught.
- Relieve the boredom of long drives with frequent, short stops.
- Stock up with games, nursery rhymes and songs for car trips.
- If your car is equipped with child-proof locks on the rear doors, use them.
- Be sure that car windows near your child's door do not open wide. Have your car dealer adjust them if they open all the way.
- Children learn by example - buckle up!

### *In Traffic or Crowds*

- A harness will keep your toddler close to you when you are near roads or in places where your child might become lost.
- One device which some parents find useful is a strap which attaches to both your and your child's wrists, giving the child several feet of freedom while still restrained.
- Always keep an eye on your child, even if you are using a harness. Children sometimes learn how to remove the straps and get away.

### *While Shopping*

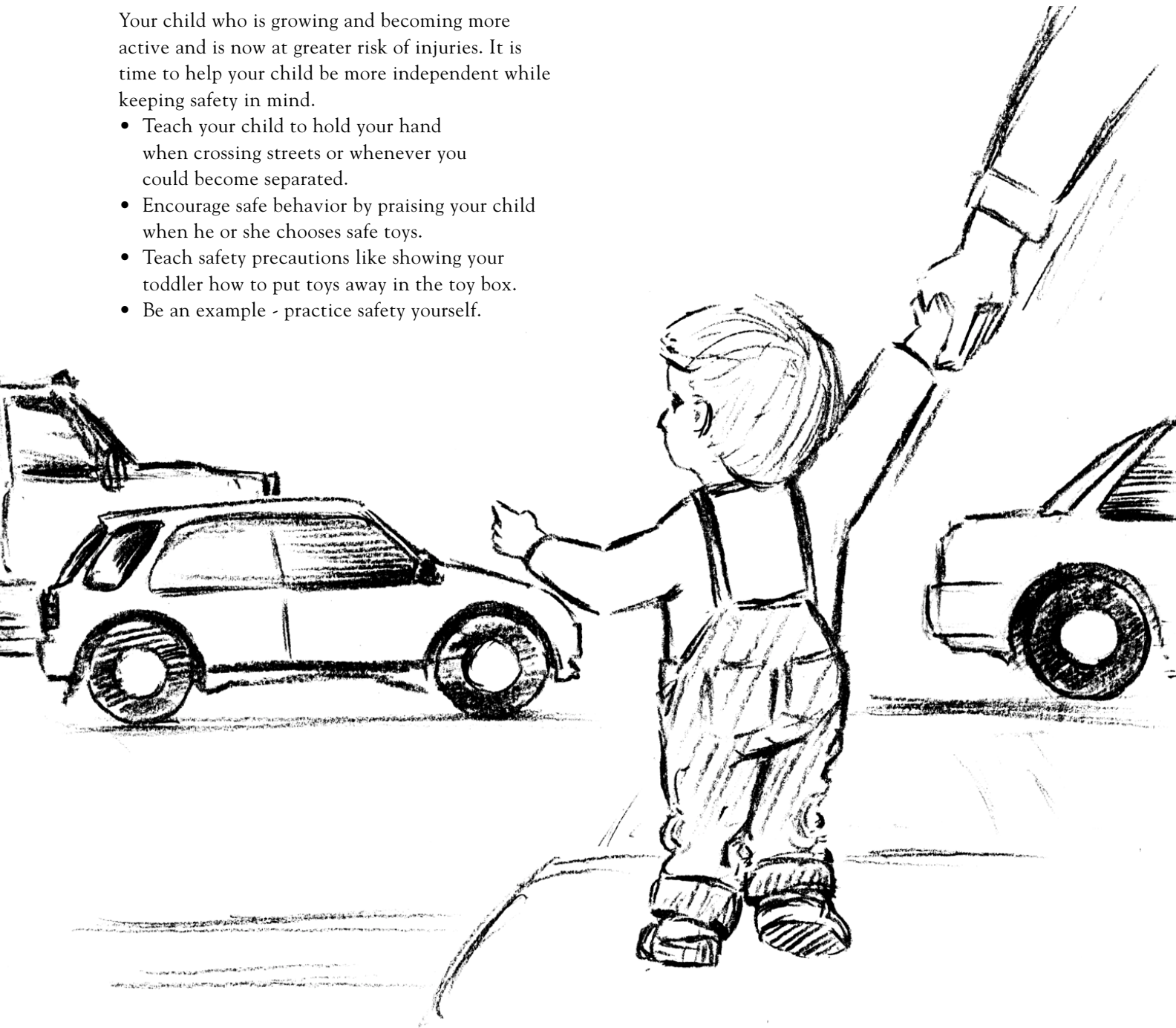
- Pay constant attention to your child in a shopping cart. Tumbles happen easily when you are distracted in the supermarket. Children have been seriously injured in falls from carts.
- Choose a shopping cart with a safety harness. If your supermarket does not have these, suggest to the manager that they be made available.
- Do not let your child ride in the basket part of the shopping cart. It is very easy to climb on the groceries and fall out.



## Teaching your toddler

Your child who is growing and becoming more active and is now at greater risk of injuries. It is time to help your child be more independent while keeping safety in mind.

- Teach your child to hold your hand when crossing streets or whenever you could become separated.
- Encourage safe behavior by praising your child when he or she chooses safe toys.
- Teach safety precautions like showing your toddler how to put toys away in the toy box.
- Be an example - practice safety yourself.



# The Teachable Preschooler Three and Four Years

Safe and Secure

The Teachable Preschooler  
Three & Four Years



# Safe and Secure

*Children at this age love exploring the neighbourhood. Preschoolers enjoy playing outside with other children. As they get stronger, they learn to ride tricycles, play rough games and climb on monkey bars.*

At the same time, preschoolers want to please their parents. For example, children at this age usually enjoy doing household chores and running errands. This is a time when you have a big influence on your child who is now more cooperative than a toddler and is trying to learn from you.

Even though children may learn safety rules, they do not always remember them. Preschoolers are more aware of danger than toddlers, but their thinking seems magical. A four-year-old might believe if people cross the street at a crosswalk, they cannot be hit by a car. That child might not look before crossing a street at a crosswalk.

The suggestions offered in the first section of this booklet still apply, and the following are several more which apply to your rapidly developing preschooler.

## Safety around home

### Teach About Falls

Children at this age have much better balance and are much less likely to fall without a reason. However, three-year-olds always seem to be in a hurry, and they take many tumbles during a day.

- Remind your child to slow down, especially on the stairs.
- Encourage your child to put toys away when they are not being used, to avoid tripping over them.
- Teach your child the importance of using handrails and turning on lights when using stairs.

## Safety from poisons

Now is the time to teach your child about the danger of poisons. Continue to observe the guidelines and symbols for poison prevention (page 9). By three and four years, a child can identify the hazardous product symbols: POISON, FLAMMABLE, EXPLOSIVE, CORROSIVE.

- Teach your child what the symbols mean.
- Use brightly coloured stickers to alert you and remind your child about products with warning labels.
- Teach your child that anything with a warning label is “off-limits.”
- Help your child learn to recognize poisonous plants such as poison ivy. If you are not sure of these, call the Poison Centre for further information (See page 40).
- Tell your child never to eat **any** plants, berries, seeds or mushrooms they may find.
- Plants found inside the house may also be poisonous.



Poison



Flammable



Explosive



Corrosive



## Safety from burns

Earlier warnings about preventing burns (page 12) still apply and now, added care is needed.

- Remind your child it is possible to be burned from the hot water tap.
- If your kitchen has an instant hot water tap (which may be as hot as 190°F), teach your child, who might climb up onto the counter, not to touch this tap.
- Teach your child about the dangers of matches and lighters. Children of this age are proud to be trusted to give such things to an adult.
- Show your child the correct way to unplug appliances.
- Work alongside your child as tools and kitchen equipment are used.
- Practice your fire escape route as a family.
  - *Show your child how to 'drop and roll' if clothing catches fire.*
  - *Teach your child how to crawl along the floor if there is heavy smoke.*
  - *Many children hide during a fire. Explain to your child how to call out and to follow the escape plan you practiced.*

## Safety at play time

### On Tricycles and Bicycles

Many children begin riding a tricycle in this age group, and the rules they learn will carry over to when they ride bicycles.

- If your child wants a tricycle but still seems too young for one, consider buying a stationary one, attached to a firm base. When the child is able to graduate to a regular tricycle, the base is removable.
- Choose a bicycle which is the correct size for

your child. If a bicycle has training wheels, resist the temptation to buy one which your child can "grow into."

- Look for the following features:
  - *widely spaced rear wheels*
  - *padded handlebars*
  - *rubber tires*
  - *hub cap wheel covers, not spokes which can trap fingers and clothing*

### Teach About Bicycle Helmets

Start the helmet habit with the first ride - in child wagons, carriers and trailers, and on tricycles, training wheels and two wheelers. Helmets prevent injuries whenever children are in a situation where they might fall and hit their heads. Teach your children no helmet, no bike.

- **Teach your child to always wear an approved bicycle helmet when riding a bicycle and why this is important.**
- Praise your child for using a helmet without being reminded.
- If your child does not wear a helmet, impose a penalty such as locking up the bicycle for a time.
- As a parent, wear your helmet every time you ride.





# Safe and Secure

## *Choosing a Helmet*

- Choose an approved (certified) helmet with your child. Children are more likely to wear a helmet they choose.
- Be sure the helmet has an outer shell of plastic or hardened polystyrene, an inner lining of shock-absorbent material and an adjustable chin strap which allows for quick release.
- Be sure the helmet fits correctly. Measure your child's head so that you can purchase the right one.
- Do not use hockey or baseball helmets as a substitute for bicycle helmets.
- Choose a brightly coloured helmet.
- Never use a bicycle helmet if it has been involved in a crash or if it is more than 5 years old. It may have been damaged in a way you cannot see.
- Contact one of the resources at the end of this booklet for further information about bicycle helmet safety.

## *Teach Rules of the Road*

- Use every opportunity to teach your child about dangers on the road and about traffic safety.
- Teach your child to stop and look all four ways before crossing any street.
- Teach about crosswalks and obeying traffic signals.
- Remind your child never to run into the street after a ball, nor to run out from between parked cars.
- When your child reaches 40lbs they are safest in a booster seat - it raises the child to ensure maximum protection of the seat belt.

## *Teach About Toys*

Your child is old enough now to start learning how to play safely and to be responsible for helping to keep other children from being hurt.

- Watch for toys that could injure others if they are not played with properly and teach your child about these hazards.
- Teach your child to watch for loose or sharp parts on toys and to let you know if they occur.
- Teach your child not to keep toys where a baby brother or sister can reach them.
- Remind your child to put toys away where others will not trip over them.

Teach your child to stay in the yard but do not assume you will be obeyed. Keep your child within view all the time and teach a few safety rules:

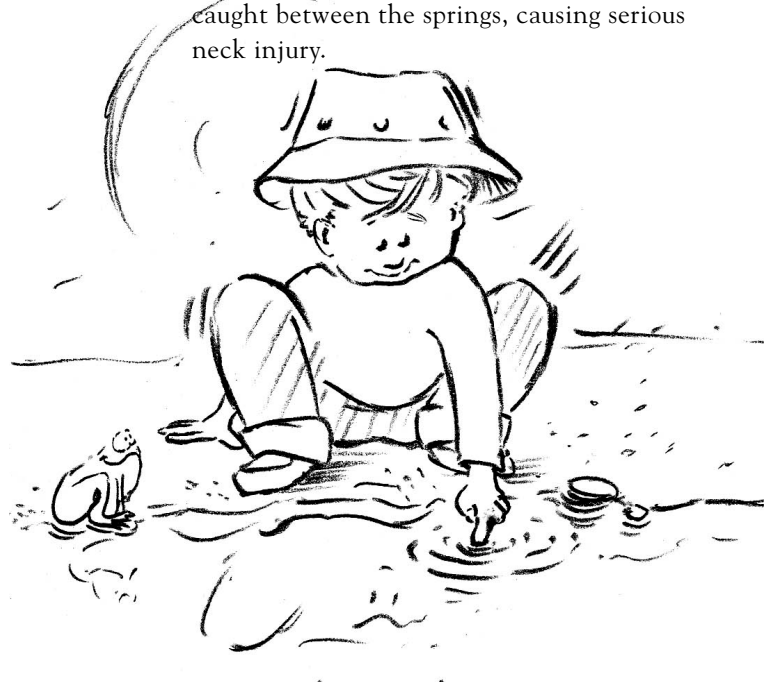
- **“Do not run with a stick in your mouth.”**  
If your running child stumbles while sucking a popsicle or sucker stick, it could knock out teeth, injure an eye, or cause choking.
- **“Never run into the street after a ball.”**  
At this age, young children forget to think about traffic rules. Teach them this key rule.
- **“Always wear shoes outside.”** There are many dangers for bare feet outside of the house.
- **“Do not push and shove around playground equipment or walk in front of moving swings.”** Excited children easily forget even the most obvious dangers. This is another rule they need to remember.

# The Teachable Preschooler Three & Four Years



Check the areas where your child plays, both in your yard and at a playground.

- Be sure your child will always be supervised either by you, another parent or a playground supervisor.
- Check that there is an impact absorbing surface, such as deep sand or woodchips, under and around the play equipment.
- Check that equipment is correct for the size and age of your child and that there is plenty of space around moving equipment, such as swings.
- If the outdoor toys are in your own yard:
  - *position the equipment to avoid collisions with walls or other objects.*
  - *check the equipment often for loose nuts, bolts and clamps.*
  - *do not use equipment that has rings in which a child's head can become stuck. Do not use other equipment (ie: nets) with squares where a child can slip and hang themselves.*
  - *lock the doors to dangerous areas and be sure gates are latched.*
- Trampolines can be dangerous and children should not be allowed to play on them. The muscles of young children are not strong enough for them to bounce correctly. They can fall and hit the frame or their heads can get caught between the springs, causing serious neck injury.



## Teach About Hazards

By now your child will be wanting to try the same activities as older children.

- Teach your child not to use a sled or toboggan where there is a risk of sliding onto a road or soft ice, or hitting trees and other objects.
- Teach your child not to play or skate on ice, even if it looks frozen, unless you have checked it first.
- Show why lawnmowers are dangerous and never to be used as play things.
- Explain how dugouts can be dangerous and be sure that any dugouts where your child might be playing are fenced off.
- Teach your child vacant lots, drainage ditches, ice-covered lakes and construction sites are not safe.
- Young children are not strong enough to use inline skates and skate boards correctly. Your child should have good balance and be aware of street safety before being permitted to use these.

## Teach About Danger Near Water

Water always presents danger to young children. The advice from page 15 still applies and now, as children grow older, they can be taught some safety measures.

- If your child cannot yet swim, this is the time to begin swimming lessons.
- Do not permit a child who cannot swim to use inflated water toys in water any deeper than his/her waist.
- Teach your child never to play near water unless an adult is watching.
- Teach your child how to put on a life jacket and insist it is always worn while in a boat. (Be sure the life jacket meets approved standards).
- Set an example for your child; always practice water safety.



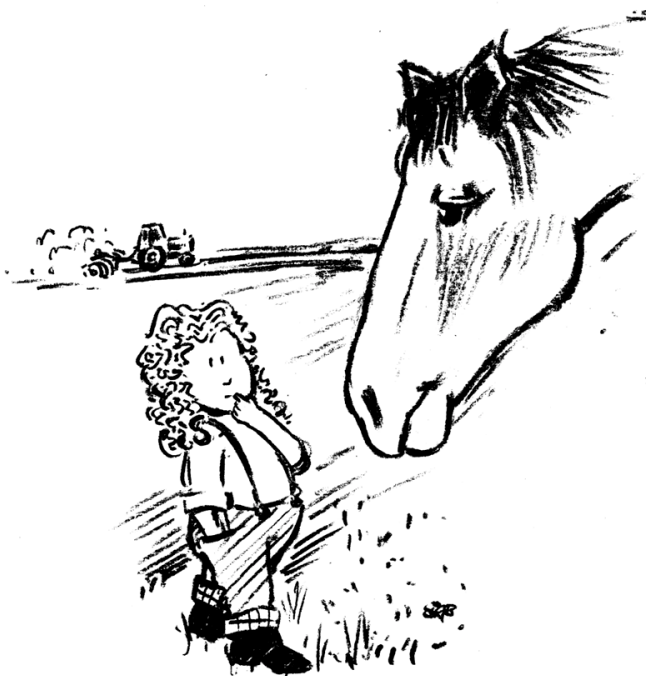
# Safe and Secure

## *Teach About Farm Safety*

Many children die each year from farm-related injuries. There are many safety measures you can take to keep your child safe on the farm.

The first is to teach your child your rules for safety and which areas are “off-limits” around the farm.

- Walk around heavy equipment before starting it up to make sure no child is playing close by.
- Never allow your child to ride with you on heavy equipment.
- Do not leave the keys in heavy machinery, and teach your child never to turn on machinery if it does have a key in the ignition.
- Teach your child to watch for moving equipment and stay out of the way.
- Keep your child away from large animal stalls where they might be kicked, and teach them to avoid animals who will be protective of their young.
- Pile hay bales correctly, and teach your child it is easy to fall off these and be hurt.
- Include fields with electrical fences in the “off-limits” areas.
- Keep ladders and other outdoor equipment repaired and safely stored.



## Safety at feeding time

Your preschooler will often be too busy to want to eat.

- Remind your child often about staying seated when eating and about eating calmly.
- Teach your child, who is still at risk of choking on the high risk foods listed on page 26, the importance of chewing and swallowing properly.

## Safety in the big world

### *Teach About Sexual Abuse*

Unfortunately, some children are sexually abused. The problem can be difficult to detect because often the child knows the abuser and does not understand how to deal with the situation.

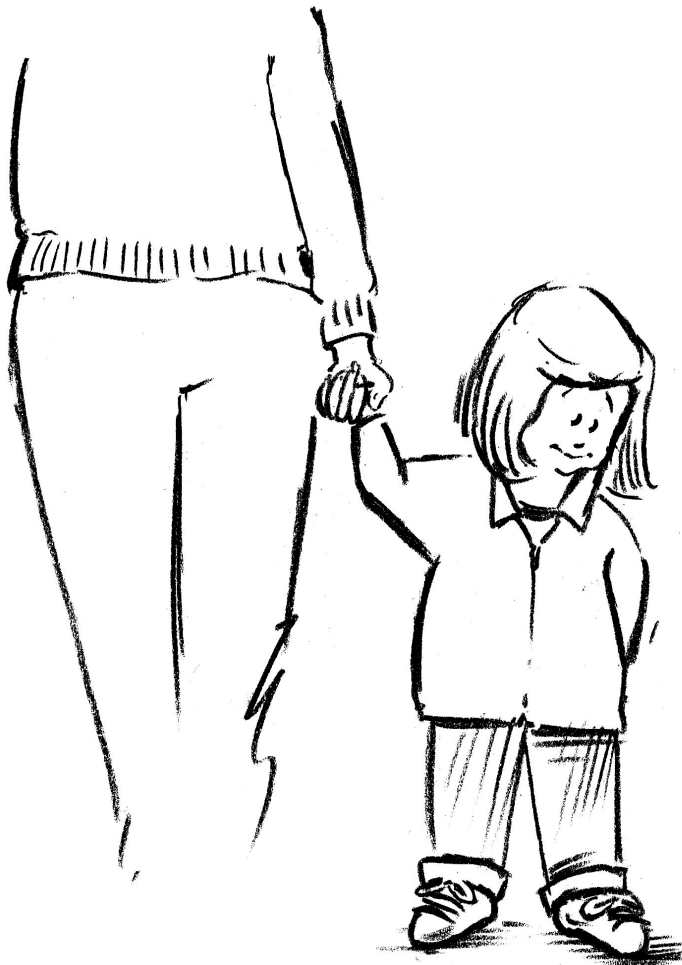
- Teach your child nobody has the right to touch any areas of the body which would be covered by a bathing suit and to say “no” and tell you right away if someone does this.
- Choose a secret code word which is known only to family and trusted friends and teach your child only to go with someone who knows the word.
- Teach your child about the Block Parent sign and that a home with that sign is a safe place to go in times of trouble.
- Teach your child the police are there to help and can be trusted.
- Walk with your child when he or she is going to a friend’s home, or have your child go in a group.





## Teach About Animals

- Teach your child how to help care for any pets you have. You will be teaching responsibility and helping your child learn to treat animals with love and respect.
- Teach your child to avoid contact with free-roaming animals which might bite or carry diseases like rabies.
- Teach your child to ask the owner of any pet if it is okay to pet their animal.
- Teach your child how to react if a dog approaches: to stand still with hands at their sides, to let the dog sniff and to speak in a calm, low voice to the animal.



## Unending Need For Care

Keeping your child safe from injuries is very much like keeping your home clean. It seems to be a never-ending task. You change and your day-to-day living situation changes. Maybe you redecorate your home or buy new appliances. Maybe your family grows larger or you change your lifestyle. Whenever there are changes such as these, you must consider them in terms of your child's safety. Ask yourself if there is something in this new situation which might cause harm and which needs your attention.

This booklet has been written to give you suggestions for keeping your child safe both inside and outside your home. Because the safety needs of children change as they grow older, keep the information handy and refer to it often. If you have a new baby or a young child visiting your home, take the opportunity to read through this booklet again in case your house is no longer safe for that age group. Make child safety your never-ending task.

Injuries can be prevented. Help your child to grow up *Safe and Secure*.





## Resources

Further information about keeping your child's world *Safe and Secure* can be obtained from the following sources:

### Product and Child Safety Information

Product Safety Bureau  
Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch  
Health Canada  
Suite 839, 9700 Jasper Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5J 4C3  
Ph: (780)495-2626

### Product Safety Program

Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch  
Health Canada  
282 Harry Hayes Building  
220 - 4 Avenue, S.E.  
Calgary, AB T2G 4X3  
Ph: (403)292-4677

### KIDSAFE Connection

Stollery Children's Health Centre  
WMC 4H2.02  
8440-112 Steet  
Edmonton, AB T6G 2B7  
Ph: (780)407-7250

### KIDSAFE Connection

Alberta Children's Hospital  
1820 Richmond Road, S.W.  
Calgary, AB T2T 5C7  
Ph: (403)229-7833

### Bicycle Helmet Information

Health Resource Centre  
Grey Nuns Community Hospital  
1100 Youville Drive W  
Edmonton, AB T6L 5X8  
Ph: (780)450-7312

### Transportation Safety Services Division

Alberta Infrastructure  
Main Floor, Twin Atria Building  
4999 - 98 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T6B 2X3  
Ph: (780)427-8901

### Poison Prevention Information

Alberta Poison and Drug Information Service (PADIS)  
Foothills Hospital  
1403 - 29 Street, N.W.  
Calgary, AB T2N 2T9  
Ph: (403)670-1414 (Calgary)  
1-800-332-1414 (Alberta-wide)

### Farm Safety Information

Alberta Agriculture  
Food and Rural Development  
2nd floor, J. G. O'Donoghue Building  
7000 - 113 Street  
Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6  
Ph: (780)427-2171

## Child Safety Courses

(full range of child safety, first aid and CPR courses)

### St. John Ambulance

Provincial Office  
10975-124 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5M 0H9  
Ph: (780)452-6565  
Ph: 1-800-665-7114

### The Canadian Red Cross Society

Western Zone Office  
6th floor 815-8th Ave SW  
Calgary, AB T2P 3P2  
Ph: 1-888-307-7997

Both St. John's Ambulance and The Canadian Red Cross Society have offices in Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Red Deer. St. John Ambulance also has an office in Fort McMurray.

### Alberta Motor Association

10310 GA MacDonald (39A) Avenue  
PO Box 8180, Station South  
Edmonton, AB T6H 5X9  
Ph: (780)430-6800 (Edmonton)  
1-800-222-6578 (Alberta-wide)

# Safe and Secure



