

## FALLS

Falls are a major cause of injury in the home.

Safety features should include:

- Non-slip surfaces;
- Handrails that toddlers cannot climb over or through;
- Good lighting on stairs with light switches at the top and bottom;
- Safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs;
- Protective barriers or restricted openings on low windows and balconies.

## OUTDOOR PLAY AREAS

Outdoor play areas should be securely enclosed by a fence with a self-closing gate. These areas should also be separated from the street, carport, garage and any car manoeuvring area. Fences and gates should not be able to be climbed or opened by young children.

Garages are also a hazardous area. Avoid direct access from the outdoor play area to the garage. Make sure the door is kept closed or locked if necessary.

When planning the design of your house and garden, consider safety features such as:

- Avoiding blind corners in the access areas to the driveway;
- Install paths that are level, wide and paved;
- Construct broad, shallow steps which are considered the safest;
- Install good drainage and soft surfaces beneath any climbing devices;
- Avoid the use of small, loose gravel or mulch which may present a choking hazard to very young children.

## PLAY EQUIPMENT

Regularly examine toys, outdoor play equipment and trampolines for damage and hazards. Research all toy and play equipment prior to purchase to ensure that it is age appropriate.

Maintain bikes and ride-on toys, particularly the steering and braking mechanisms. Insist on the correct safety gear for all ride-on toys such as bikes and skateboards. Australian Standard approved helmets should always be worn.

## SWIMMING POOL FENCES

Your swimming pool should be separately fenced. A fence complying with the Australian Standard should isolate the pool and prevent direct access from the house.

Drowning is the biggest killer of children in the under-five age group. A high proportion of drowning occurs with visitors to the home.

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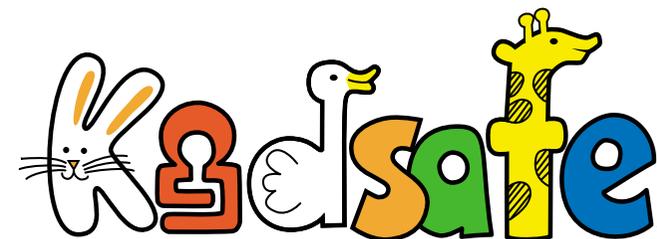


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# Child Safety in the Home



If you have children or are planning to start a family, home safety will be very important to you. Accidental injury and poisoning are the leading causes of death and a major cause of disability among children in Australia.

Many of these accidents happen around the home, especially to pre-school aged children. The biggest threats to the safety of your child are from:

- DROWNING
- SUFFOCATION
- FALLS
- BURNS
- POISONING

*The best way to protect children is to actively supervise them and make the environment safer, both in and around the home.*

## BUILT-IN-SAFETY

Try to look at the home from a child's point of view. Pre-schoolers are unlikely to recognise danger. It's up to you to protect them by having safety features built into your home.

No home is completely accident-proof but the hazards can be minimised.

## PLANNING

The living spaces and outdoor areas should be planned so that play areas are in full view and children can be easily supervised.

Parents should be able to see their children at play in family rooms, playrooms and outdoors. Equally, children need to be able to see their parents, and know that they are nearby.

child safety is no accident

## IN THE BATHROOM

Hot water burns can cause shocking injuries. The skin of a young child is extremely sensitive. It only takes one second of exposure to water heated to 60° C to cause a full thickness burn.

Install a thermostatic mixing valve to prevent any water hotter than 50° C (the safety limit for young children) coming out of the taps.

Bathroom and toilet areas should feature:

- Shower taps set high and out of children's reach;
- Soap holders in showers at least 1200mm above floor to reduce injury in cases of a fall;
- Towel rails adjacent to shower and bath so that towels are within easy reach;
- Door handles that are 1500mm above the floor to restrict unsupervised access;
- Laminated and toughened or wired safety glass in shower screens (as per the Australian Standard and Building Code of Australia).

## IN THE KITCHEN

The peak 'danger time' for toddlers and young children is when meals are being prepared. Ideally a kitchen should have only one access point.

Other features should include:

- Half-height doors, barriers or gates to exclude toddlers from the kitchen work area;
- Upright stoves securely fixed in place to avoid overturning;
- Guards on stove tops so children can't reach saucepans;
- Plastic bags kept out of reach of children and tied in the middle to avoid risk of suffocation.

## CUPBOARDS

For greater security, install child-resistant latches on selected kitchen and bathroom cupboard doors. Temporarily attach a lock or velcro on refrigerator doors to prevent access by young children.

Outdoor sheds, tool cupboards and pool chemical storage areas should also be fitted with a lock. Alternately, store potentially dangerous objects out of reach of children at least 1600mm above ground level.

## ELECTRICAL CIRCUITS

Install safety switches on all circuits to reduce the risk of electrocution around the home. Ideally all power outlets should be situated out of children's reach and have safety shutters or plugs attached.

## GLASS

The risk of serious injury is reduced through the use of safety glass. Stickers or markings should be used on floor length glass doors and windows to increase visibility and avoid children and adults running into glass panels.

## HEAT

Scalds are the biggest single thermal injury for small children. In most instances children pull or spill hot liquid onto themselves. This may be from saucepans, kettles or cups. Take care, even when consuming hot drinks near children.

Keep matches in a safe place and out of reach. Always store flammable liquids in labelled containers out of reach of children.

Guard all fire places whether electric, gas or solid fuel. Children should wear close-fitting sleepwear made of flame-resistant material and kept well away from any heating source.