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*Mommy Can Do It: A Do-It-Herself Guide to Baby-Proofing.*  
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Please use our home baby-proofing checklist as a tool to help create a safer home environment for your children. TotSafe recommends that baby-proofing be done when your child is around 3-6 months of age, before he/she can crawl. Don't wait for your child to start opening cabinets or trying to climb the stairs before you childproof your home. Do it as soon as you can, and as thoroughly as possible to help prevent the number one cause of injury to children (unintentional injuries).

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**The following is a list of common toddler safety risks in the home. Check off items once they are secured. Click an item you have in your home to view suggested childproofing products. Products will open in a new window for your convenience.**

- Stairways:** Secure the top and bottom of stairways with baby safety gates. Please see our "[GUIDE TO BABY SAFETY GATES](#)" to help you choose which gates are right for your space. **PRESSURE MOUNTED BABY GATES ARE NOT RECOMMENDED FOR THE TOP OF THE STAIRS.** Special circumstances such as molding, baseboards, uneven or hollow walls, wrought iron railings, balusters, etc. may require the use of gate installation kits to create a mountable surface.
- Windows:** Second story windows (and higher) pose a falling hazard to children. Children should not have access to open windows; windows that can be opened more than 4" are hazardous. Use childproofing window guards on second story and higher windows.
- Window Blinds:** Cords from window blinds should be kept out of children's reach. Although we prefer to see parents remove window blinds with cords from the home because they are a strangulation risk to children, they can easily be secured out of reach if removal is not possible. **NEVER PLACE A CHILD'S CRIB OR BED NEAR THE WINDOW OR WINDOW BLINDS.**
- Outlets-** Create a barrier between children and electrical currents with appropriate childproofing measures. Determine whether your outlets are Standard or Decorator\* and:
  - If you have outlets constantly in use (i.e. lamp plugged in all the time): We suggest outlet covers.
  - For outlets that are frequently used (i.e. outlet used to plug in vacuum, then remove it): Try sliding outlet plates, which replace your existing outlet plate and have a 'door' that slides closed to cover the outlet as soon as an item is unplugged.

- Outlets that are rarely used (usually left unused): Outlet plugs fit snugly inside outlets to prevent access.
- \* Decorator Outlets have 2 screws, one at top, one at bottom. Standard outlets have one screw, in the middle. For more information regarding electrical outlet safety, please read "Outlet Safety In Your Home" a guide to selecting electrical safety products for your home.

- ☐ Medicines, Cleaners, Cosmetics, etc.: These items should to be kept out of the reach of children. Medicines, cosmetics, cleaners and other household products should be kept in their original containers with labels, and up in cupboards or on shelves where children can not have access to them. Use cabinet locks and latches on cupboards or drawers where these items are stored.
- ☐ Balcony, Loft, Landing, etc. with banisters: Use banister shields to close off gaps between balusters and newel posts, particularly where the space is more than 4". Remove items from around banisters, half walls, etc. that children may use to climb. This includes toys, chairs, tables, and other products that curious children may use to step up on.
- ☐ Kitchens: Kitchens can be one of the most hazardous rooms in your home. If it is possible, use a baby safety gate to block off access to the kitchen, especially during cooking or baking.
  - ☐ Always use the back burners when cooking; make sure that pan handles are pointing toward the back of the stove.
  - ☐ Never hold your child while in the kitchen. Children may try to grab hot foods or sharp items that could injure them. If a child does grab a sharp item such as a knife, do not try to pull it out of the child's hand. Instead, firmly squeeze the child's wrist until they let go of the object.
  - ☐ Use Stove Knob Covers or Locks to prevent access to burner knobs.
  - ☐ Use adhesive locks on the refrigerator/freezer to prevent little ones from getting into food & drinks they should not have.
  - ☐ Keep knives and other sharp objects stored in locked drawers.
  - ☐ Store plastic bags away from children.
- ☐ Electrical Appliances: There is a huge array of electrical appliances that are hazardous to children. Kitchen stoves, refrigerators, ovens, microwaves, and dishwashers can all lead to burns and other injuries. They should be secured with guards, latches, and straps to prevent access, and guard against injury. Unplug electrical appliances when not in use.
- ☐ Heavy or Unstable Furniture (including dressers, armoires, entertainment centers, book cases and changing tables, etc.): Every year thousands of children are injured due to tipping furniture. Children pull out dresser drawers and use them as steps to climb up furniture. Heavy and/or unstable furniture should be removed or secured with special furniture straps to studs in the walls to prevent them from tipping onto a child. Keep the tops of furniture clear of knick-knacks, toys, flowers, etc. to help deter climbing.

- ❑ Toilets: Children are particularly curious about water, even water in the toilet. Just a couple of inches of water, such as that in the toilet, bucket, or pet dish can pose a drowning risk. Use toilet locks to prevent access to water in the toilet, and never keep water in buckets, tubs, etc. Pets water dishes should be kept out of the reach of babies and toddlers as well.
- ❑ Water sources (faucet, bathtub, shower): Children should not have access to water for many reasons. In addition to the drowning risk associated with water, it can also put children at risk for being scalded if it is too hot. Water heaters in your home should be set to no more than 120 degrees to help prevent this. Keep bathroom doors closed or gated off and use a Safety Tap Guard to prevent access to water.
- ❑ Cabinets/Drawers: Cabinets and drawers hold many items that can be dangerous to children including cleansers, medicines, cosmetics and sharp objects like knives and scissors. Cabinets and drawers should be secured with locks or latches to prevent access. Individuals who prefer not to install hardware mounted cabinet & drawer latches can try Adhesive Mount Cabinet Latches.
- ❑ Garbage Cans: Children should not have access to garbage cans or their contents. Garbage cans should be placed where children can not reach them, and locked closed with a locking strap.
- ❑ Sharp-edged tables, fireplace hearths, and window sills: Use corner and table edge cushions to pad sharp edges of tables, hearths, computer desks, counters, etc.
- ❑ Cords in reach: cords should be kept out of reach of children to minimize pulling on items, and gaining access to electrical outlets. Computers, entertainment centers, and lamps are a few of the items that have cords that should be secured out of reach. Cord control kits or outlet covers with cord shorteners can be used for this purpose.
- ❑ Nightlights: Some nightlights have small parts and hot bulbs that can injure children. They also may be pulled out, exposing children to outlets.
  - Nightlight with Outlet Cover is an alternative to standard nightlights, and offers protection from outlets.
- ❑ Fireplaces, Wood Burning Stoves, Barbecue Grills: Children should not be allowed near fireplaces, grills or wood burning stoves. It is good practice not to allow children near them even when they are not in use. Protect children from burns from fireplaces and stoves with fireplace gates. Use edge and corner cushions on hearths to protect from bumps and bruises.
- ❑ Plants: Several household plants can be fatal to children if eaten, and the fertilizer in soil can be harmful, as well. Plants should be moved out of children's reach. If that is not an option, pot should be covered with mesh or plastic so that child does not have access to the soil. The Plant Saver can be used to cover the soil and help prevent access.
- ❑ TV/VCR/DVD/Stereo: Children are often fascinated with buttons and doors, such as those found on TVs, VCRs, etc. Clear plastic shields can be used to guard against having a child

insert inappropriate items into the VCR, push buttons, etc. Attach appliance straps to items to help prevent them from tipping onto children.

- Computer and Entertainment Centers: Areas around the computer and entertainment centers can have several hazards to children. Generally, these areas have a large amount of cords, adapters, and heavy equipment like a monitor or television set. Browse our website for power strip safety covers, outlet & adapter covers, cord control kits, and safety locking straps to help prevent injuries.
- Carbon Monoxide & Smoke Detectors: It is recommended that carbon monoxide detectors be placed in every separate sleeping area of the home, on the ceiling at least 15 feet away from fuel-burning appliances. There should be at least one smoke detector on every floor of the home.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas which is a particular hazard to children because they have faster metabolic rates and gas accumulates faster in their bodies than adults.

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### **Other Home Childproofing Tips:**

- Use childproofing products correctly all of the time. Train older children, babysitters and visitors (including Grandma & Grandpa) on how to properly use child safety items in your home to help ensure correct use, and continued protection of your child. It only takes one time for a cabinet to be left open, or a toilet to be left unlocked for an accident to happen.
- Prevent access to scalding water using anti-scald devices, and/or setting your water heater to a maximum temperature of 120 degrees.
- Make sure cleaners, cosmetics, plants, and other poisonous substances are correctly labeled with name and ingredients so that if your baby ingests the item you can give accurate information to a poison control center or emergency medical team.
- Make sure windows can not be opened more than 4" and/or are blocked with Window Guards.
- Always supervise your child in the bath.
- Remove two-piece door stops, which have small parts that can be choking hazards, replace with [one-piece door stops](#).
- Make sure to keep older children's toys away from younger children.
- Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, and lit candles out of children's reach.
- Check floors for small objects that could pose a choking hazard, move breakable items like figurines, ceramics, vases, etc. to higher locations where children can not reach them, and remove tablecloths and coverings that toddlers may pull themselves up on.

- Keep older children's toys out of reach of younger children.
- Consider childproofing to be an ongoing process.

This baby-proofing checklist was created to be as thorough as possible, however, please remember that this checklist is just for reference, and may not cover all of the child safety issues in your home, or with your child.

**Babyproofing products are meant to be deterrents; they are not meant to substitute for proper adult supervision.**

This article can be found online at <http://www.TotSafe.com/checklist.htm>