

Child and Infant Safety Checklist

The Safety Checklist can help you learn risks for injury at home, in the car, at childcare centers, at schools, and on playgrounds. The Safety Checklist also tells you what to do to reduce risk. It is impossible to eliminate every risk for every child. For this reason, you must know how to respond to an emergency.

Action	I follow this safety precaution (✓ = yes)	Purchase of safety item is required for all shaded boxes (✓ = item purchased)
Car Safety		
1. Make sure that every person in the car “buckles up” correctly.		
2. Have children who are less than 12 years old ride in the BACK seat and use correct child restraints or lap-shoulder restraints for age.		
<p>3. Use a rear-facing infant safety seat for infants until they weigh at least 20 lb (9 kg) and are 1 year old.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Secure all car seats in the BACK seat of the car. ■ Secure the seat according to the manufacturer’s instructions. ■ To see if the seat is secure, try to push the seat forward, backward, and side-to-side. Tighten the belt to be sure that the seat does not move more than ½ inch (1 cm). ■ For proper adjustment, the seat belt buckle and latch plate (if needed) must be located well below the frame or toward the center of the seat. 		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Infant safety seat
4. Wait until a child weighs 20 lb (9 kg) and is at least 1 year old and can sit with good head control before using a convertible seat or toddler seat in the forward-facing position. Secure these seats in the BACK seat of the car.		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Child safety seat
<p>5. Use a belt-positioning booster seat for children who weigh 40 to 80 lb (18 to 36 kg). Secure the seat with a 3-point seat belt (lap and shoulder belt) in the BACK seat of the car.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If a shield is provided, fasten it close to the child’s body. ■ Properly install the tether harness if required. 		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Belt-positioning booster seat
<p>6. Children cannot be properly restrained with a lap-shoulder belt until they are at least 4 feet 9 inches (58 inches or 148 cm) tall, weigh 80 lb (36 kg), and can sit in the automobile seat with their knees bent over the edge. Always use a combination lap-shoulder belt to restrain children sitting in an automobile seat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The shoulder belt should fit across the shoulder and breastbone. If it crosses the child’s face and neck, use a belt-positioning booster seat to be sure that the belt is properly placed. Do not hook the shoulder belt under the child’s arm. ■ All children 12 years old or younger should ride in the BACK seat. 		

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General Indoor Safety		
7. Place a sticker with emergency phone numbers near or on the phone. Include numbers for the EMS system, police, fire department, local hospital or physician, the poison control center in your area, and your telephone number.		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Phone sticker with emergency response numbers
8. Install smoke detectors on the ceiling in the hallway outside areas where children sleep or nap and on each floor at the head of stairs. Test the alarm monthly and replace batteries twice a year (for example, in the fall and spring when the time changes to and from daylight saving time).		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Smoke detector
9. Make sure that there are two unobstructed emergency exits from the home, childcare center, classroom, or other area where children are likely to be present.		
10. Develop and practice a fire escape plan.		
11. Make sure that a working fire extinguisher is available.		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Fire extinguisher
12. Make sure that all space heaters are safety approved. They should be in safe operating condition. They should be placed out of a child’s reach and at least 3 feet from curtains, papers, and furniture. The heaters should have protective covers.		
13. Make sure all wood-burning stoves are inspected yearly and vented properly. Place stoves out of a child’s reach.		
14. Make sure that electrical cords are not frayed or overloaded. Place out of a child’s reach.		
15. Install “shock stops” (plastic outlet plugs) or outlet covers on all electrical outlets.		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Plastic outlet plugs
16. To prevent falls, always keep one hand on an infant sitting or lying on a high surface such as a changing table.		
17. Place healthy full-term infants on their back or side to sleep. Do not place infants on their stomach to sleep.		
18. Make sure the crib is safe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The crib mattress fits snugly with no more than two fingers’ width between the mattress and crib railing. ■ The distance between crib slats should be less than 2 3/8 inches (so the infant’s head won’t be caught). ■ Do not put any fluffy material, stuffed animals, or fluffy blankets or comforters in the crib with the infant 		
19. Be sure that stairs, railings, porches, and balconies are strong and in good repair.		

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20. Keep halls and stairs lighted to prevent falls.		
21. Put toddler gates at the top and bottom of stairs. (Do not use accordion-type gates with wide spaces at the top. The child's head could become trapped in such a gate, and the child could strangle.)		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Toddler gates (NOT accordion-type)
22. Do not let your child use an infant walker.		
23. To prevent falls, put locks (available at hardware stores) on all windows. Put gates on the lower part of open windows.		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Window locks, gates
24. Store medicines and vitamins in child-resistant containers out of a child's reach.		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Child-resistant containers
25. Store cleaning products out of a child's sight and reach. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Store and label all household poisons in their original containers in high locked cabinets (not under sinks). ■ Do not store chemicals or poisons in soda bottles. ■ Store cleaning products away from food. 		
26. Install safety latches or locks on cabinets that contain potentially dangerous items and are within a child's reach.		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Safety latches or locks on cabinets
27. Keep purses that contain vitamins, medicines, cigarettes, matches, jewelry, and calculators (which have easy-to-swallow button batteries) out of a child's reach.		
28. Install a lock or hook-and-eye latch on the door to the basement or garage to keep children from entering those areas. Put a lock at the top of the doorframe.		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Latch on base- ment, garage doors
29. Keep plants that may be harmful out of a child's reach. (Many plants are poisonous. Check with your poison control center.)		
30. Make sure that toy chests have lightweight lids, no lids, or safe-closing hinges.		

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Kitchen Safety		
<p>31. To reduce the risk of burns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep hot liquids, foods, and cooking utensils out of a child’s reach. ■ Put hot liquids and food away from the edge of the table. ■ Cook on back burners when possible and turn pot handles toward the center of the stove. ■ Avoid using tablecloths and placemats that can be pulled, spilling hot liquids or food. ■ Keep high chairs and stools away from the stove. ■ Do not keep snacks near the stove. ■ Teach young children the meaning of the word <i>hot</i>. 		
<p>32. Keep all foods and small items (including balloons) that can choke a child out of reach. Test toys for size with a toilet-paper roll. If a toy can fit inside the roll, it can choke a small child.</p>		
<p>33. Keep knives and other sharp objects out of a child’s reach.</p>		
Bathroom Safety		
<p>34. Bathe children in no more than 1 or 2 inches of water. Stay with infants and young children throughout bath time. Do not leave small infants or toddlers in the bathtub in the care of young siblings.</p>		
<p>35. Use skid-proof mats or stickers in the bathtub.</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item—bath mats or stickers
<p>36. Adjust the maximum temperature of the water heater to 120° to 130°F (48.9° to 54.4°C) or medium heat. Test temperature with a thermometer.</p>		
<p>37. Keep electrical appliances (radios, hairdryers, space heaters, etc) out of the bathroom or unplugged, away from water, and out of a child’s reach.</p>		
Firearms		
<p>38. If firearms are stored in the home, keep them locked and out of a child’s sight and reach. Lock and unload guns individually before storing them. Store ammunition separate from the firearms.</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item—trigger lock, lockboxes for firearms
Outdoor Safety		
<p>39. Make sure playground equipment is assembled and anchored correctly according to the manufacturer’s instructions. The playground should have a level, cushioned surface such as sand or wood chips.</p>		

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<p>40. Make sure your child knows the rules of safe bicycling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Wear a protective helmet. ■ Use the correct-size bicycle. ■ Ride on the right side of the road (with traffic). ■ Use hand signals and wear bright or reflective clothing. 		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Bicycle helmet
<p>41. Do not allow children to play with fireworks.</p>		
<p>42. Make sure your child is properly protected while roller skating or skateboarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Wear a helmet and protective pads on the knees and elbows. ■ Skate only in rinks or parks that are free of traffic. 		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Helmet and protective padding
<p>43. Make sure your child is properly protected while riding on sleds or snow disks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sled only during daylight hours and only in a safe, supervised area away from motor vehicles. 		
<p>44. Make sure your child is properly protected while participating in contact sports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Proper adult instruction and supervision are provided. ■ Teammates are about the same weight and size. ■ Appropriate safety equipment is used. 		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— Safety equipment for contact sports
<p>45. To reduce the risk of animal bites, teach your child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How to handle and care for a pet. ■ Never to try to separate fighting animals, even when a familiar pet is involved. ■ To avoid unfamiliar animals. 		
<p>46. If you have a home swimming pool, make sure the pool is totally enclosed with fencing that is at least 5 feet high and that all gates are self-closing and self-latching. There should be no direct access (without a locked gate) from the home into the pool area. In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An adult must always supervise children while they swim. Never allow a child to swim alone. ■ Change young children from swimsuits into street clothes, and remove all toys from the pool area at the end of swim time. ■ All adults and older children should learn CPR. ■ Pools on nearby properties should be protected from use by unsupervised children. 		<input type="checkbox"/> Safety item— 5-foot fence around swimming pool with self-closing, self-latching gate

Note: Much of the safety information presented in this table is based on the SAFEHOME program and the Children's Traffic Safety Program at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health developed the SAFEHOME program as part of its Statewide Comprehensive Injury Prevention Program. The Federal Division of Maternal and Child Health funded the SAFEHOME program. The Department of Transportation and the Tennessee Governor's Highway Safety Program funded the Children's Traffic Safety Program.