

**Safety in the Bedroom:**

Put your baby to sleep on his back to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Use a firm, tight-fitting mattress in his crib and remove all soft items to prevent smothering. The slats on your baby's crib or wooden playpen must be 2 3/8 inches or less apart to prevent strangling. Never use a waterbed, sheepskin or pillow for bed. Once your baby can reach a hanging mobile with his hands, remove it. Keep one hand on your baby when you are diapering him to prevent falls.

Safety in the Bathroom:

Children can drown in one inch of water. Watch your child at all times. Place rubber mats in your tub or shower to prevent slipping. Store pills, personal care items and electrical appliances out of your child's reach. Purchase items with child safety caps.

Safety in the Living Room:

Remove furniture that can tip over easily. Put up barriers around fireplaces, space heaters and wood stoves. Remove the lid of a toy chest to prevent head injuries or suffocation. Throw out broken toys or toys with sharp edges. Cushion sharp corners and edges to prevent cuts and bruises.

Safety in the Kitchen:

Put pots and pans on the stove's back burners and keep handles turned toward the center of the stove. Place electric appliances far back on the counter. Keep hot beverages out of your child's reach. Place sharp knives and cleaning solvents in locked cabinets. Choose a sturdy high chair with a wide base that offers a tight fitting tray and a belt that fits across your child's waist and between her legs. Never leave your baby alone in her high chair.

Safety in the Car:

Use a car seat approved under U.S. Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and make sure it is installed and used correctly. Never place a child under 13 years in the front seat of a car equipped with air bags. Always lock rear side air bags when transporting young children.

In spite of your best efforts, emergencies can happen. Here are some ways you can prepare:

- Attend a CPR and First Aid Class.
- Post emergency numbers such as 911 and the poison control center next to your phone.
- Keep a first aid kit handy.
- Regularly inspect your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Replace worn-out batteries.

If you are a parent, share this with your child's caregiver. If you are a caregiver, share this with the child's parent(s). Thank you!

PRACTICE HEALTH & SAFETY

This brochure is the seventh in an eight-part series on fun and learning with your baby or toddler:

1. Care for Yourself
2. Cuddle, Talk, and Read with Your Child
3. How Your Child Develops
4. Be Playful with Your Child
5. Show Your Child the World
6. Teach Self Control
7. Practice Health and Safety
8. Healthy Eating

"Keys to Great Caregiving" has been adapted for use in Connecticut from "Keys To Great Parenting", University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

To request Keys brochures call 203-207-3267 or visit: www.thekeys.uconn.edu



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PRACTICE HEALTH
AND SAFETY

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New Haven School Readiness Council

PRACTICE HEALTH & SAFETY

Ensuring your child's health and safety protects him and gives you peace of mind. At the same time, you are teaching habits of good health and safety that your child will keep for life. You are your child's first and most important teacher.

General Safety Tips

- Get down and crawl around your house. Look for hazards that may attract your curious baby or toddler. Cover all electrical outlets and remove all extension cords from your child's reach.
- Adjust your hot water temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or less. Always check the water temperature with your elbow or wrist before you put your child in the water.
- Don't use accordion-style wooden gates. Use expansion-type safety gates across stairs and off-limits areas.
- Keep blind and curtain cords out of reach, especially from your child's crib.
- Place houseplants out of reach. Some are poisonous.

- Open your windows from the top only. Use screens and/or guards with rails to prevent falls.
- Keep your purse or briefcase out of reach to help prevent choking. Remove toys and other objects small enough to fit inside a toilet paper tube.
- Do not allow your child to play with car keys. They are covered with oil and germs.



Consider offering your baby a pacifier just before going to sleep. Pacifier use during sleep may reduce the risk of SIDS. There is no evidence that pacifier use inhibits breastfeeding or causes tooth/mouth problems. Clean your baby's pacifiers often. Replace old pacifiers with new pacifiers regularly. Never coat your baby's pacifier with a sweet solution.

Place your baby on his stomach while he is awake and is being watched. This "tummy time" allows your baby's head, neck, and shoulder muscles to get stronger. Also, it may help to prevent your baby from getting a flat back of head.

Tips That Can Help You Prevent Many Health Problems and Most Accidents:

- Choose a doctor for your child before he is born. Ask other parents for names of family doctors and pediatricians in your area.
- Bring your child outdoors every day. Fresh (even chilly) air is vital to your child's physical health, brain development, and good spirits.
- **Keep your baby or toddler away from cigarette and cigar smoke.** Cigarette and cigar smoke have been linked to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), learning problems, ear infections and tooth decay.
- Wash your child's hands and your own hands often with warm soapy water to reduce illness.
- Keep your home and your baby's toys clean. Wash toys in hot soapy water when they look dirty or smell bad.
- Ask your doctor to test your child for lead, especially if you live in an older home or in a city. Remove blistering, peeling or flaking paint in your home. Check for lead in your water.
- Keep your cat's litter box and other pet waste away from your baby or toddler.
- Provide your baby or toddler with quiet periods for sleep and play.

Tips for Healthy Teeth:

- Healthy teeth and gums are necessary for chewing, holding space for permanent teeth, learning to speak clearly and correct growth of the jawbone.
- Don't put your baby to sleep with a bottle of milk, formula or fruit juice. This can cause tooth decay. Instead, give your child a bottle filled with water. If you breast-feed, avoid letting the baby nurse continuously. Clean your baby's mouth and gums with a clean, wet cloth after feedings.
- Talk to your child's doctor or dentist about the possible need for fluoride supplements. Fluoride helps build strong teeth and prevents tooth decay. Some dentists suggest taking your baby to the dentist after the first tooth cuts through the gums. Every child should be seen by a dentist around age two.
- Check with the doctor when your child can start using fluoridated toothpaste. Use no more than an amount the size of a pea. Too much fluoride is harmful.