



**Children are smart, strong and curious. Combined with their boundless energy, they can get into unsafe situations in a flash as they seek out new experiences and new ways to play.**

Keeping babies, toddlers and children safe at home means caregivers must keep a close eye on them at all times and take steps to prevent accidents.

This brochure gives a few tips on prevention. Other information can be found online at sites such as [www.safekids.org/parents](http://www.safekids.org/parents), or by talking to your child's pediatrician or your caseworker.

## **Safe Sleep**

Many babies are smothered every year by adults or other children rolling over on them while they are sleeping. Always place your baby on his or her back in a crib or portable play yard with nothing else in it. Your baby's sleep area should be close to, but totally separate from where you and others sleep.

See the "Safe Sleep for Your Baby" brochure or visit [www.nichd.nih.gov/sts](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/sts) for more tips.

## **Poison & Medicines**

Many things look like food or drink to a child, and he or she may still want it even when warned that it is dangerous. Substances that should be kept out of reach include:

- Cleaning products
- Automotive fluids
- Button batteries
- Alcohol
- Vitamins – Never refer to them as candy. They can be dangerous.
- Drugs and medicines – Whether prescribed by a doctor or not.
- Nicotine – Never store cigarettes or other nicotine products (including vaping liquids) within reach of children. Plus, secondhand smoke has been linked to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Homes and cars should be kept smoke-free.

### **DHS IS**

responsible for providing and administering publicly funded services to Allegheny County residents.

### **DHS PRINCIPLES**

All services will be

- high quality, comprehensive, and accessible.
- individualized and designed to be respectful of the unique cultural characteristics of each individual and/or community
- integrated and offered through a team approach that recognizes the capacity of individuals and families to identify their own strengths, needs, and goals; create relationships with natural supports; and take steps necessary to accomplish these goals.



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Produced by the DHS Office of Community Relations 7/2021



# Child Safety in the Home



## Tips on Prevention

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
HUMAN SERVICES**

[alleghenycounty.us/dhs](http://alleghenycounty.us/dhs)



## Weapons

Every year, dozens of children in Allegheny County are killed or injured in gun incidents.

The best way to prevent this is to not keep a gun in your home and to make sure your child is not in a home where guns are in use or in reach.

If you must keep a gun in your home, remember to:

- Keep the guns unloaded
- Make sure guns are properly locked away
- Lock the ammunition in a separate place
- Hide all keys to gun cabinets or rooms in which guns are stored and make sure children cannot get the keys

Follow these same tips for knives and other weapons.

Before your child goes to another house, ask if there are weapons in the home and if they are stored safely. Visit [askingsaveskids.org](http://askingsaveskids.org) for more tips.



## Furniture & Windows

Furniture such as TVs, bookshelves, dressers – anything unstable or top heavy – should be anchored to the wall. Children have been crushed by furniture. Babies and toddlers are especially at risk of this threat.

Children also can fall out of windows. Never open windows more than a few inches in rooms that children can access. Do not place furniture in front of windows. Children may climb it. Do not think that screens will prevent children from falling out of a window. They will not.

If you rent and believe there are hazards in your apartment that could harm your child, tell your landlord or caseworker.

Secure cords on blinds so that they are out of the reach of children, or use cordless blinds. Children can get blind cords wrapped around their necks and suffocate.

## Toys

Children can choke on toys. Toys labeled for children older than 3 may have small parts that can choke them. If a toy part can fit inside a toilet paper tube, it's likely to be a choking hazard and should not be within reach of a child.

## Water

Water is a big attraction for children because they like to play in it. They are at risk from water sources that may not occur to you, such as buckets and toilets. Babies and toddlers are especially at risk because they cannot free themselves from a container if they fall or place their head into it.

**Never leave children of any age alone in a tub or pool of any size.** Keep bathroom doors tightly shut. Stay within arm's reach of children when any body of water is near, including ponds, rivers and lakes. Do not allow yourself to be distracted by phones or electronic devices.

## Electricity

Electrical outlets are within reach of children. Curiosity can lead them to stick an item into the outlets and they can be shocked and badly hurt. Inexpensive covers that plug into the outlets are available, but always keep an eye on your child, too.

Babies and toddlers may also want to put cords from lamps or TVs in their mouths, and can even pull these items over onto themselves. Make sure these sorts of cords are out of reach.



## Food & Kitchens

To prevent choking, always supervise children when they are eating. Some foods present an increased risk. Those include:

- Small pieces of hot dogs – hot dogs should be minced
- Cheese sticks/chunks
- Hard candy
- Nuts
- Grapes
- Popcorn
- Raw vegetables
- Jelly beans
- Raw, unpeeled fruit slices
- Dried fruits
- Chunks of meat

In kitchens, portable cooktops should be out of reach. Stove knobs should be covered. Cabinet doors should be secured with child-proof locks. Cooking should be done on back burners whenever possible so children cannot pull hot foods onto themselves. Kitchen knives should be kept out of the reach of children and/or in a locked drawer or cabinet.

**Never leave a child alone in a kitchen.** Shut the door to it tightly or block the entrance with a child safety gate.