

CHILD SAFETY AT HOME

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Introduction:

Home is the first institution where a child learns many things. It is also the home which is considered safest for children. But this is also one of the places where most accidents take place. All children try to learn by imitating, pulling, pushing, climbing and touching things. This is a normal way of learning. A child, while doing these things, is liable to hurt himself. It is the duty of parents to encourage him/her in the process of learning and protect against the obvious hazards. It is imperative for parents not only to make the household but also the neighborhood safe for the child to play and move about.

Accidents are bound to occur at home especially when the child gains mobility. All accidents do not result in death. Many of them leave the child crippled or disfigured or result in unnecessary pain. Thus is easier to prevent an accident than to treat a child after the damage has been done.

Here is a list of measures that parents can take to make their homes safe:

I. Accidents in Kitchen

- Keep the child away from hot

stoves, hot vessels, etc.

- Children should not be allowed to play or meddle with gas lighter.
- Gas cylinder's knob should be out of reach for children
- Table cloth should not hang down as the child may pull it and hot things may cause burns and injuries.
- The pot handles should not be extending over the edge of the stove.
- One should not allow the child to play with small things which can be swallowed easily, for example, coins, nuts, small articles, etc.

II. Accidents at homes arising due to callousness

- Never allow the child to play with sharp edged pointer and dangerous objects like knives, scissors, sickles, etc.
- Do not allow the child to play with plastic covers as it can suffocate the child
- Electric points should not be within the reach of the child as poking fingers can give electric shocks.

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on high shelves beyond the child's reach

- There should be no broken glass lying on the floor.

III. Accidents in courtyards

- Always use door guards to open doors that lead to possible dangerous area.
- Do not allow the child to play near water tanks or wells or construction sites, especially for bore wells as there is always a danger for the child to fall.
- Do not allow the child to play in a area where construction materials are lying.
- One should always keep a watch over the child while playing in the courtyard as reptiles and stray dogs may harm the child if the child's mobility is not supervised.
- The house should not be very close to the street road as the child cannot play in the yard.

IV. Outdoor and road accidents

- Stay with the child, especially a toddler, when he/she plays outside the house.
- Do not allow the child to play on the roads.
- Children should not be left alone while playing in the park.

V. Accidental falls from great heights

- The small child should not be encouraged to go up or down the stairs alone.
- Use stairway gates for preventing the child from rolling up the stairs.
- Do not use mats on stairs.
- Protected staircases with railings should be used.
- Child should not be allowed to use the staircases with or without railing or with wide railings alone.

Thus the home can be made a safer and better place by organizing things, latching doors and gates after use and use of baby stoppers to kitchen doors and verandahs to restrict movements of children. The electrical points and door bolts can be fixed at higher levels and dangerous and poisonous materials should be kept out of reach of children. Accidents can occur at any time. Thus, it is the judicious planning and organization of the environment by the mother in avoiding the hazards and ensuring safety for the child's play and well being.