



# Safe Home Checklist

For parents with children  
birth to 6-years old

Massachusetts  
Department  
of Public Health





# Keeping your child safe & injury-free at home

Infants, toddlers, and young children are curious, playful, and eager to learn. As your child learns how to take their very first steps, run, and climb, it's important to know how to keep them safe at home. Oftentimes, the home can be a dangerous place for your child to encounter bumps, bruises, falls, and burns — but luckily, they have you to protect them from harm's way. By using this checklist, you can learn the best ways to keep your child safe from injuries.

## Instructions:

- Walk through your home and identify potential injury hazards.
- For each question, check “Yes” or “No,” depending on what you find in your home.
- If you check “Yes,” that part of your home is safe for young children.
- If you check “No,” you will need to make some changes to make your home safer.
- Note what changes you can make to keep your child safe.
- Use this checklist as they grow and develop to make sure you are keeping up with them!

You may learn that there are easy changes you can make or more difficult changes where you may need more support from a home visitor, childcare provider, healthcare provider, or family member. Sometimes, a change may require your landlord's permission or assistance. Those changes are noted in the checklist with an (L).

With knowledge and practice, childhood injuries are preventable. Once you have completed this checklist, you will have taken the first step in making your home safer for your child to grow, play, and explore for years to come.



# Kitchen Safety

	YES	NO
Do you keep coffee, hot liquids, and hot food away from your child?		
Do you keep small items and pieces of food that can choke your child out of their reach? (Anything that can fit inside a toilet paper roll can be a choking hazard to your child)		
Do you store cleaning supplies, medicines, and vitamins locked or out of reach from your child?		
Do you keep knives and other sharp objects out of reach from your child?		
Do you keep candles, matches, and lighters out of reach from your child?		





	YES	NO
Do you keep items that can catch on fire (example: oven mitts, wooden utensils, towels) away from the stove?		
Do you keep your child at least three feet away from the stove while it is on?		
Have you secured any furniture (example: shelves or bookcases) to make sure it does not tip over if your child climbs on them?		

I can keep my child safe by:



### Did you know?

- Working smoke alarms reduce the chances of dying in a reported home fire by 50%.



# Bathroom Safety

	YES	NO
Do you always supervise your child and stay within arm's reach during bath time?		
Do you store cleaning supplies, medicines, and vitamins locked or out of reach from your child?		
Do you keep electrical appliances unplugged, away from water, and out of your child's reach?		
Do you test the water temperature before giving your child a bath?		
Is your hot water heater set to 120F or below? (L)		



	YES	NO
Have you secured any furniture (example: shelves or tables) to make sure they do not tip over if your child climbs on them? (L)		

I can keep my child safe by:

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Did you know?

- Nearly 9 in 10 parents agree that it's important to store medicine up high and out of reach of children after every use.
- CPR performed by bystanders has been shown to save lives and improve outcomes in drowning victims. The more quickly CPR is started, the better the chance of improved outcomes.



# Living Room Safety

	YES	NO
Have you secured your TV and furniture to make sure they do not tip over if your child climbs on them? (L)		
Are outlets covered and electrical and extension cords out of your child's reach?		
Are space heaters out of your child's reach?		
Has your child been tested for lead poisoning between the ages of 9 and 12 months?		
Has your child received a second test for lead poisoning between the ages of 2 and 3 years old?		





	YES	NO
Do you keep your child away from indoor plants that may be poisonous? ( <a href="https://poison.org/articles/plant">poison.org/articles/plant</a> )		

**I can keep my child safe by:**

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### Did you know?

- Infants are more likely to fall from furniture, baby walkers, and stairs.
- Toddlers tend to fall from windows and playground equipment.





# Toy Safety

	YES	NO
Do you supervise your child when they're playing with toys?		
Do you keep small toys, toy pieces, and other choking hazards away from your child? (Anything that can fit inside a toilet paper roll can be a choking hazard to your child)		
Do you make sure that your child's toys are appropriate for their age, abilities, and development?		
If you have more than one child of different ages, do you separate your children's toys by age?		
Are old toy chests and trunks securely closed when not being used? Are they modified to stay open so children cannot crawl into them and get trapped inside?		



I can keep my child safe by:

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**Did you know?**

- In 2016, 174,100 children under the age of 15 years were seen in emergency departments for toy-related injuries. That's 477 kids every day. Almost half of those injured were children 5 and under.



# Hallways, Stairs, and Window Safety

	YES	NO
Do you have working smoke alarms? (L)		
Do you have working carbon monoxide alarms? (L)		
Are stairs, railings, porches, and balconies strong and in good condition? (L)		
If you live on the second floor or above, do you have window guards installed?		
Do you supervise your child and keep them away from stairs and windows?		



	YES	NO
Have you placed furniture away from windows?		
Do your stairs have stair gates, stair guards, and hand rails to prevent falls?		
Do you keep window cords out of reach from children?		
Is your home free of any loose lead paint or peeling paint?		
Are tripping hazards like toys, rugs, and electrical cords safely stored or secured?		

I can keep my child safe by:



Did you know?

- Infants are more likely to fall from furniture, baby walkers, and stairs.
- Toddlers tend to fall from windows and playground equipment.
- Older children fall more often from playground equipment.



# Sleeping Area Safety

(For infants up to 1-year old)

	YES	NO
Do you keep all objects other than mattress and crib sheet (i.e. pillows, stuffed animals, window cords, and blankets) out of your child’s crib?		
Does your child’s mattress fit tightly inside of the crib?		
Are the crib bars $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches or less apart?		
Have you secured your child’s furniture to make sure it does not tip over if your child climbs on it? (L)		
If anyone smokes in your home, do you make sure they do not sleep in your child’s sleeping area?		





I can keep my child safe by:

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**Did you know?**

- Room sharing can decrease the risk of SIDS by as much as 50%.



# Child Passenger & Outdoor Safety

	YES	NO
Does your child ride in an appropriate car seat for their age, height, weight, and development? ( <a href="https://www.safekids.org/car-seat">safekids.org/car-seat</a> )		
Do you make sure that you and all passengers are buckled up during every car ride?		
Do you make sure you're always alert and avoid distractions while driving?		
Do you make sure your child isn't wearing a big winter jacket that could loosen the car seat harness?		
Do you keep your child away from the basement and/or garage or other places where dangerous objects are stored?		



	YES	NO
Do you always supervise your child around pools and other bodies of water?		
Do you empty wading pools, cleaning buckets, and other containers that hold water as soon as you are done with them?		
Do you have a 4-sided fence around your pool or pool alarm? (Please note, if a door from the house leads to the pool, it is not safe for young children)		

I can keep my child safe by:



Did you know?

- Car seat use reduces the risk for injury in a crash by 71-82% for children, when compared with seat belt use alone.
- For older children and adults, seat belt use reduces the risk for death and serious injury by nearly half.
- Learning to swim can reduce the risk of drowning by 88%.
- Taking part in formal swimming lessons reduces the risk of drowning among children aged 1 to 4 years.

# Emergency Preparedness & Firearm Safety

	YES	NO
Do you have an emergency/fire escape plan for your family?		
Do you have an emergency meeting place for your family?		
Have you practiced a fire escape plan before?		
Do you have an emergency supply kit?		
Are any and all firearms in your home locked up separately from ammunition, with the key in a secure location?		





I can keep my child safe by:

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**Did you know?**

- It is estimated that after a major disaster, it may take up to three days for relief workers to reach some areas.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) advises that the safest home for a child is one without guns. The most effective way to prevent unintentional gun injuries, suicide and homicide to children and adolescents, research shows, is the absence of guns from homes and communities.





# SAFETY & PREVENTION TIPS

## Child Passenger Safety

- Check the labels and owner's manual to make sure you have the right car seat for your child. Check the height and weight limits
- Keep kids rear-facing for as long as possible, until they outgrow the height or weight limit, which usually occurs around age 2 or later
- Keep kids in the back seat until they are 13 years old and 4 feet 9 inches
- Learn more: [www.safekids.org/car-seat](http://www.safekids.org/car-seat)

## Emergency Preparedness Tips

- Create an escape plan and practice it twice a year with your family
- Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible
- Have an outside meeting place a safe distance from your home
- Learn more: [www.emergency.cdc.gov](http://www.emergency.cdc.gov)

## Falls Prevention

- Always supervise children near porches, stairs, decks, balconies, and windows
- Make sure hallways and stairs are well lit and clear of any tripping hazards
- Keep furniture and anything your child can climb on away from windows
- Install child safety window guards or window stops
- Make sure air conditioning units are properly and securely installed
- Keep windows closed and locked, and open the window from the top if possible
- Learn more: [www.safekids.org/falls](http://www.safekids.org/falls)

## Fire & Carbon Monoxide Safety

- Always supervise your cooking
- Keep anything that can catch fire (oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains) away from your stovetop
- Keep a 3-feet “kid-free zone” around the stove
- Make sure you have smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home and outside all sleeping areas
- Test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms every month
- Change your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms batteries every six months
- Keep electrical outlets covered and cords stored away from children.
- Use stove knob covers, oven locks, and non-colorful plug protectors to prevent fires and burns.
- Learn more: [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs)

## Firearm Safety Tips

- Make sure to keep all guns and other firearms in your home locked and unloaded with the ammunition locked separately.
- Make sure children can’t access the keys to the lock boxes or gun safes.
- Talk to your children about staying away from guns and telling an adult right away if they see one.
- Learn more: [www.projectchildsafe.org](http://www.projectchildsafe.org)

# SAFETY & PREVENTION TIPS

## Infant Safe Sleep

- Keeping your baby sleeping safe and sound can be easy as ABC:
  - Alone: Your baby should sleep alone inside their crib without any pillows, blankets, or stuffed animals
  - Back: Your baby should sleep on their back every time they sleep
  - Crib: Your baby's crib or bassinet is the safest place for your baby to sleep
- The best room temperature for your baby is between 68 and 72 degrees Fahrenheit (20 to 22 degrees Celsius).
- Keep your baby's sleeping area and your home smoke-free, including cigarette and marijuana smoke. Second and third-hand smoke can also harm your baby.
  - Second-hand smoke comes from the tips of cigarettes, pipes, and cigars, and exhaled by people who smoke
  - Third-hand smoke is chemical residue from smoke that can build up on clothes, bedding, furniture, walls, floors, and other surfaces in your home
- Learn more: [mass.gov/safesleep](https://mass.gov/safesleep)

## Toy Safety

- Always check the label to make sure your child's toys are age-appropriate, non-toxic, and lead-free.
- Keep magnets and button batteries away from your child to prevent serious injury.
- Check toys for broken parts, sharp edges, small parts, or other safety concerns.
- Learn more: [www.safekids.org/toys](https://www.safekids.org/toys)

## Poison Prevention

- Be careful of household items that can be poisonous to your child including:
  - Medicines
  - Vitamins
  - Make-up and cosmetics
  - Household cleaners
  - Laundry detergent
  - Indoor and outdoor plants
- Lead paint (Homes built before 1978 are the most likely have lead paint)
- Store items that can be poisonous locked up and away from children.
- If you think your child has been poisoned, call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. Save this number on your phone or post-it somewhere visible in your home to make the number easily accessible. The Poison Help hotline is a free, 24-hour service providing professional medical advice to those who have been exposed to a poison.
- Learn more: [www.maripoisoncenter.com](http://www.maripoisoncenter.com)

## Water Safety

- Close toilet lids to prevent drowning.
- Keep doors to bathrooms closed and locked.
- Always supervise your child when they're in or around water.
- Empty infant tubs or buckets of water as soon as you are done using them.
- Learn more: [www.safekids.org/watersafety](http://www.safekids.org/watersafety)

# RESOURCES & RECOMMENDATIONS

## Online Resources

Fire Prevention — [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs)

Firearm Safety — [www.projectchildsafe.org/talking-to-kids](http://www.projectchildsafe.org/talking-to-kids)

Child Car Seat Safety — [www.safekids.org/car-seat](http://www.safekids.org/car-seat)

Child Falls Prevention — [www.safekids.org/falls](http://www.safekids.org/falls)

Childhood Lead Poisoning — [www.mass.gov/topics/lead-safety](http://www.mass.gov/topics/lead-safety)

Emergency Preparedness — [www.emergency.cdc.gov](http://www.emergency.cdc.gov)

Infant Safe Sleep — [www.mass.gov/safesleep](http://www.mass.gov/safesleep)

MA & RI Poison Center — [www.maripoisoncenter.com](http://www.maripoisoncenter.com)

Poisonous & Non-Poisonous Plants — [www.poison.org/articles/plant](http://www.poison.org/articles/plant)

Lead & Your Child's Health — [www.mass.gov/lead-and-your-childs-health](http://www.mass.gov/lead-and-your-childs-health)

Toy Safety — [www.safekids.org/toys](http://www.safekids.org/toys)

## Recommendations

We recommend checking your local home improvement or hardware supply stores for childproofing safety supplies and equipment.

We recommend contacting your local boards of health or town halls if you need an inspection for heating systems, smoke alarms, carbon monoxides alarms, and lead paint.

### For more information on child safety & injury prevention:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Injury Prevention & Control Program

[www.mass.gov/orgs/injury-prevention-and-control-program](http://www.mass.gov/orgs/injury-prevention-and-control-program)

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