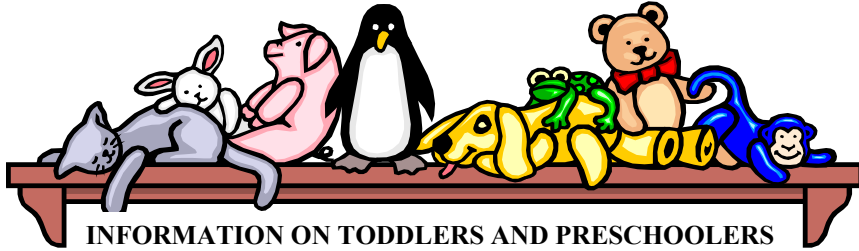




# TODDLER TOPICS: 2005



INFORMATION ON TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS

ISSUE NO. SIX

**Dear Parent:**

*Raising children in today’s world is not an easy job. Young children are especially vulnerable to safety hazards lurking in and around the home. As they grow older and spend more time outside of the home, these hazards extend to situations and other people they meet. The five major sources for unintentional child injury are motor vehicles, drowning, falls, burns and poison. This issue of Toddler Topics will provide information on these safety concerns and others to help you learn more about what you can do to help your toddler stay safe and healthy.*



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**WHAT CAN I DO?**

Accidents happen every day. According to the National Safe Kids Campaign, unintentional childhood injury is the number one killer of children ages 14 and under. Injuries include falls out of shopping carts or down stairs, injury from moving vehicles, experimenting with poisonous materials, and drowning. Parents often ask, “What can I do to protect my child from getting hurt.”

One of the most important things you can do to prevent accidents is to monitor your child. Monitoring means being aware of possible dangers and taking steps to protect your child. All young children are naturally curious. They learn about their world by exploring it—listening, smelling, tasting and touching, along the way. Become familiar with your child’s environment and remove all potential hazards.

More important is to actively supervise your toddler. Supervision means keeping your toddler in sight and in reach at all times with your undivided attention. It’s in those seconds when you’re distracted by other activities—answering the door, starting dinner, or; talking with another person, when accidents are likely to happen.

Sincerely,

Nancy E. Crago, Ph.D., C.F.C.S.  
Extension Educator

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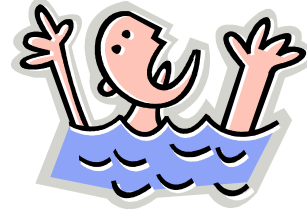
## DROWNING IN SILENT DEATH

Drowning is the number one cause of death from unintentional injuries for children under the age of four. It is often described as the silent death, because children are unable to scream or call for help. Each year about 300 toddlers drown in residential swimming pools. Another third of children under five drown from hazards in and around the home, such as fish tanks, landscape ponds, coolers, sinks, and other containers holding liquids.

Death from drowning occurs in a matter of minutes. Even when a child survives there may be irreversible brain damage.

Take the following precautions to protect your child:

- NEVER leave your toddler alone or with other children in a bathtub even if you are using a bath seat or ring.
- Keep the toilet lid down. Keep all young children out of the bathroom when unsupervised. Consider placing a latch on your bathroom door out of reach of young children.
- Be sure any containers that contain liquids are emptied after each use. Avoid leaving empty containers in yards or around the house where they may accumulate water and attract young children.
- Learn infant and child CPR. It may save a child's life.
- Secure the safety cover on hot tubs and spas.
- If you have a pool, install 5-foot fencing on all sides. Use self-closing and self-latching gates. For extra protection consider pool and gate alarms, door and window alarms for your home, and an automatic pool cover.



Remember, the most important precaution is **active supervision**.



## KIDS IN PARKED VEHICLES

Every year, during warm weather, children die from being left unattended in parked vehicles. These deaths happen in situations like the following:

A toddler fell asleep in the car on the way home from the grocery store on a warm spring day. Her mother decided to let her sleep in the car while she put away the groceries. The telephone rang. She became distracted with other activities. An hour later, she remembers her toddler is still asleep in the car.

A young child climbed into an unlocked vehicle in his driveway when no one was watching. The doors locked and he was unable to get out. A father left his child locked in the car just for a few minutes while he mailed some letters at the post office.

Children left alone in unattended vehicles on warm days can face serious injury or death from heatstroke in just minutes. A child's body temperature increases three to five times faster than an adult's. Studies show that even when temperatures are as mild as 60 degrees Fahrenheit, a closed vehicle can be deadly.

You can keep your toddler safe by keeping the doors to vehicles in your home locked. Keep all keys out of children's reach. Watch your toddler closely when loading and unloading vehicles. Teach her not to play in or around vehicles.

Make sure all children leave the vehicle when you arrive at your destination. To help you remember a sleeping child, place your purse or other important item in the area where the child is seated. This will serve as a reminder to take the child from the vehicle. **NEVER** leave a child alone in a parked vehicle, even with the window slightly open. If you see a child who is alone in a vehicle, get help.

## Child Safety Resources

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)

<http://www.cpsc.gov/>

National Safe Kids Coalition

<http://www.safekids.org>

FirstGov for Consumers

<http://www.consumer.gov/productsafety.htm>

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/>

American Association of Poison Control Centers

<http://www.aapcc.org/>

### Protecting Against Falls

Falls are the most common cause of injury visits to the emergency department for young children. The seriousness of injuries from a fall is usually related to the distance of the fall and the nature of the landing surface.

#### Falls from Windows

Falls from windows are the cause of most serious injuries. Window screens will not protect your child from falling. Supervise your toddler at all times, especially when windows are open. Open double-hung windows from the top only. If local fire regulations permit, install operable window guards on second and higher story windows. Place all furniture on which your toddler may climb away from windows.



#### Outdoor Falls

Encourage your toddler to play on ground level playing areas. Discourage active play on balconies, decks, and high porches. Look for potential climbing hazards such as wood piles or porch furniture. Move them away from edge of decks and balconies. Cover window wells to prevent your child from falling in. Buy your toddler low cut shoes with rough rubber soles for outdoor play. He will be less likely to slip and fall.

#### Shopping Cart Falls

Falls from shopping carts are another potential source of emergency room visits. When using a cart, always make sure your toddler is seated properly. Use the child safety restraints provided. To prevent tipping, never let her sit or stand in the cart or on the outside of the cart. Allowing your toddler to push the cart is also dangerous. It is too large for her body size to control.



## POISON LOOK-ALIKES IN AND AROUND THE HOME



Many poisonous substances found in your home look like non-poisonous food products. It is difficult for adults to distinguish the difference and even more confusing for your curious toddler who is unable to read labels. Some examples of these look alike include:

Apple juice and pine cleaner  
Cranberry juice and lamp oil  
Window washer fluid and blue punch  
Sports cream and tooth paste  
Vitamin pills and candy  
Rubbing alcohol and water

**IF YOU HAVE A POISONING EMERGENCY, CALL  
1-800-222-1222  
NATIONAL POISON CONTROL HOTLINE**

To protect your child from accidental poisoning: Keep poisonous substances in their original containers. Store poisonous substances in locked areas away from food storage areas. Never store non-food items in old food containers. Call medicines by their proper names; never call them candy. Discard old, unused medications.

## A Safety Tool for Dads

By Erik J. Vecere Executive Director,  
National Fatherhood Initiative's Community-based Programming



I remember how excited I was when both of my girls began to walk for the first time. All those months of coaching had finally paid off as they began to wobble around on their own. But with this new-found skill came many new dangers for them. I learned just how quick a situation could turn dangerous when they became mobile. I quickly learned that an important part of being a good dad is ensuring that the home is a safe place for our toddler. Because we, dads, are such a vital part of our child's safety team, what can we do to be as effective as possible?

Nothing guarantees our child's safety like good supervision; however, this is not enough by itself. All it takes is a split second before a quick and determined toddler can pull something down or put something in his or her mouth. So, I found creating a safe house checklist is a great way to build a childproof home. Here are four major categories to focus on with your toddler:

**Choking and Suffocating** – Keep any and every thing that can fit inside a 1-1/4" diameter cardboard toilet paper roll out of your child's reach, remove the cover of any toy box that is large enough to hold your child, and keep plastic bags away from your child.

**Falls and Injuries** – install safety gates at tops and bottoms of stairways (hardware-mounted, as opposed to pressure-mounted) with openings between slats no more than 2-3/8 inches wide, pad the edges of sharp furniture, and mount taller furniture that could tip over to the wall.

**Poison Safety** – lock all dangerous substances or use child-safety latches available at any hardware store, keep houseplants out of your child's reach, if any hazardous materials go in the trash, take it outside immediately, and have the local poison-control center phone number posted next to all phones.

**Shock and Burn Safety** – place child-resistant covers in all electrical outlets, place barriers around fireplaces, radiators, and space heaters, and store any bathroom electrical appliances away from toilets, sinks and bathtubs.

The National Fatherhood Initiative provides a brochure (Keeping Your Child Safe from Newborn to Toddler) that includes a comprehensive checklist for dads to build a childproof home and is available at [www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org). We are never done learning how to be better dads. Taking these precautions is another tool we can put in our tool belt to be the best dads we can be.

## **Plants – Safe or Poisonous?**

Young children are often attracted to the colorful flowers, leaves, fruits and berries of plants in and around the home. More than 700 standard plants have been identified as poisonous. If eaten, some of the plant parts can cause a skin rash or upset stomach. Others can cause death.

### **Dangerous Plants**

Azalea  
 Caladium  
 Castor bean  
 Daffodil  
 Delphinium  
 Dieffenbachia  
 Foxglove  
 Hyacinth  
 Hydrangea  
 Lantana  
 Larkspur  
 Mistletoe  
 Mountain laurel  
 Nightshade  
 Oleander  
 Lily of the valley  
 Lupine  
 Mistletoe  
 Philodendron  
 Pokeweed  
 Rhododendron  
 Rhubarb leaves  
 Thorn apple  
 Yew

### **Safe Plants**

Abelia  
 African Violet  
 Airplane Plant  
 Aralia  
 Asparagus fern  
 Aster  
 Bamboo  
 Bachelor's buttons  
 Begonia  
 Bird's nest fern  
 Bougainvillea  
 California poppy  
 Christmas cactus  
 Coleus  
 Dahlia  
 Daisies  
 Dracena  
 Hens and Chicks  
 Honeysuckle  
 Jade plant  
 Kalanchoe  
 Lily (Day, Easter, or Tiger)  
 Marigold  
 Monkey plant  
 Purple passion

- Remove poisonous indoor and outdoor plants.
- Supervise your toddler closely around plants. Eating too much of any plant can make her sick.
- Keep plants out of your toddler's reach.
- Teach your toddler not to put plants, fruits, or berries in his mouth without first asking an adult.
- Do not assume a plant is not poisonous because birds and animals eat it.
- For a more complete list of poisonous and non-poisonous plants, contact your county Extension office.

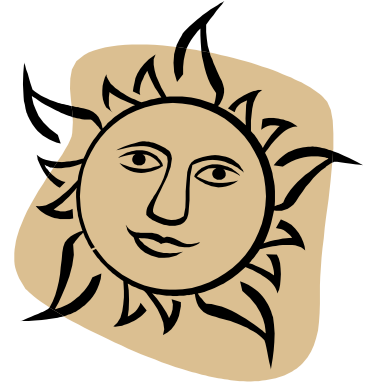
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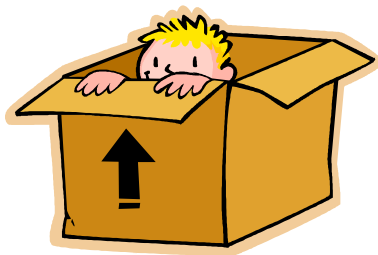


# RAIN OR SUN



## BOX CRAWLING

Get two to three boxes large enough for your child to crawl through. Open the ends of each box. Set the boxes on the floor so your child can crawl in and out of the one box and into another.



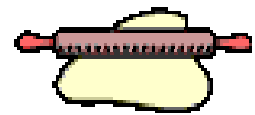
## SHREDDING PAPER

Give your child a stack of old newspapers or magazines. Let them shred or tear the paper in any way they like. Idea when they are finished, the shredded paper can be stuffed in an old pillowcase. Tie with a string of yarn or ribbon to make a lily pad pillow. Let your child sit on the pillow while you read him a story.

## PLAY DOUGH\*PRINTS

Give your child some play dough and a rolling pin to flatten the dough.

Provide a variety of different objects to make imprints in the dough. Try large buttons, seeds, uncooked macaroni, leaves, etc. Note: Objects less than 1-1/4 inches in diameter are choking hazards for children under 3 years of age.



## \*HOMEMADE PLAYDOUGH

1 cup flour  
1/4 cup salt  
2 T. cream of tartar  
1 cup water  
2 tsp food coloring  
1 T vegetable oil



Mix all ingredients in a pan. Cook over moderate heat, stirring constantly. Mixture will become stiff. Keep stirring until mixture cleans the pan like pie dough. Remove from heat, beat, and cool. Let child knead the dough. Store in a plastic bag or air tight container.