

# early Intervention



## Infant and Toddler Safety: Learning from Birth

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, almost 2 ½ million children are injured or killed in the United States by accidents. Accidents are the leading cause of death among children. But the good news is that most of these deaths and injuries can be prevented with some effort and common sense approaches both in and out of the home.

The key to successful injury prevention is to accept the idea that safety is just another part of a healthy lifestyle. Safe behaviors can be learned from birth. Parents can teach their infants and toddlers at the same time they themselves learn how to create safe and secure environments for their families. From what kind of crib you place your baby in to fire and car safety, you can demonstrate and reinforce the preventive behaviors to start building a lifetime of good practices.

We all live in a busy and dangerous world. People in a hurry often try to take short cuts and get easily distracted. Prevention often can begin with the simple act of taking a deep breath, slowing down and putting safety first. Focusing on the baby entirely through the diaper changing process, taking the time to make sure the car seat is properly installed and secure, checking the bath water carefully before placing the baby in the sink or tub...these are just a few examples of situations where we have to take an extra moment to make sure we are slowing down and making clear-minded decisions.

This issue of *Early Intervention* focuses on the topic of safety. It provides checklists and other resources to help you make informed decisions about inexpensive and appropriate adaptations to improve the environment your child lives in. It is never too soon to look at your home from the child's point of view and to review family safety and emergency procedures.

**By talking to your child from infancy on to explain why you are childproofing, you begin to build into them the concepts of good practices and safe living. Start today.**

*Editor's note: Special thanks for the staffs of the Injury and Violence Program of the Illinois Department of Public Health for their assistance with this issue.*

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## Reducing the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome: The Safe Sleep Top 10



1. Always place your baby on his or her back to sleep, for naps and at night.
2. Place your baby on a firm sleep surface, such as on a safety-approved crib mattress, covered by a fitted sheet.
3. Keep soft objects, toys, and loose bedding out of your baby's sleep area.
4. Do not allow smoking around your baby.
5. Keep your baby's sleep area close to, but separate from, where you and others sleep.
6. Think about using a clean, dry pacifier when placing the infant down to sleep.
7. Do not let your baby overheat during sleep.
8. Avoid products that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS because most have not been tested for effectiveness or safety.
9. Do not use home monitors to reduce the risk of SIDS.
10. Reduce the chance that flat spots will develop on your baby's head by providing "Tummy Time" when your baby is awake and someone is watching and avoid too much time in car seats, carriers, and bouncers.

From the NICHD Back to Sleep Campaign. For more information go to [www.nichd.nih.gov](http://www.nichd.nih.gov).

## Books and Videos About Safety

### Books

*The Safe Baby: A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Home Safety.* Debra Smiley Holtzman. Boulder, CO: Sentient Publications, 2005. Call # TX 150 .H758 2005 – This book covers child-proofing essentials from making the nursery safe to protecting the baby in the kitchen, the bathroom, and every other space in the house.

*Mommy Can Do It: A Do-It-Herself Guide to Baby-Proofing.* Kelly A. Smith. New York: iUniverse, 2006. Call # TX 150 .S649 2006 – This book helps mothers learn what child safety products are appropriate and helps walk them step-by-step through the process of childproofing their homes.

*The Babyproofing Bible: The Exceedingly Thorough Guide to Keeping Your Child Safe from Crib to Kitchen to Car to Yard.* Jennifer Bright Reich. Beverly, MA: Fair Winds Press, 2007. Call # HV 675 .R347 2007 – This is an illustrated guide to keep babies safe and sound, showing essential steps that can be taken in the home to make a child's environment safe and secure.

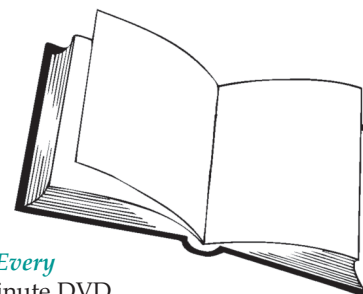
*From Crib to Kindergarten: The Essential Child Safety Guide.* Dorothy A. Drago. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2007. Call # WA 250 .D759 2007 – These tips help protect children from birth to age five. It describes how to provide a safe environment during daily activities.

### Videos

*Infant & Child CPR: What Every Parent Should Know.* (18 minute DVD videodisc). Soundtrack in English or Spanish. New York: Matty Mo Media, 2006. Call # WA 292 .I43w 2006. – In an introduction to CPR and choking skills for infants and young children aimed at parents. Also has safety and childproofing tips.

*Child Safety.* (53 minute DVD videodisc). Janson Media, 2004. Call # WA 320 .I96d 2004. – This video allows adults to view unsafe situations from the child's point-of-view and includes information from experts who work with children of all ages from infants to teens.

*Crib Safety and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.* (10 minute DVD videodisc). Ft. Lauderdale, FL: Education 2000 Inc., 2004. Call # WS 430 .C928 2004 – Designed for all child care providers to understand Crib Safety, what makes a crib unsafe to use, potential problems with cribs and the do's and don'ts of Crib Safety. Potential causes and prevention procedures for SIDS is discussed.



# Safety Checklist for Infants and Toddlers

## Crib

- Bars should be no more than 2 3/8 inches apart.
- Railing should be at least 26 inches higher than the lowest level of the mattress support.
- Mattress should fit snugly into crib.
- All surfaces should be smooth.
- A bumper guard should be installed from the hard railing.
- Do not place the crib near a hot radiator or cold draft.
- No pillow should be used in the crib.

## Change Table

- The table should be sturdy.
- It should have a strap to secure infant.
- Never turn your back on the baby while changing a diaper, even if using the strap.

## Toys

- Toys should always be appropriate for age.
- Avoid toys that have buttons or small objects that can be easily pulled off and swallowed.
- Don't give any child a toy with a sharp edge.
- Avoid toys that are breakable.

## Bathing

- Water should be tepid. Check temperature carefully using your elbow or a bath thermometer.
- Never leave an infant or toddler alone in a tub.
- Keep room draft-free.

## Feeding

- Keep infant in upright position to prevent choking.
- Check temperature of formula or baby food carefully before feeding.
- Never prop an infant's bottle.

## Environment

- Remove poisonous houseplants (e.g. philodendrom, poinsettia leaves, caladium, narcissus, daffodils).
- Electrical outlets should be in good repair.
- Install protective electric outlet covers to guard child if he/she is drawn to poking items into outlets.
- Instruct child never to play with matches. Keep matches and cigarette lighters well out of reach.
- Don't expose child to second-hand smoke. This can contribute to serious respiratory problems.
- Toddlers should be instructed about an emergency fire escape plan. Plan two escape routes.
- Every home should have smoke alarms.
- Every home should have a fire extinguisher.
- Never leave a baby unattended on a bed or sofa, even if the baby is strapped into a carrier.
- Never leave a child alone near a pool, pond, or water source of any kind.
- Pets should be supervised closely around children.
- Handles on pots should be turned to the back of the stove to prevent a child from pulling on it.



Always use safety gates to protect children from stairs.

- All low cupboards should be emptied of any solvents or detergents that are harmful if swallowed. Use lock-latches, if necessary.
- Keep vertical blind cords out of reach of children.
- Keep all cords, ropes, and scarves away from children. Don't allow child to tie a cape or other costume garment around neck.
- Know the Heimlich maneuver.
- Keep all medicines out of reach of children.
- Use safety gates to protect child from stairs.
- Use a playpen or crib to protect the baby or toddler if distracted with a phone call or some other distraction.

## Babysitter

- Take special precautions when selecting a babysitter. Is the sitter qualified? Does the sitter have experience? References?
- Have the sitter visit beforehand to spend some time with you to become familiar with baby's routine.
- Prominently post the phone number of the place where you will be.
- Keep emergency numbers for fire, police, poison control center and doctor posted next to the phone.
- Always have a telephone that is in good working order.

*Special thanks to the Women's Heart Foundation for this checklist. For more information go to [www.womensheartfoundation.org](http://www.womensheartfoundation.org)*

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## Calendar Ahead

*Free Conferences for Parents of Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*

**February 8, 2008**

North of Eighty • Moline, Illinois

**February 23, 2008**

South of Eighty – Jacksonville, Illinois

**April 5, 2008**

South of Seventy – Mt. Vernon, Illinois

CONTACT: H.E.A.R., [www.morgan.k12.il.us/isd/hear](http://www.morgan.k12.il.us/isd/hear) or 1-877-339-2686



**March 14, 2008**

*Illinois EI Training Program Regional Early Intervention Conference*

Peoria, Illinois

CONTACT: Illinois EI Training, [www.illinoiseittraining.org](http://www.illinoiseittraining.org) or 1-866-509-3867

**April 12, 2008**

*2nd Annual New Dreams Conference*

Springfield, Illinois

CONTACT: Family Matters, [www.fmptc.org](http://www.fmptc.org) or 1-866-436-7732

### WEB SITES OF INTEREST

#### Child Safety

KeepKidsHealthy.com: A Pediatrician's Guide to Your Children's Health and Safety

<http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/>

#### Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

National Institutes of Health Back to Sleep Campaign

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/sids/sids.cfm>

National SIDS/Infant Death Resource Center

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

SIDS of Illinois • <http://www.sidsillinois.org>



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