



Safety at home

For children from 3 to 6 years old



It is not always easy to talk to our children. While speaking with them about safety in the house, it is important to pay attention to the way we approach the topic and the tone we use.

We must also remember that preschool children learn by imitating parents. This means that the best way to teach correct behaviour is for adults to set a good example and behave the right way themselves. Thus, children will learn to use objects and manage spaces at home without hurting themselves.

It is also important to use a language appropriate to the age of the children.

Children learn better what is right and what is wrong, or what can and what cannot be done, by playing, listening to stories and reflecting on their experiences.

Be careful about the message given! Sometimes the concern for children's safety can be so strong to become an obsession. When this happens, parents risk to get children across anxiety, giving them only few useful advices. There are people who are not able to see the house through the eyes of a curious child: in this case, potential dangers are often underestimated. However, it is necessary to capture and train the children's attention to teach them to recognize and avoid dangers by themselves as they grow.

And if by chance they do get hurt, it is important to find the right balance between scolding and positive reinforcements. In this way children will gradually learn to "be careful", to "go slow" to "look carefully" and to "wait". In this way, little by little, they will properly grow up.



Beware of the risk of drowning!

- * Never leave the children unattended in the bath tub. They could drown in few seconds in only 10 cm of water! Fix a non-slip mat on the bottom of the shower stall or bath tub. This helps to avoid accidental falls and the possible risk of drowning.
- * Fence in all swimming pools, wells, small ornamental lakes, and fountains so that children cannot accidentally fall in them. Watch over them constantly when they are in these places, even if they are with older children.
- * Never leave the paddling pool full after children have finished playing; otherwise, use a heavy duty cover that they cannot remove.



Beware of poisoning from dangerous substances!

- * Keep detergents closed in high cupboards or fit them with safety catches. Never leave the container, even if you are still using it, within the reach of children. Never pour detergents into empty drink or water bottles, even if you label them correctly.
- * Do not use mothballs in children's wardrobes.
- * Store cosmetics and medicines high up. Never leave these containers accessible to children.
- * Store pesticides, weed killers and all toxic products in tightly sealed containers in inaccessible places. Don't use them on surfaces that children could touch. Don't use them while the child is in the garden.
- * Teach children not to touch mushrooms and not to put them in their mouths.
- * Remember that many house and garden plants contain substances that can be harmful when touched or swallowed. These include holly, azalea, cyclamen, philodendron, Scotch broom, jasmine, wisteria, lily of the valley, oleander, ranunculus, castor, poinsettia and mistletoe.
- * Do not leave alcoholic drinks or cigarette stubs lying around, especially if the cigarettes are lit. And don't leave packets of cigarettes around either. A 2 cm cigarette piece can cause serious poisoning if swallowed!



Avoiding burns.

- * Use preferably the burners on the back of the stove top, because they are less accessible to children. Turn pot handles towards the inside of the stove top. Use stoves with knobs that need to be rotated and pressed simultaneously to turn them on or off. Don't leave stools or chairs near stove tops!
- * Keep children away while you are using the barbecue. Once you have finished, turn it off and place it out of the reach of children. Don't use alcohol or other easily inflammable liquids to stoke the fire.
- * Use a safety gate or screen in front of your fireplace. Don't leave inflammable toys or objects around it.
- * Keep cigarette lighters in inaccessible places.
- * Set the temperature of your water boiler not higher than 45°C.
- * Don't leave your iron to cool on the floor or on any surface a child might reach.
- * Put the humidifier in a safe place!



Beware of bumps and falls!



- * Balcony railings should be high enough with vertically positioned bars so that the child cannot climb over it. If this is not the case, get it raised or covered with netting.

Do not leave chairs, stools, ladders, tables, bicycles, flower pots, or anything a child can use to stand on and climb over the balustrade.

- * Outside gates must be made up of vertical bars to prevent children from climbing up on them. Automatic gates should be provided with photoelectric and safety sensors so they can stop moving in time.
- * Do not leave chairs, stools, tables or ladders, close to windows. Use a safety device on your windows to prevent them from opening completely.
- * Choose rounded knobs for the doors rather than long handles with sharp edges. The front door should be provided with a child-proof opening mechanism.



- * When buying furniture, make sure that the drawers are provided with stops so they do not open completely. Otherwise, get them installed. If a drawer contains potentially dangerous objects, use a safety catch.
- * Don't use long tablecloths: your child may grab it and pull everything over him/herself. Always put hot pans and foods at the centre of the counter, away from the edge.
- * Place the television set and other heavy objects in safe places, where children cannot pull them down.
- * If possible, avoid buying bunk beds. Don't let small children climb to the top bunk or jump on it.
- * Fix all furniture your child could climb on to the wall.
- * If the floor is smooth, don't wax it.

- * Use non-slip carpets or an anti-slip mesh under the carpet.
- * Swings should be strong and well anchored into the ground.
- * When carried by bicycle, children should sit on their own seats fitted with a foot rest and head support.

It's a good idea to teach children the rules of the road gradually and appropriately to their age. Start with simple rules such as dealing with traffic lights and zebra crossings. Make sure they wear helmets ... and set a good example yourselves!



Avoiding cuts and wounds!

- * Don't leave knives and sharp objects (scissors, razors, tin cans, glass jars) close to the edge of worktops or in easily accessible places.
- * Fix adhesives to glass doors and windows, to help the little ones see them better.
- * Keep children away while you are using the lawnmower.

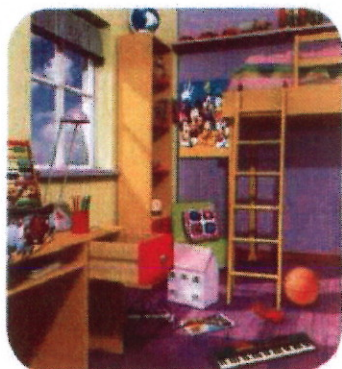




Beware of suffocation!

- * Mothers must make sure that their bags are not left around opened and unattended: children thus can easily reach them and take medicines or any harmful object that is contained in there.
- * Do not leave the car boot opened or accessible to children.
- * Keep plastic bags, belts and ropes out of the reach of children. An apparently harmless game can become extremely dangerous.
- * Avoid open flame devices (such as kerosene stoves, indoor gas boilers, wood burning stoves, etc.) because they burn oxygen and they may lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.

In case you cannot avoid them, follow the instructions carefully about air exchange and the maintenance of devices, which should in any case be installed in a place that is inaccessible to children and far away from toys, curtains and anything that could catch fire easily.
- * Be careful about "button-sized" micro-batteries. If swallowed, they are highly toxic and can even cause suffocation. Seal the battery compartments of all household appliances with adhesive tape. Keep spare and used batteries out of the reach of children.
- * Avoid giving children peanuts and chewing gum. Being they so small, they could cause suffocation.



Be careful with electricity!

- * The electrical system must be grounded and provided with an automatic cut-out. Otherwise, redo the wiring adapting it to current regulations.
- * Cover unused electrical outlets with socket covers. Loose and dangling wires should be covered with flexible covers or fixed to the wall.
- * Remind children that they should never touch electrical appliances while they are in the bath tub or with wet hands.
- * Unplug small electrical appliances after using them. Make sure there are no dangling wires, then store them in a safe place.
- * Teach children not to cover light bulbs with sheets of paper or plastic or with clothing.

