



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

CENTER ON THE FAMILY ♥ UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Keeping Your Young Child Safe



Keeping children safe—creating a safe environment and preventing or minimizing the risk of accidental injuries—is a full time responsibility for adults charged with their care. As children grow, they are constantly trying out new

skills, experimenting with new ways to use objects, and encountering situations that are new to them. Their curiosity and impulsivity drives their learning. This can sometimes get them into dangerous situations, increasing their chances of getting hurt. Knowing that young children are active explorers, it's up to you to keep them safe while encourage their learning. Reducing the risk of harm and accidents are important in keeping children safe.

An important part of keeping children safe is to establish routines that reinforce safety and teach them how to keep themselves safe. The following are some examples of how you can teach safe habits, beginning at an early age:

- ♥ **Create a safe environment in your home.** Look around your home to identify potential hazards and use safety devices to restrict your child's access to unsafe areas.
- ♥ **Make safety practices part of your daily routine.** Young children may not understand why you are doing certain safety practices (e.g., using a car seat when traveling in the car), but they become familiar with these

practices, and are more likely to use them, if it becomes a part of their daily routine.

- ♥ **Use age-appropriate reminders to reinforce safety practices and rules.** A simple “no” is appropriate for telling your infant not to touch something. However, for toddlers you can provide frequent verbal reminders and post pictures around the house to remind them about rules. For preschoolers, you can talk about why you do certain things to keep safe (e.g., “Don’t touch the stove because it gets hot and you can burn yourself.”)

This newsletter will focus on safety issues that need to be paid close attention to for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. In addition, age appropriate activities are also included.

In This Newsletter:

To support you in creating a safe environment for your child, this newsletter includes:

- ♥ Age-specific information and suggestions about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschoolers,
- ♥ Featured activities for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of how child progresses developmentally by doing these activities,
- ♥ **Community Resources:** online resources for more information, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read to your child.

3-10-6/14

Infants

Young infants spend a lot of time sleeping; therefore, an important area to check for safety concerns is their sleeping area. Whether they sleep in a crib, on a mat, or on the floor, their sleeping area should be free of objects such as pillows, blankets, toys, crib bumpers or propping devices that could cause suffocation, strangulation, or other injuries. It's also important to remember to place infants on their back when putting them to sleep.



As young infants grow and begin to move more (e.g., turn their bodies, scoot, crawl) and actively explore their environment, it is important that their explorative learning is encouraged and supported; by ensuring that they have a safe environment in which they can learn in. A home that is properly child-proofed provides a safer place for children to explore, learn and grow in.

Here are some safety steps you can do in your home:

- ♥ **Identify potential dangers around your home.** Items such as dangling cords, small, “choke able” objects (e.g., buttons or decorations on stuffed toys), breakable objects, or sharp corners are potential hazards for your little one. Remove these items from her reach and take the necessary steps to help make the area safe for her to be in.
- ♥ **Avoid placing heavy objects on shelves above cribs and/or sleeping areas.** These items (e.g., DVD players or picture frames) may topple down and hurt someone.
- ♥ **Use proper safety devices around the home to restrict access to dangerous objects or places.** Devices such as gates, railings, outlet covers, and latches can help keep your child safe.

Activity for Infants: *Make Your Own Drum*

Materials:

Pots, pans, and bowls
Wooden spoons

What to Do:

1. Set up pots, pans, and bowls near your baby and give her a wooden spoon.
2. Use the other wooden spoon to hit the “drums” to make a noise.
3. Encourage her to try it herself. Talk about the sounds that she is making.
4. Tap out a beat and see if she can copy it.



(See page 5 for more information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

Toddlers

Toddlers are just as curious at this age as when they were infants, if not more so. They will touch, taste, and smell just about anything. This trait, combined with their increased mobility, allows them to make many new discoveries, but also increases their risk for accidents or injuries. Children at this age are still developing mobility and coordination, and they don't seem to fully understand yet, what "danger" or "safety" means; therefore, it is important that you continuously check and safety proof your home to help keep them safe.

Here are some safety steps you can do in your home:

- ♥ **Consistently model safety first.** Your child will copy what she sees.
- ♥ **Provide an uncluttered area where children can safely walk and move around in.** Items that could be toxic (e.g., household chemical, medications), could cause choking, suffocation (e.g., plastic bags), or strangulation

(e.g., drapery/window blind cords) should be placed out of your child's reach.

- ♥ **Practice safe habits.** Look at one room at the home, for example, your kitchen, and identify safe practices. Some kitchen safety practices include: keeping hot pan handles pointed away and out of reach to prevent burns and scalding; placing safety covers on exposed stove/oven knobs, and keeping your child at least three feet away from the stove if it is on.



Activity for Toddlers: *Storm in a Bottle*

What You Need:

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| Clear plastic bottle with cover | Food coloring |
| Eye dropper and/or small spoon | Small foil pieces |
| Liquid detergent | Water |

What to Do:

1. Fill a bottle halfway with water.
2. Have your child place a few drops of detergent into the water and then a drop or two of food coloring. Ask her to describe what happened to the water.
3. Ask her what she thinks will happen if she adds more food coloring. Have her add in and stir a little more and describe what happens.
4. Have her add in some small foil pieces.
5. Cover the bottle and have her shake the bottle vigorously.
6. Encourage her to talk about what she sees.



(See page 5 for more information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

Preschoolers

Preschoolers are growing in their ability to understand, repeat, and follow safety rules. Take time to explain that everyone has rules to obey, and that rules keep us safe. Make it a habit to use teachable moments throughout the day to consistently remind your child of the rules and talk about the reasons for them. For example, discuss outdoor safety rules; why she shouldn't play near the street or by parked cars, or why she shouldn't leave the house unsupervised. Before crossing the street, talk about street signs, crosswalks, and traffic signals that show when it's safe to cross the street. Always hold her hand when crossing the street.

Here are some safety steps you can do with your child:

- ♥ **Talk about community helpers such as police officers and how they help keep us safe and can help us in an emergency or if we are lost.** Talk about what your child can say to a police officer or to another person if she needs help. Role play different situations with your child, and encourage her to find safe solutions.
- ♥ **Teach your child her home telephone number or emergency cell number, and home address.** This information may come in handy during emergency situations such as being in an accident or fire, being lost, or when faced with the sudden illness of a parent, family member, or caregiver that prevents the adult from communicating and accessing help themselves.

Activities for Preschoolers: *Learning My Home Telephone Number and Address*

What You Need:

- Paper
- Crayons
- Toy telephone (optional)

What to Do:

1. Find a toy telephone or draw a picture of a phone and keypad on a piece of paper.
2. Show your child how to dial 911, and explain that it is only used in emergencies. It is important to stress that she should not freely give out their telephone number or address to anyone unless it is an emergency.
3. On a separate blank piece of paper write "My telephone number is: (insert phone number)" and "My address is: (insert home address)."
4. Have your preschooler say her phone number out loud and practice dialing her phone number using the pretend phone.
5. Have her practice saying what her address is out loud.
6. Point out the house number on your front door or mailbox, or have her find and read your home address off of a recent piece of mail.
7. Display your telephone number and address near a phone and/or in a place where she can easily retrieve it.

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How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development:

Physical Development

- ♥ Learn through their senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching
- ♥ Use their bodies with intention

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Develop a closer bond with you
- ♥ Build trust in you and other important people

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Connect words and sounds they hear with what they experience
- ♥ Build verbal skills and vocabulary

Cognitive Development

- ♥ Begin to examine characteristics of objects
- ♥ Develop their creativity and imagination



Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons. As you do this recipe with your child, allow her to do as much as she is capable of. Ask questions throughout the process to encourage her thinking skills. Make sure to wash your hands and your child's hands before and after preparing any food.

On the Go Ravioli Spinach Lasagna

Adapted from: www.food.com

Ingredients:

- 1 (25 ounces) package frozen cheese ravioli, thawed and separated
- 1 (26 ounces) bottle of spaghetti sauce
- 1 package (10 ounces) frozen chopped spinach; thawed and drained well
- 2 ½ cups of Mozzarella cheese, shredded

Instructions:

1. Heat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Using the back of a spoon, have your child spread 1/3 cup of spaghetti sauce on to the bottom of a 13x9x3 baking dish.
3. When she is done, have her combine the spinach with the rest of the spaghetti sauce in large bowl.
4. Next, have your child place 1/2 of the ravioli in a single layer in the baking dish. Encourage her to count the ravioli as she does this.
5. When she is finished, have her spread 1/2 of the remaining sauce mixture on top of the ravioli.
6. Now, let her sprinkle 1/2 of the mozzarella cheese on top.
7. Tell her that she is going to create a second layer to the casserole, by repeating the same sequence of sauce, ravioli, sauce and cheese over again. Help her to recall and tell you what she did first, second, etc.
8. Bake for 40 minutes.



Community Resources

Poison Hotline (American Association of Poison Control Centers) <http://www.aapcc.org/>
Hotline is open everyday, 24 hours a day. Call 1-800-222-1222 for poison tips and information.

Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition/Safe Kids Hawaii
<http://www.kipchawaii.org>

A great website designed to prevent and reduce injury to Hawaii's keiki. Find safety information and resources for children of all ages.



Suggested Books

Recommended by Read to Me International www.readtomeintl.org.
For more books, visit the public library www.librarieshawaii.org.



Infants and Toddlers

I'll Always Love You by Paeony Lewis

Although he didn't mean to, Alex Bear has broken his mother's favorite honey bowl. Before telling his mother this, he asks if she would still love for him if he were to do something that disappoints her, but is always reassured that his mother loves him unconditionally. See how Alex Bear finally owns up to breaking the honey pot and what happens when he does.

On the Night You Were Born by Nancy Tillman

Children learn how special they are in this beautifully illustrated board book. Night creatures celebrate and acknowledge the young listener's existence as something special. The gentle tone of this book creates a sense of safety and warmth.

Preschoolers

Fireman Small: Fire Down Below! By Wong Herbert Yee

Fireman Small has to leave the fire station to avoid a leaky roof and get some sleep. He checks into the Pink Hotel, only to be kept awake by all the noise from the other guests. Just as he is about to fall asleep, a fire breaks out in the hotel and he quickly saves the day. Children will enjoy the silly rhymes and funny, likable characters as they learn simple fire safety tips from the story.

Officer Buckle and Gloria by Peggy Rathmann

Officer Buckle knows more safety tips than anyone else in Napville, and he shares those tips with the students at Napville School. Nobody ever listens until one day he gets a police dog named Gloria, who accompanies him to the schools. Youngsters will laugh at the antics of Gloria and will enjoy reviewing the safety tips on the inside covers after hearing this silly story.

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