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HOME SAFETY

When working in a Toy Library you are able to support families to consider how to make their home family safe. Home is a special place for children whilst growing up, but it is also the place where most children are most likely to be injured. However, most of the accidents which occur are often both predictable and preventable. Therefore, the purpose of this guidance sheet is to raise awareness of the types of accidents that many occur in the home, and what measures you can take to prevent them

Child Proofing

Locks and safety catches are important in any home with children. There are many poisonous chemicals and cleaning products kept in the home, especially the kitchen, and you will need to ensure that such products are put away immediately after use and stored in a locked or out-of-reach cupboard. There are various locks and catches that can be attached to cupboards and drawers in order prevent children from getting in, and the following list offers some useful examples which could be implemented in your home:

- **Magnetic locks** - easy to fit and hidden from view, magnetic locks can be secured via a magnetic key by parents, and are a great form of baby safety.
- **Safety tap caps** - designed to prevent children from turning on the hot tap which can result in scalding.
- **Power point covers** - prevent electrocution from open power sockets by covering the point itself and protecting against any objects being inserted.
- **Blind cord windups** - help prevent strangulation by ensuring long cords are not left dangling. RoSPA (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) is currently running a campaign to raise awareness of this issue.
- **Finger protection strips** - an innovative yet simple way to prevent children from trapping their fingers between door.

Fire Safety

Fire remains one of the biggest killers in the home. It can start suddenly and in a variety of ways, and will spread very quickly. The following information offers some tips:

- Ensure all fires and heaters are well guarded to ensure young children cannot get near
- Check to see whether all fires and heaters are unobstructed, e.g. keep portable heaters well away from furniture or curtains.
- Do not smoke in bed, or ideally, within the house
- The majority of fires start in the kitchen, especially fat fires. Never leave a pan unattended, and avoid using deep fat fryers.
- Store matches or flammable chemicals well away from the reach of children. Keep such items in locked cupboards or on a high shelf.
- Fit approved smoke detectors on each floor of the house.
- Plan you escape route. Remember, GET OUT and STAY OUT!

Electrical Safety

Electricity is obviously a major point of concern for children in the home, and it should always be treated with respect. Many electrical accidents are serious, and can result in fatalities. The following points offer some tips on ensuring electrical safety:

- Ensure all wiring is checked at least every five years by a professional contractor.
- Immediately dispose of appliances that are in any way damaged or faulty.
- Keep any portable mains operated appliances away from the bathroom.
- Look out for a CE Mark when buying any electrical products.
- Never overload an electric socket.
- Install an RCD (Residual-current device) for whole house protection. An RCD is an electrical wiring device that disconnects the electricity automatically if there is a fault.



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Running a toy library in Scotland

Kitchen Hazards

Always be extremely careful with hot water, tea, coffee or soup. Never leave hot drinks unattended, and ensure they are never placed on the edge of a counter where they could possibly fall or be knocked over.

- Keep any sharp knives or dangerous instruments in locked drawers.
- When cooking, make sure pan handles are turned inward so that children cannot reach them and pull them over.
- Buy a cordless kettle so that children cannot pull it on them.
- Organise your storage effectively. Do not put heavy items on high shelves (in case they fall), and make sure any dangerous appliances are kept in locked cupboards and out-of-reach areas.
- Hobs and hotplates can stay hot even after they've been turned off. Keep younger children away from them, and as they get older make sure you teach them why they are so dangerous

Medicines and Cleaning Products

Medicines and household cleaners should also be treated with extreme caution. Not only could certain medicine types cause serious harm to children if ingested, but cleaning products can cause chemical burns to children's skin. The following information offers some tips on how to prevent such accidents occurring:

- Install a lockable cabinet in the kitchen (or other designated room) in which all medicines and chemicals can be kept, and where it can be closely supervised.
- Always keep medicines in their original containers, and make sure they are clearly labeled.
- Never take other people's medicines, and allow them to use or borrow your own.
- Pharmacies are happy to take any old or unused medicines from you, so make sure you dispose of any products in this way if necessary.
- Keep all cleaning products, e.g. bleach, turps or soda water, where children cannot reach or see them.



Useful External Links

- [Fire Kills](https://firekills.campaign.gov.uk/) - gives advice on preventing house fires, in English as well as a number of foreign languages.
- [Children First Aid](https://www.redcross.org.uk/first-aid/learn-first-aid-for-babies-and-children) - a British Red Cross website that teaches first aid skills to parents and carers of babies and young children.
- [RoSPA](https://www.rospa.com/Home-Safety/UK/Wales/Home-Garden-Checklist) (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) - produced a [home safety checklist](#) which is a helpful way of initially assessing any safety hazards in your home.
- [CAPT](https://www.capt.org.uk/) (Child Accident Prevention Trust)

Smart Play Network Members Support

Member you have access to telephone and email support. For more information about the topics covered in this guidance sheet, or any other queries you may have about your group, please contact us using: 0131 554 2620 or admin@smartplaynetwork.org

It is free to be a member of Smart Play Network, for more information on how to become a member please refer to our website: www.smartplaynetwork.org.