

Family Keys

Self-Care Resources for Children & Their Families

Safe at Home

7 KEY

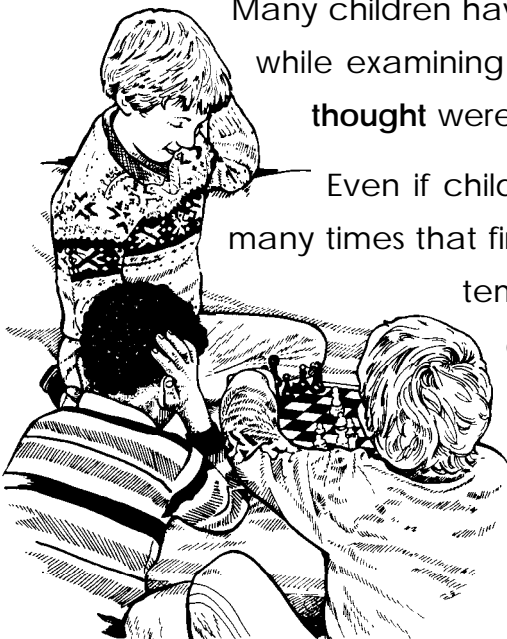
Accidents are the leading cause of death in children ages 6 to 12. Children home alone after school are at risk in two ways: **First**, they may not think

ahead to avoid accidents. **Second**, they may not respond in the best way after the accident has happened, which can make matters worse.

Firearms pose a special danger. Watching TV, children see guns shown as exciting and powerful,

Many children have been maimed or killed while examining firearms that parents **thought** were safely stored.

Even if children have been told many, many times that firearms are “off limits,” the temptation to examine them or show them to friends can be hard to resist.



Avoid accidents.

Many accidents can be prevented. Before you start self-care, begin with a safety check around the house, apartment or farm.

Check ✓

1. Yes No

Dangerous substances such as matches or lighters, paint thinner, bleach, drain cleaner or pesticides are stored where they won't be ignited, spilled, mixed, or accidentally mistaken for food or drink.

2. Yes No

Wires to all electrical appliances are safely insulated. Cords are unplugged when the appliance is not in use. (Be sure no one can trip over cords and wires, but never tack cords down or run them under rugs where they can be frayed or worn.)

3. Yes No

The temperature on your hot water heater is set below 140 degrees F — ideally between 120 and 130 degrees. (Above 140 degrees F, tap water can cause a third-degree burn.)

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Avoid accidents,

continued from page 1

4. Yes No

Home furnishings are safe even in “wild play” — heavy bookcases are anchored down, there are slip-guards under rugs, and sharp edges are protected. (Even if rough-housing is prohibited, it sometimes happens.)

5. Yes No

If there are firearms in the home, these are locked, with keys unavailable to children. **All** ammunition is removed and stored separately.

Parents can help:

Reducing risks of experimenting

Curiosity is something we want to encourage in children most of the time. However, the time to experiment is when adults are around to help out if things go awry.

In the upper elementary years, many children become curious about sexual feelings, but few share this area of interest with parents. Children can start to feel aroused by members of the opposite sex, and may start experimenting long before parents realize they are even interested.

Experimenting with smoking is also common. Many children try their first cigarette to show off in front of friends. Research suggests this often happens by grade 5.

Some children will experiment with alcohol or sniff substances such as glue or paint thinner, which are often easily found at home. These substances are damaging to children’s growing bodies, and may increase the chance that the child will try other drugs later on.

Here are some ways you can help:

1. Store anything that might be tempting — matches or lighters, chemicals, drugs, power tools — in a place out of sight, preferably under lock and key.

2. Clearly and explicitly tell your children **what** you think of their using tobacco, alcohol, inhalants or other drugs, and **why**. Remember, if your children don’t know exactly what you think, they will probably assume that you don’t mind.

3. Establish rules about **who** — if anyone — is allowed over while you are away. When you are not there, children should never invite someone into the house unless they have specific permission from you. Many families restrict guests to same-sex friends, especially once children reach the age of about 9.

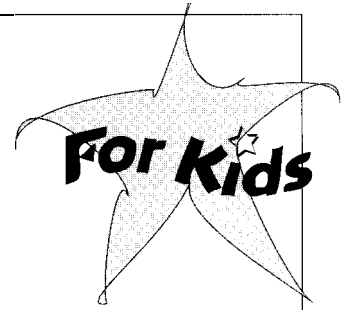
4. Make and post rules about acceptable and unacceptable behavior in your house. Talk about what your child should do if a friend isn’t following the “house rules.” Key 2 covers setting family rules.

What to do if there is a problem

When an accident happens, the way a child responds may make a big difference in how much damage is done. Talk with your child about the best way to respond to a variety of accidents: injuries, poisonings, things broken at home, friends getting out of hand, times when rules have been broken.



When accidents happen. . .



Here's what to do in case of accident:

1. No matter how bad the damage, it is always better to tell your parents about the accident or problem right away — when it might be more fixable — rather than try to hide it.
2. Post emergency numbers by each phone. Include numbers for parents at work, the police and fire department (or 911), and the nearest Poison Control Center, Call for help if you need it.

What do you do?

Gather the whole family for this activity. Have different family members take turns playing different roles. Talk about how each person responds to the situation,

Situation

1. You can see from the sky that a thunderstorm is coming. Then lightning hits nearby, and all the power goes out. The tornado siren goes on.
2. You are wrestling with your friend and knock over a bookshelf. Some knick-knacks get broken.
3. Your friend pulls out a small flask of something she says is vodka from her parents' cabinet. She dares you to take a drink of it, and calls you a "chicken" when you refuse.
4. Your friend won't stop begging you to show him the hunting rifles that your father uses. He says he's never seen a real firearm up close, and wants to.
5. You take a big sip from a glass sitting on the counter, thinking it was your lemonade glass. You realize it wasn't lemonade, but chlorine bleach your mom had been using to disinfect some brushes.



Resources

Family Keys 4, 5, 10 and 11 cover phone skills, first aid, fire and kitchen safety.

Key 6 covers interpersonal safety.

7

KEY

Safe at Home points out some ways accidents

happen to children home alone, and ways to prevent them. *Key 7* also reminds parents that children may experiment with risky behavior when parents aren't home, and offers ways to teach how to refuse pressure from friends and to reduce risks



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