



Childproofing Your House

You can set up your house so it is easier for children to do the right thing than the wrong thing. This is called childproofing. A young child does not understand danger. She will not stay away from electrical outlets, cleaning supplies, and breakable dishes just because you have told her “don’t touch.” A child does not remember instructions very long. Young children actively explore their world. They are curious. They touch things and put them in their mouths. Discipline does not always have to be correcting children. You can help children behave better by making their world friendly and fun. Childproofing helps prevent battles over things children cannot understand yet.

Questions to ask yourself

Get down at your child’s level. Look around your house and ask:

- What does my child see?
What is in his reach?
- What things can my child do in this room that can cause problems?
- Are there any dangers and safety concerns?
- Are there breakable things or things that the child might damage?
- Are there things in the room for my child to play with or entertain himself?

Things that you can do to childproof your house

Make your home a fun place for children. Set up your house and schedule so it is easier for your child to do the right thing than the wrong thing.

- Rearrange your furniture in a way that will invite better behavior. For example, move furniture to reduce running through the room.
- Put dangerous things where your child cannot get them.
- Put breakable things in a safe place.

- Arrange children's toys to make it more fun and safe for them. For example, put toddlers' toys on the coffee table. Keep toys on low shelves that the children can reach.
- Be aware of what your child is doing and how he might get into trouble. For example, if you see your child moving towards an area that you do not want him to go in, step in his path and offer him a different activity.
- Think about your child's schedule and how it could affect his behavior. Change it to help him behave better. For example, give him snacks when you get home if supper is not ready right away. Take him shopping after naptime so he doesn't get tired and grumpy.

Source:

Lagoni, L. S., Martin, D. H., Maslin-Cole, C., Cook, A., MacIsaac, K., Parrill, G., Bigner, J., Coker, E., & Sheie, S. (1989). Good times with health and safety. In *Good times with child care* (pp. 82-106). Fort Collins, CO: Colorado State University Cooperative Extension. <http://www.nncc.org/Series/good.time.health.html>

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