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## Child Proofing Your Home

The following are some ideas for making your home safe for your child. This does not include all possible safety hazards. Some of these depend on the age of your child and their abilities.

### For babies and toddlers:

#### **General:**

- check the whole home every day for possible dangers for children
- guns and ammunition locked up
- knives, matches, lighters out of child's reach
- unused electrical faceplates/sockets covered
- plastic bags out of child's reach — including trash containers
- choking objects on floors, tables, counters, bathrooms, etc., out of reach
- house plants out of reach, especially poisonous and plants that could fall onto child
- floors cleaned of cat and dog urine and poop
- carpets without holes that child could trip and fall
- objects on the wall and ceiling can not be pulled down
- remove buckets/pails with water that could cause drowning
- alcohol and drugs out of children's reach

#### **Walls:**

- walls without holes
- walls without bare electrical wires
- walls without bare nails, tacks, other
- walls without peeling paint or wall paper
- hanging objects on walls are secure or out of reach
- baseboards are fastened with no exposed nails, tacks, other

#### **Windows:**

- windows with holes or cracks are covered up
- window protected from risk of child falling out
- no furniture near windows where child could climb and fall out
- no curtains or blinds can be pulled down by child
- drapery or blind cords are not within child's reach for possible choking
- no dangerous objects on window sills
- windows safe from accidentally closing or pinching fingers or hands

## Normally Safe

<b><i>Child Proofing Your Home — normally SAFE actions</i></b>
All electrical plugs and switches covered
All electrical cords in good condition and safe from choking a child
All kitchen/bathroom drawers and cabinets child proofed, including poisons/falling objects
All trash containers child proofed—including plastic bags to prevent suffocating
All drugs and poisons including cleaners and plants removed from child's reach
Oven, stove, and microwave child proofed or child always supervised in kitchen — burning
All drapery and blind cords child proofed or out of child's reach to prevent choking
Windows closed or with window guards so child can't fall out window
Child always closely watched around water in and outside the home to prevent drowning
Baby gates keeping child from stairs or rooms that may be dangerous
Child watched closely inside and outside for safety , including bathroom toilets and tubs
Guns, ammunition, knives, alcohol, and prescribed medicines secured from child
Please look at more information on child proofing on pages 5-7

<b><i>Medical Care — normally SAFE actions or behaviors</i></b>
Go to all recommended prenatal medical care appointments
Have the right medical people around when the baby is born
Follow medical people's suggestions for baby care and future medical appointments
Take child to all well baby checkups suggested by medical professionals
Take child to all well baby check ups within a month of what is suggested
Get all immunizations required by preschool and school — unless excused by doctor
Get medical care for temperatures above 103-104 degrees
Get medical care for bad cuts, burns, broken bones, and drinking/eating poison
Get medical/mental health care for excessive screaming, suicidal thoughts, other

*Risky for Abuse/Neglect OR is Abuse/Neglect*

<b><i>Child Proofing Your Home - UNSAFE actions or behaviors</i></b>
Uncovered electrical plugs or switches—danger of electric shock
Electrical cord exposes wire or blind/drapes cord can be reached for child to choke
Child able to get into drawers or cabinets with knives, cleaners, poisons, medicines, etc.
Open windows that child can climb and fall out
Child can reach hot water or hot kitchen items — burning
No gate to keep child from falling down stairs or going into room with dangerous objects
Child unattended around hot water or water they can drown in
Young child unattended in the home or outside with possible dangers around them
Child able to reach/play with plastic bags (or balloons) which may choke or suffocate them
Guns, ammunition, knives, alcohol, drugs within child's reach

<b><i>Medical Neglect - UNSAFE actions or behaviors</i></b>
Birth mom does not get medical care for known complications during pregnancy
Plan child birth at home without trained child birth helpers
Miss all well baby checkup appointments
Not get your child any immunizations for preschool or school — not excused by doctor
Not go to follow up doctor appointments for important medical problems
Not take your child to a medical professional when your child has a broken bone(s)
Not talk to a medical professional when your child has a fever above 103-104 degrees
Stop giving you child prescribed medicine without first talking to a medical professional
Not talk to a medical professional when your child may have a medical problem you don't know how to help
Not take your child to a medical professional when your child has a bad burn, trouble breathing, too weak to eat, serious medical illness, other

## Inform on Child Protection

### Why a Child Protection Agency?

*A little history about child abuse and child neglect:*

- ◇ years ago children were seen as their parent's property
- ◇ parents could do what they wanted with their children
- ◇ over time people started to think children had the right to be treated fairly
- ◇ the federal government made laws for children to have rights
- ◇ the federal government made rules and laws around child abuse and neglect
- ◇ states had to follow the federal laws
- ◇ states also added their own rules and laws to the federal laws
- ◇ states describe and set rules on what is considered child abuse and child neglect

*Since states were responsible for protecting children from child abuse and neglect they decided to set up public or government agencies to do this.*

Each state has some type of central registry, or central filing system for keeping reports of confirmed child abuse and child neglect.

- states usually have a state child protection service agency which provides guidance and checks up on the local child protection agencies through out their state
- these agencies are usually called Department of Social/Human Services, Department of Child and Family Services or Child Welfare Agencies
- some states have their child protection services (CPS) in each county
- some states have CPS agencies organized by districts, townships, other
- each county or district CPS agency receives and investigates reports of child abuse or neglect in their area
- states may hire or contract private agencies to provide some of these services

## Visiting Your Child

When a CPS agency removes a child from their parent's care it often takes a week or two before visits start between the parent and their child. There are a couple of exceptions to this, which can delay visits:

1. the child has been severely physically abused
2. the child has been severely neglected
3. the child has been sexually abused
4. the child is in a hospital
5. the parent doesn't believe their child was neglected or abused
6. the parent blames their child for the abuse or for the family's problems

*There are a number of reasons for visits:*

- visits help the parent and child continue their relationship with one another
- visits give the caseworker a chance to see the child and parent together
- visits give the caseworker a chance to decide how safe a child is with their parent

*There are usually a number of rules for visits:*

- visits usually start out at the CPS office
- visits change to unsupervised visits when the caseworker thinks the child is safe with their parent
- the GAL may help decide when visits can be more often and be unsupervised
- visits are sometimes supervised by some one beside the caseworker—case aide
- a parent's caseworker or attorney may ask for more visits when the parent is doing well with their treatment plan
- some CPS agencies are limited with how many supervised visits they can provide by how many employees they have to do this
- parents need to be on time for visits
- if parents are late by a certain amount of time the visit may be cancelled
- if a parent looks like or smells like they have used alcohol the visit may be cancelled
- if a parent appears to be under the influence of drugs or substances, the visit may be cancelled

**CPS agencies usually have rules parents can't talk about some things during visits—when you think they are coming home, not liking your caseworker, talking to your child about your problems, other.**

**Central Registry**—a central filing system where reports of substantiated child abuse or child neglect are kept. Reports include information on the child as well as information on the person who was found to be the abuser or neglectful. Some employers check the central registry as part of their hiring process, to make sure they don't hire someone who may be a danger to children.

**Child Abuse and Child Neglect**—ways a child can be injured. There are different types including:

Physical abuse — causing injury to a child by hitting, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking, or other ways of physically hurting a child. Most states include non-accidental injury in their definition of physical abuse.

Child Neglect — failing to provide for a child's basic needs, including physical, medical, emotional, and educational needs.

Sexual abuse — includes any type of sexual activity or sexual contact by an older child or adult with a child.

Emotional Abuse — includes actions of an older child or adult that can hurt a child's emotional health, such as screaming and name calling, and rejecting or withholding affection.

**Child Abuse Report**—when someone reports some type of possible physical abuse or neglect to a child protection agency. The agency then decides if they should investigate.

**Child Placement Agency (CPA)**—a private foster care or adoption agency.

**Child Protection Service (CPS)**—the public agency that investigates reports of child abuse and neglect. They also provide services to families. Other common names for this agency include Human Service, Social Services, Child Welfare, other.

**Client**—a person who receives services from a child protection agency. Services may be voluntary or court ordered. A client may be a child, teenager, or adult.

**Concurrent Plans**—when CPS or a court has more than one plan for a family at the same time. Some common plans are *return home*, *permanent custody with a relative*, *emancipation*, *adoption*.

**Confidentiality**—information certain professionals receive about their client which is considered private. Professionals may be doctors,