



Keeping Kids Safe from Home Falls

A home may represent a haven of safety and security. But for young children, it can be also a minefield of potentially dangerous falls. The following tips from the National Safety Council will help make your home free of fall hazards.

Falls from furniture

- Don't leave babies alone on beds, changing tables, or sofas.
- Always strap children into highchairs and strollers.

Falls from heights

- Don't let children play alone on fire escapes, high porches or balconies.

Slips and falls from floor surfaces

- Secure area rugs. Especially on wood, ceramic tile or linoleum floors, area rugs can cause anyone to slip. Secure them with a piece of foam carpet backing, double-sided tape or a rubber pad, available at many carpet and department stores.

Falls on the stairs

- Keep stairs clear. Kids must spend as much time running up and down stairs as they do going in and out the back door. As it is, stairs figure in a large percentage of home falls. Combine a child's boundless, yet reckless, energy with a staircase full of junk, and you could end up taking an emergency trip to the hospital.
- Use safety gates if there are infants and toddlers in your home. At the top of the stairs, attach the gate to a wall. Avoid accordion gates with large openings—a child's neck can get trapped.

Window falls

- Be aware of the danger of falls from windows by unsupervised young children. Keep your windows closed and locked when children are around. When opening windows for ventilation, open windows that a child cannot reach.
- Set and enforce rules about keeping children's play away from windows or patio doors. Falling through the glass can be fatal or cause serious injury.

- Keep furniture—or anything children can climb—away from windows. Children may use such objects as a climbing aid.
- Never depend on an insect screen to keep your child from falling out of the window. Screens are intended to keep insects out, not children in.
- Unguarded windows opened only five inches pose a danger to children under ten. In some cities, landlords are required by law to place window guards in apartments where children live; such guards prevent windows from being opened wide enough for a child to crawl through. Be sure to check with your local fire department and building code official to make sure guards or security bars comply with all applicable requirements.

In the bathroom

- Always use a rubber mat or slip resistant stickers in the tub. Never leave a child unattended in the tub. Should they slip and fall, they may be unable to cry for help.

Dangers that are obvious to adults are not necessarily that apparent to children. They need extra guidance and an ever-vigilant eye. By following these simple suggestions, you help make your home a safer and more secure place for everyone.