

Baby Proofing Basics



Simple steps to make sure your home is as safe as possible for your little one

Courtney Ilarraza, co-founder of Baby Bodyguards, a full-service baby and child safety company based in NYC, shares what you need to do before bringing home your bundle of joy. Remember: You don't have to go crazy and baby proof the whole house; just focus on the rooms where your child will be. Additionally, purchase baby-proofing items that are Juvenile Products Manufacturing Association-certified and don't use hand-me-down products (you'll want to register all baby-proofing items with the manufacturer to receive any recall notices).

- Secure furniture to the walls.**
 You might think heavy dressers can't be tipped over, but once the drawers are pulled out, the weight is redistributed. When a toddler or child climbs into the drawers, the piece can topple.
- Put padding on sharp corners.**
 A lot of parents have the misconception that every edge should be padded, but it's just the sharp corners that need it, as they could cause a laceration if a toddler were to fall on the corner.
- Anchor the TV, either to the wall or the media stand.**
- Replace traditional outlet plates with sliding outlet plates.** When an appliance is unplugged, the outlet cover automatically slides into place. It's aesthetically pleasing, and the child can't remove it.
- Put coat hooks on the wall near the entryway, if you don't have a coat closet.** This keeps coats and bags out of baby's reach, preventing him from finding choking hazards or medications.
- Screw latches into drawers and cupboards that contain dangerous items, such as cleaning products and sharp objects.** And leave one cupboard, like where you store Tupperware, accessible to your child to explore.
- Run cables and cords through a cable management box.**
- Set the hot water heater to 120 degrees or lower,** if you have access, preventing your toddler from being badly burned if she can reach the hot-water faucet.
- Take an infant-child CPR and safety class** with your partner.
- Put a child-proof knob cover on the bathroom door handle** and any other off-limits rooms to prevent your toddler from entering unattended.
- Wrap shade blind cords around a blind cleat,** if your shades have cords.
- Install hardware-mounted gates at the tops and bottoms of stairs;** children can potentially fall through pressure-mounted gates.
- Stop using tablecloths when your toddler starts pulling himself up on things.** If something is sitting on the table-clothed table and the child pulls himself up on the cloth, that item could fall on the child.
- Rearrange bookshelves,** putting heavier items on bottom shelves and lighter items on higher shelves.
- Install windows guards** if your windows can open more than 4 inches.
- Make sure bannister and balcony slats are no more than 4 inches apart.** If they are, add slats in the spaces or install a guard on the inside of the slats, especially if the slats are horizontal, creating a ladder.



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