

## OUTDOOR PLAY AREAS

Kids love to explore outside, but if they're not careful, they can get into some dangerous situations. outdoor play areas should be securely enclosed by a fence with self-closing gate from the front of the street, carport/garage and car manoeuvring area. fences and gates should be made difficult for small children to climb: vertical slats are better than horizontal ones.



Garages are also a hazardous area. Plan against access from the outdoor play area to the garage. Too often garage doors are left open for convenience, offering temptation to little ones.

Make sure pesticides, weed killer and other poisons are securely out of reach. Sharp objects like axes, chainsaws and mowing equipment should not be accessible to young children.

When planning and landscaping your house, avoid blind corners in the area immediately adjacent to the driveway. also avoid doors leading out of the house directly on to the driveway.

- ◆ Paths should be level, wide and paved: loose gravel is dangerous. Broad, shallow steps are the safest.
- ◆ Good drainage is essential and soft surfaces must be provided beneath any climbing devices.
- ◆ Keep incinerators covered when unsupervised.

## PLAY EQUIPMENT

Regularly examine toys and outdoor play equipment. Maintain bikes and ride-on toys: particularly steering and brakes.

Insist on the correct safety gear for all ride-on toys such as bikes and skateboards - particularly helmets.



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## SWIMMING POOL FENCES

Whether you have young children or not, your swimming pool should be separately fenced. Having an allotment fence is not sufficient. A fence complying with the Australia Standard should isolate the pool and prevent direct access from the house. Drowning is the biggest killer of children in the under-five age group and Australia's death rate in this category is the highest in the world. A high proportion of drownings occur with visitors to the home.



## ADDITIONAL FEATURES

- ◆ A clear glass vision panel added to the hall door will protect children playing behind the door
- ◆ Bedroom doors should be able to be opened in such a way that they don't encroach into the bedroom, where they may be playing.

Falls are a major cause of injury. Safety features should include:

- ◆ Non-slip surfaces
  - ◆ Handrails that toddlers cannot climb over or through. Good lighting on the stairs with light switches top and bottom
  - ◆ Avoid doors opening into the path of travel at the bottom of the stairs
- Provide protective railing on low windows and balconies

## CHILD SAFETY IN THE HOME



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# CHILD SAFETY IN THE HOME

If you have children or are planning to start a family, home safety will be very important to you. It should be. Accidental injury is one of the biggest killers of children aged one to 14 in Australia today.

Many of these accidents happen around the home, especially to pre-school age children who are too young to defend themselves against dangers within and around the home.

## PLANNING

In supervising children, visibility is of prime importance. Parents should be able to see their children at play in family rooms, playrooms and outdoors. Equally, children need to be able to see their parents, especially in the kitchen. Where a parent is present, children are less likely to injure themselves.

To achieve this, ideally the living space of the house should be planned around a courtyard and the kitchen strategically placed to allow unimpeded vision.

## BUILT-IN-SAFETY

Try to look at the home from a child's perspective. Pre-schoolers are unlikely to recognise danger. It's up to you to protect them by having safety features. No home is completely accident-proof, but the hazards can be minimised.

All Children, curious and adventurous as they are, can unknowingly put themselves in danger.

Supervision can help reduce these dangers, but nothing is better than designing and building safety into the home.

## GLASS

Risk of injury will be reduced through use of safety glass. (This is mandatory in NSW in some situations.) Additionally, glass markings should be provided to floor length glass to prevent mistaking the door in the open position.

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# IN THE KITCHEN

The peak "danger time" for toddlers and young children is when meals are being prepared. To help eliminate accidents, ideally a kitchen should have only one access point; other features should include:

- ◆ Half height doors to the kitchen entry to exclude toddlers from the kitchen work area
- ◆ Upright stoves securely fixed in place to avoid overturning.



## CUPBOARDS

Ideally cupboards should be designed to open from the inside and the outside. For greater security install child-resistant catches on:

- ◆ Selected kitchen and bathroom cupboard doors and the broom cupboard should have a shelf above 1600mm. (Use these cupboards and shelves to store potentially dangerous objects, knives and poisonous substances like medication, flammable liquids and cleaners.)
- ◆ Outdoor sheds, tool cupboards and pool chemical storage areas should also be fitted with a lock.

## HEAT

Scalds are the biggest single thermal injuries for small children.

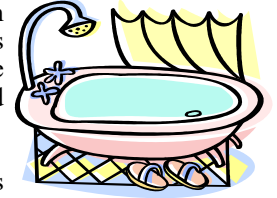
In most cases children pull or spill saucepans and cups of hot liquid.

- ◆ Take care with hot drinks near small children
- ◆ Placemats and tablecloths can easily be dragged down by small children
- ◆ Keep matches in safe places
- ◆ Store inflammable liquids in labelled containers away from a child's reach
- ◆ Guard all fires, whether electric, solid fuel or gas. If you have an open fire, children should only wear category 1 or 2 sleepwear.



# IN THE BATHROOM

Hot water burns can cause shocking injuries, scars, even death. The skin of a young child is very sensitive. It only takes one second of exposure to water heated to 70°C to cause a tragedy.



If planning a home it is recommended the toilet and bathroom be separate to maintain unsupervised access. However, if this is not appropriate, install a thermostatic mixing valve preventing any water hotter than 38°C coming out of the tap.

The bathroom and toilet areas should also feature the following:

- ◆ Taps set high and out of children's reach in the shower
- ◆ Soap holder in showers at least 1200mm above floor to reduce injury in all cases of fall
- ◆ Towel rails adjacent to shower and bath
- ◆ Door furniture 1500mm above the floor to exclude toddlers from unsupervised access
- ◆ Toughened safety glass in shower screens (this is mandatory for all new homes in NSW. If your existing home does not have safety glass, apply a safety film so that the glass is held together in case of a breakage).

## ELECTRICAL CIRCUITS

Residual current devices (earth leakage circuit breakers) should be installed on all circuits to reduce the risk of shock and electrocution around in the home.

Ideally all power outlets, should be sited out of children's reach and have safety shutters.

