

Keeping children safe

FALLS

Falling is a normal part of learning to move! It can happen anywhere. Falls can be very dangerous. Here is some advice on how to prevent falls:

- Make sure that the flooring used inside your home or crèche is not slippery or uneven.
- It is also important to check that the ground outside where children play is not uneven – it should be stable and secure, and free from rocks and other rubbish on or over which the children may fall.
- Remember to make sure that children are protected from furnishings with sharp edges – they may fall and cut themselves on these.
- Try to make sure that walkways are uncluttered with toys, furniture or rubbish.
- Make sure that loose electrical and phone cords, and rugs are safely out of the spaces in which you walk or move. Also, children like to pull on loose items like these, so it is best to make sure they are securely out of their reach.
- It is important to place furniture in a way that allows children to move around freely.
- Household items and other equipment should be appropriately stored so that they do not create an over-crowded and unsafe space full of obstacles.
- Make sure that all areas of your home or crèche are adequately lit to prevent accidental falls over items that were not seen.



What can you do?

BURNS

You can be burned by hot objects, hot liquids, fire, chemicals, electricity and the sun.

- When you are cooking, especially when children are nearby, make sure that pot handles are turned toward the back of the stove so there is no risk of bumping them as you or the children move past.
- It is useful to place a rubber mat in front of the stove so there is no risk of slipping and bumping hot plates.
- Make sure that electrical cords and wires are not left crossing hot surfaces or where there is liquid. Both can be dangerous!
- Paraffin stoves and other gas appliances should be kept out of reach of children at all times, and must always be attended to by an adult while it is being used.
- It is useful to make sure that the area in which you cook, especially where gas appliances are used, is separated from the area in which children play. It is useful not to allow them into this space while these items are in use.
- If you are using candles, make sure they are placed well away from flammable objects, or things like curtains which may be blown towards the flame.
- It is important that children know the correct escape routes in case of a fire. You should practice these routes with them regularly. They should also know where the nearest fire-hose and extinguisher are. These can be essential resources during times of emergency! Never leave a paraffin appliance unattended. It only takes a second for a gust of wind, pet or child to knock over a light or stove.
- Do not put a cloth under a paraffin appliance. A child or pet could pull the loose end and the cloth will burn and help fuel the fire.
- Always have a bucket of sand nearby when using a paraffin appliance. Water *will not* put out a paraffin fire and can make matters worse by spreading the flames. Paraffin fires can only be extinguished using sand or a fire extinguisher.
- Keep lighters and matches away from children and never store paraffin near matches, lighters or lit paraffin appliances.
- Remember, you can be burned by hot food and liquids just as easily as by flames – whenever possible, check the temperature. Never leave food or liquids that are too hot in a place where children can reach them!

Be careful...

POISONING

Poisons can cause sickness or even death if swallowed, breathed in, or spilled or splashed on the skin and eyes.

- Do not leave children unsupervised and make sure they understand that certain materials (e.g. paraffin) are dangerous.
- Make sure that poisonous materials like bleach and paraffin are kept in containers with a child-proof or safety cap. Always replace the cap after use.
- Never store these materials in old milk or cooldrink bottles as a child could mistakenly drink the contents.
- Make sure to remember that poison can be solid, liquid or *gas*! It is important to make sure that there is always enough fresh air.
- Medicine, as well as paraffin and other poisonous substances, should always be kept out of the reach of children. Keep these safe in a locked cupboard that children cannot reach.

DROWNING

Children can drown while playing, washing or working.

- An adult should watch a child at all times when it is near, or in water.
- Children should be taught to swim and 'tread water' (this means staying upright, with your head out the water by using your arms and legs) as early as possible.
- Make sure that there is a cover for cisterns, wells or other containers holding water. Children should not be able to move these covers alone.
- Access to pools or other bodies of water should be limited where possible; surrounding barriers and supervision are very important!

Preventing Accidents

Children in South Africa, and all over the world, are a very vulnerable group.

Research has shown that they are often injured in accidents due to:

- FALLS
- BURNS
- POISONING
- DROWNING

This pamphlet provides some useful information about how you can take steps to reduce the risk of children having accidents in your home or crèche.



Important Details

This table gives some useful contact numbers:

SAPS Emergency Services	10111
SAPS Crime Stop	08600 10111
National Department of Social Development	(012) 312 7500
Child Welfare	0861 4 CHILD 0861 4 24453
Childline	0800 055 555
Family and Marriage Association of South Africa (National Office)	011 975 7107
AIDS Helpline	0800 012 322



Contact Details

Institute for Social & Health Sciences
University of South Africa

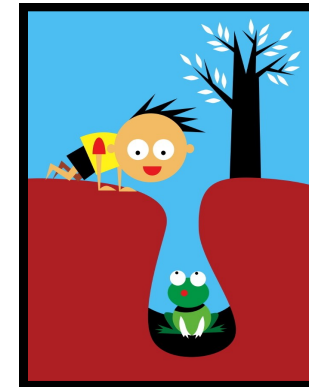
P.O. Box 1087, Lenasia, 1820, South Africa
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E-mail: lourilo@unisa.ac.za
Website: <http://www.unisa.ac.za/dept/ishs/index.html>

MRC-UNISA Crime, Violence and Injury
Lead Programme

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Be careful...

OUCH!!



How to Prevent Accidents to
Children in Homes and Crèches