

Keeping Children Safe

A GUIDE TO PREVENTING SERIOUS INJURY



www.kidsafesa.com.au

This resource has been developed
with the generous support of
Variety, the children's charity.



This resource is for general information only. Please talk to Kidsafe SA or a health professional for specific information relating to your circumstances and your child.

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Each year over 150 children die in Australia due to injury and a further 68,000 children are hospitalised. Many of these can be prevented.

This booklet provides information about the most common and serious injuries to Australian children and ways to prevent them.



Child injury can lead to death

More children still die from injury in Australia than from cancer, asthma and infectious diseases combined.



Watch children

Children are at risk of injury because they develop quickly, are on the move, and like to explore. Children under age 5 are most at risk and need to be watched at all times.



At home

Homes are very special places. At home we feel comfortable and safe. But sometimes our homes may not be safe enough for children. Many children are injured at home every year. There are simple steps that can be taken to make your home safer.



Out and about

It is also important to keep kids safe when out and about. Transport related injuries are the most common cause of child injury death in Australia. The good news is that you can reduce the risk of road trauma for children by following the checklists included in this booklet.

About Kidsafe SA

Kidsafe SA is the leading independent not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting safety and preventing unintentional deaths and serious injuries to children aged 0–15 years.

To help parents and carers, Kidsafe SA has more information about child safety and injury prevention on our website – www.kidsafesa.com.au.

Kidsafe Centre WCH

Women's and Children's Hospital
72 King William Road, North Adelaide

Kidsafe Centre Hilton

Sir Donald Bradman Drive, Hilton
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Rolling and falling

❌ Never leave a child alone on a change table, couch or bed. They can roll off and hurt themselves.

Why? They can take you by surprise – one day they might not be able to roll, the next day they can.

✅ You can change them on the floor if possible so it doesn't matter if they roll.



High chair and prams

✅ Always use a five point harness for when children are in high chairs and prams/strollers – sometimes they like to stand up or try and climb out and can fall.





Baby walkers

❌ Baby walkers are not recommended for use as baby can easily get to dangerous things like stairs, heaters, poisons, etc.

Furniture tipovers

Some children like to climb! Make sure TV's and heavy furniture (bookshelves, cupboards and drawers) are secured to the wall or cabinet using brackets or anchors so they don't fall on children.



Trampolines

✗ Trampolines are not recommended for children under 6 years old.

Make sure trampolines are set up on a flat surface with bark, mulch or soft grass underneath.

✓ Always watch children on the trampoline and remember, only one child on the trampoline at a time because many injuries on trampolines are from children bumping into each other.



Bunk beds

✗ Bunk beds can cause nasty falls – they are not recommended for use with children under 9 years old.

✗ Don't let children play on bunk beds as many injuries happen when they fall from the top while playing.



Safety checklist to prevent falls

- ☐ Have you checked all heavy furniture and TVs are secured/screwed to the wall or cabinet to prevent falling?
- ☐ Do you check the springs, net, padding and the mat on the trampoline are in good condition?
- ☐ Do you always keep one hand on your baby when changing their nappy or clothes on the change table so they don't roll off?
- ☐ Do you make sure your child always wears a helmet, that it's done up properly and fits properly every time they ride a bike or scooter?
- ☐ Do you always use the parking brake on the pram, put the wrist strap on and buckle your child in using the 5 point harness?
- ☐ Do you use a stationary activity centre instead of a baby walker?
- ☐ Do only children over 9 years old sleep in bunk beds?
- ☐ Do you always watch your child when they are being held by another child?

Hot water burns like fire.

At 60°C it takes 1 second to cause a serious burn to a child. At 50°C it takes 5 minutes.

Check the temperature of hot water in your bathroom to make sure it isn't hotter than 50°C. If it is, contact a Licensed Plumber.

✓ ***Check the temperature of the bath water using a thermometer before putting your child in.***

Why? The best temperature for bathing a baby is 37–38°C (36°C for a newborn). If the water is too hot then it can burn your child.



✗ ***Never hold hot drinks or food when holding your child.***

Why? Babies and toddlers move about quickly and can throw their arms around or lunge forward which can knock hot drinks spilling them over their bodies.

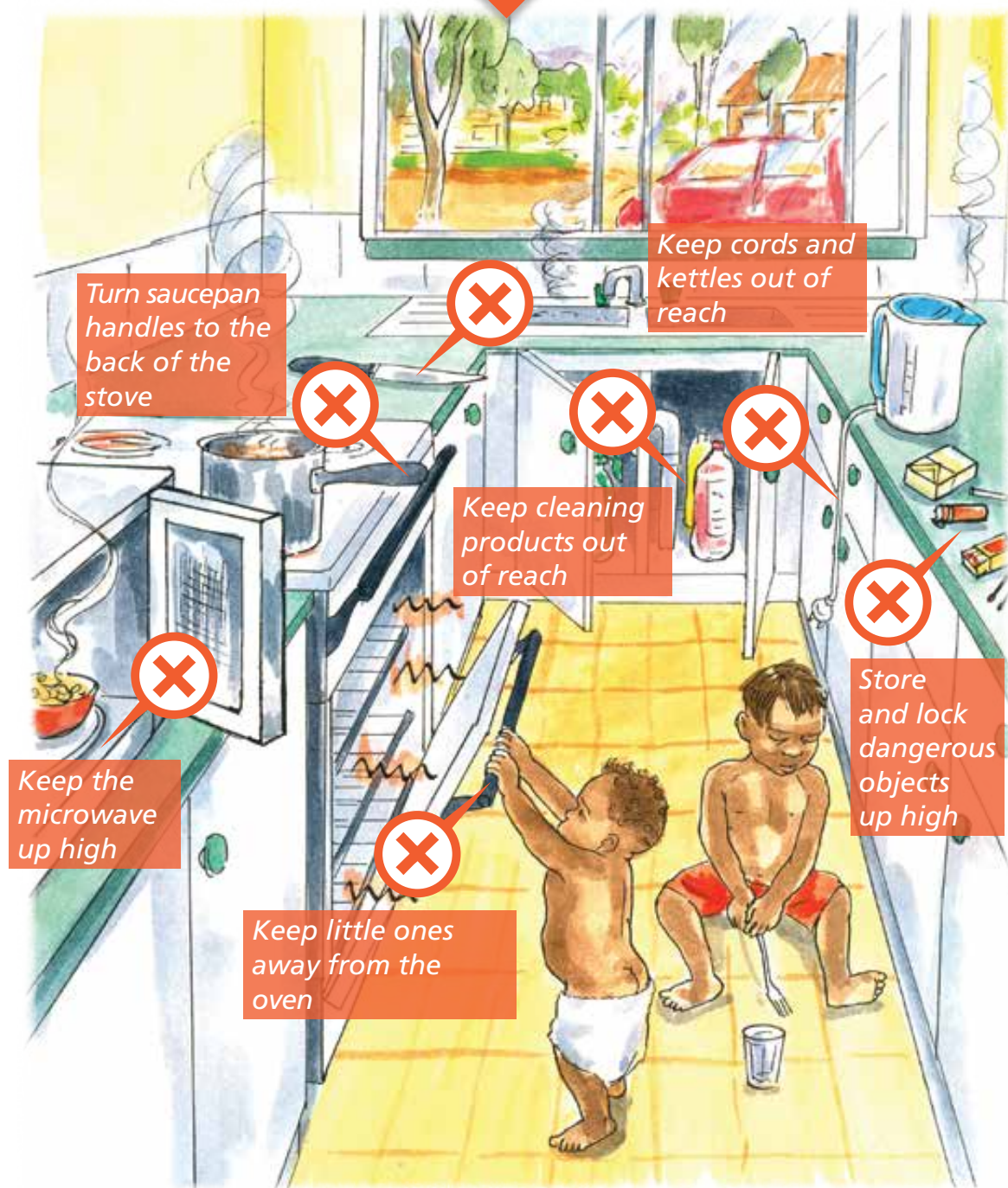
✓ ***Put hot drinks well out of reach.***

Why? Young children like to explore and can pull drinks down on top of themselves.



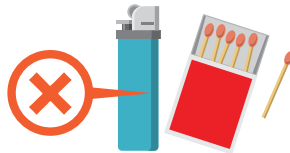
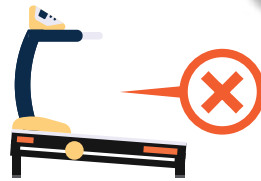
The kitchen can be a dangerous place for children because it has many hot objects like ovens, kettles and saucepans.

✓ You can stop your child coming into the kitchen by using a gate, especially when you are cooking.



✓ **Install smoke alarms in your home and regularly check that they are working by testing the batteries.**

Why? Smoke alarms help let you know that there is a fire and that you need to get out of the house.



✓ **Keep your child away from items that can burn them including the iron, heater, treadmill and hair straightener. Also keep matches and lighters out of reach.**

Why? Children should never play with matches and lighters as they can set their clothes on fire or burn down the house.

Camp fires and hot coals can burn.

Always put the fire out with water not dirt.

Why? Because dirt covered fire can stay burning hot for more than 8 hours.

✓ **Watch your children around the campfire.**



First aid: If your child gets a burn, place the area under cool running water for 20 minutes.

Why?

- It takes 20 minutes or longer for the skin to cool down and stop burning.

What to do:

- Remove all clothing and jewellery.
- Place under cool running water for at least 20 minutes.
- Cover with clean cloth or cling wrap to transport your child and stop infection.
- Seek medical attention if burn is bigger than a 20 cent piece.



Safety checklist to prevent burns

Have you checked that the delivery temperature of water in your bathroom doesn't reach more than 50°C?

- ☐ Do you always check the bath water before placing your child in the bath, to check it's not too hot?
- ☐ Are you always careful to mix and test the temperature of microwaved food before feeding your child?
- ☐ Do you always put your child down before having a hot drink?
- ☐ Do you turn the iron and hair straightener off and put it out of reach when you are not using it?
- ☐ Some older children like to play with matches and lighters. Are matches and lighters stored well out of sight and reach of children? Preferably in a locked cupboard?
- ☐ Do you keep children out of the kitchen when food is being made?
- ☐ Do you know the first aid for a burn injury?

Young children love the water. They have no understanding of danger or drowning. They can drown very quickly and silently.

✓ Closely watch children around the water at all times. Young children should always be within arm's length of an adult around water and never left in the care of older children.

It can be too difficult for older children to watch and provide help.



It only takes 20 seconds for a young child to drown so never leave them alone near water.

✓ Remember to watch your child in the bath and stay with them at all times. If you have to leave, take them with you.

Children can drown in as little as 3cm of water.

Any buckets, inflatable pools, baths, water tanks, fish ponds, water features, pet drinking bowls and wheelie bins should all be emptied or be away from where your child plays.

Children can fall head first into water hazards like buckets and fish ponds and it can be hard for them to get out.



Install fencing around all in-ground and above ground pools and spas.

This includes all portable or above ground pools that have a filtration system.

If your pool has a filtration system, you will need to contact your local council for approval.



✗ Never prop or keep the pool gate open.

✓ Check the pool fence regularly and fix it straight away if it is broken.

Make sure there is nothing around the fence that children can climb to get to the pool.

Safety checklist to prevent drowning

- ☐ Do you always actively watch children around water? Young children at arm's length?
- ☐ Is your swimming pool or portable pool fenced?
- ☐ Have you checked your pool fence is in good condition and working like it should?
- ☐ Is your pool gate always kept shut and never propped open?
- ☐ Do you always empty wading pools, eskies and buckets after each use?
- ☐ Do you have a grate or barrier to stop children playing in ponds and water features?
- ☐ Do you and your children always wear life jackets at the river and in a boat?
- ☐ Have you learnt CPR and do you know what to do in an emergency?
- ☐ Has your child been to swimming lessons?
- ☐ Do you always watch your children in the bath? Never leave a child alone in the bath.

Button batteries are very dangerous and can get stuck in a child's throat without blocking their airway. You may not even know that it's in there.

Button batteries can burn holes inside the body which can cause death.

If a button battery gets stuck then your child may have flu like symptoms and will need to go to hospital quickly.

If you think your child has swallowed a button battery, do not wait for symptoms to show, **call the POISONS INFORMATION CENTRE** urgently on 13 11 26.



Common items that button batteries are found in



watch



car remote



musical card



fake candle



hearing aid

Look for button batteries around your home



Look for items with button batteries



Keep items and loose batteries out of reach of children



Secure the battery compartment



Get rid of them immediately and safely

Safety checklist to prevent injury from a button battery

- ☐ Have you checked your home for button batteries and items that may use them?
- ☐ Have you checked that the battery compartment of all items that use button batteries is tightly secured?
- ☐ Do you store button batteries and items that use them out of the reach of young children?
- ☐ Do you keep hearing aids and batteries separate to any medications or lollies?
- ☐ Do you always get rid of batteries immediately and safely? *Batteries with no charge are still dangerous to children.*
- ☐ Do you check novelty items and toys such as flashing jewellery/clothes for button batteries?
- ☐ Have you entered the phone number of the **Poisons Information Centre** into your mobile phone? **13 11 26**

If children don't have their back teeth (molars) yet, they can't chew and grind food down properly.

✓ Grate or mash hard fruits and vegetables and cut meat into small pieces before feeding it to young children.

✗ Don't feed young children small or hard foods which they can choke on such as nuts, popcorn, corn chips, whole grapes or lollies.

✓ Watch your child while they are eating and make sure they sit down to eat. If your child is choking they can't call out to you so you need to be there to watch them.



Children will put anything in their mouth.

✓ Keep small objects around the house like marbles, building blocks, batteries and loose coins out of reach so they can't choke on them.



Make sure there are no loose or dangling curtain or blind cords near your child's cot or areas where they might be crawling or playing.

Young children can get tangled in the cords and strangle themselves.



Tie up loose curtain or blind cords out of reach of children, at least 1.5 metres above floor level.



Safety checklist to prevent choking and suffocation

- ☐ Do you always watch your child when they are eating?
- ☐ Do your children sit down to eat?
- ☐ Are all small toys that young children could put in their mouth stored out of reach?
- ☐ Do you keep older children's toys out of reach of young children?
- ☐ Have you checked all blind and curtain cords and made sure they are well away from children?

Lock away poisons – up high and out of reach

Why? Young children put everything in their mouth. They don't understand it could be dangerous.

Most children are poisoned from swallowing medicines and cleaning products around the home.

✔ Lock away all poisons, medicines and dangerous items in a cupboard up high, at least 1.5 metres above ground level, out of sight and reach of children.





Safe storage

✓ Make sure low cupboards and drawers have a lock on them.

Why? Many cleaning products are stored in low cupboards under the sink or dishwasher. Think about how easily children can get to your cupboards and drawers.

✗ ***Don't leave bags around where young children can get in to them.***

Why? They might find medicines, products containing nicotine, hand sanitiser or other small items which they can put in their mouth.



Check what plants you have at home and get rid of any dangerous ones.

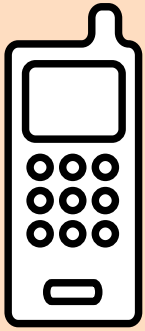
✓ Teach your children that gardening is fun but not all plants in the garden are for eating.

For more information and for a list of some common poisonous plants, please visit www.kidsafesa.com.



What to do if something happens

If your child has swallowed something you think might be poisonous:



- take your child and the product to the phone with you;
- ring the **POISONS INFORMATION CENTRE** on **13 11 26** and follow their advice.

Children can sometimes be poisoned after being given too much medicine.



- ✓ Read instructions carefully and record when and how much medicine you give them to reduce the chance of overdose.

Safety checklist to prevent poisoning

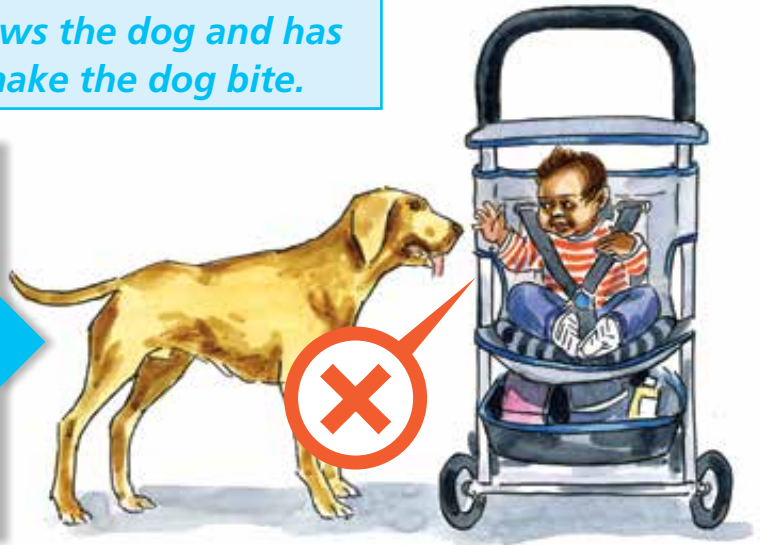
- ☐ Do you store medicines and cleaning products out of reach at least 1.5 metres off the ground?
- ☐ Do you always check the recommended dosage when giving medication to children, even if you have given it before?
- ☐ Do you use child resistant locks on cupboards where poisonous products are stored? These can be purchased from Kidsafe.
- ☐ Are all products stored in their original, clearly labelled container?
- ☐ Do you buy products with child resistant lids? Remember child resistant is not always child-proof – many toddlers can open them given time.
- ☐ Are medicines in the fridge kept in a small, portable and lockable container?
- ☐ Have you reminded grandparents and other carers about storing medicines safely when children are around?
- ☐ Do you ensure handbags and other bags are kept out of reach, particularly visitors' bags?
- ☐ Do you make sure you never refer to medications as 'lollies' or 'sweets' as this gives children false ideas?
- ☐ Have you checked the plants in your garden are not dangerous?

Most dog bites occur at home.

The child usually knows the dog and has done something to make the dog bite.

✗ *Never leave your child alone with a dog – all dogs can bite.*

If children and dogs are in the same area, they must be watched closely by an adult at all times.



✓ *Always separate dogs and children during eating and sleeping times.*



Remember that any dog can bite.

All dogs will bite under the right conditions. Children often provide those conditions by teasing the dog with food or pulling the dog's fur and tail.

As your child grows you can teach them how to treat dogs.

It is also a good idea to take your dog to training classes to help them learn to get along with humans and learn to 'sit' and 'come' when they are told.

Safety checklist to prevent a dog bite

- ☐ Do you have a separate area for your dog to play that is away from children?
- ☐ Do you always watch your child and dog when they are in the same area?
- ☐ Have you taught your child how to play with your dog? How to treat them – what to do and not to do?
- ☐ Has your dog been to training classes to learn how to 'sit' and 'come'?

✓ *Sleep baby on back*

Sleep baby on their back from birth, never on their tummy or side. Make sure their head and face is uncovered during sleep.



Best way for parents and baby to sleep

✓ Sleep baby in a cot or bassinette in the same room as the parent and carer for the first 6–12 months. Babies need to sleep in a separate space of their own so they don't get too hot or get rolled on.



Remove unsafe items in the cot

Why? These items could cause baby to suffocate. Don't have anything soft in the cot. Take out any pillows, quilts, cot bumpers, sheepskins or large soft toys.

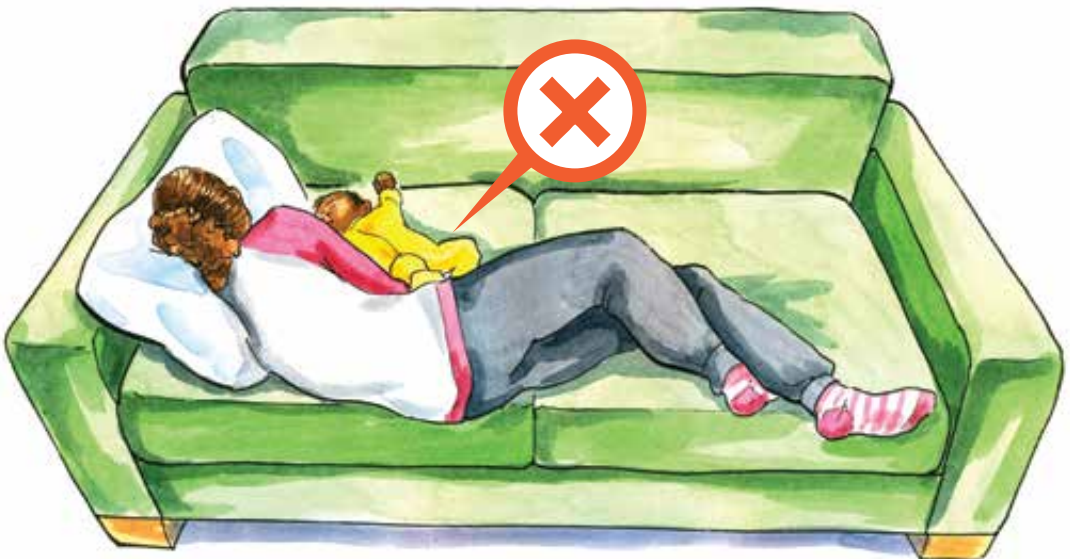
Cords can strangle babies

✓ Make sure the cot is well away from dangling curtain and blind cords. Secure them up high and out of reach.



*Unsafe ways for
parents and baby
to sleep*

✗ Don't let baby sleep on couches, bean bags or pillows as they can suffocate or be rolled on by a bigger person.



No smoking

✓ Keep your child away from any type of smoke, before and after birth.

Smoking during pregnancy or around baby increases the risk of SIDS.



Safety checklist for safe sleeping

- ☐ Is your baby on their back to sleep with head and face uncovered?
- ☐ Is baby sleeping safely in their own cot next to parent's bed?
- ☐ Is everything soft or puffy removed – no bumpers, pillows, toys, sheepskins, quilts or doonas?
- ☐ Make sure baby is not sleeping on couches, pillows, bean bags.
- ☐ Make sure baby is sleeping in their own safe sleeping place at all times and not with another person, pet or in a big bed.
- ☐ Is baby sleeping away from curtain and blind cords? Secure all cords up high and out of baby's reach.
- ☐ Is baby away from smoke?
- ☐ Breastfeed your baby if you can.

✓ **Buckle up every child on every trip.**

✓ Keep your child in the right seat for their size. Only change seats when your child becomes too big. You can do this by checking the shoulder marker.

SHOULDERS MUST BE
 — — — — —
BELOW THIS LINE



✓ **Check the seat is fitted and adjusted properly as your child grows.**

Check:

- The seatbelt is buckled up and firm.
- The top tether strap is connected and not loose.
- The harnesses are not twisted and sit just at or above the shoulders. The harnesses should be firm every time your child travels in the car.

✓ ***All children must be seated in an Australian Standard's approved child car seat.***

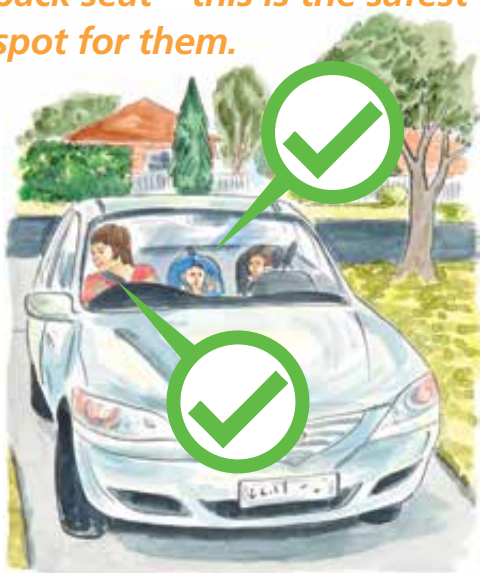


✗ Car seats from overseas are illegal to use in Australia. Never use a car seat that has been in a crash. Throw away any car seat that is not in sound condition or good working order.

It is not recommended to use a car seat that is older than 10 years.

✓ ***Make sure you always buckle up too – children like to copy their parents.***

✓ ***Little ones must sit in the back seat – this is the safest spot for them.***



Safety checklist to keep kids safe in cars

- ☐ Do you buckle up your child on every trip and check the harnesses are firm?
- ☐ Have you checked your child's car seat is fitted properly?
- ☐ Is your child kept in their car seat until they become too big for it?
- ☐ Was your child's car seat purchased in Australia and does it have an Australian Standard's sticker?
- ☐ Do you regularly check that car seats are in good condition?
- ☐ Have you read the car seat instructions carefully?
- ☐ Do your children always sit in the back seat?
- ☐ Have you checked the age of your car seat to make sure it's not more than 10 years old?

✗ Never leave your child alone in the car, not even for a minute.

Why? The car can heat up really quickly and your child can become sick (distressed and overheat).

Leaving the window down has little effect.

Why? The temperature will still be so much hotter than outside.

The temperature inside a parked car can get 20°C–30°C hotter than the outside temperature.

Most of this temperature increase happens in the first 5 minutes.

The inside of the car can become like an oven!



✓ Always take your child with you, even if you're only going to be a few minutes. It's not worth taking the risk.

Always take your child out of the car on the safe side away from traffic.

Try and do a 'look before you leave' routine.

Why? Sometimes people are so busy that they have forgotten there is a sleeping baby in the car. Make a habit of always checking the back seat before walking away from the car.



What to do if you see a child locked inside an unattended vehicle:

1. Look for parents or carers.
2. Call 000 if the parents can't be found or the child is in distress.
3. Wait for emergency services, or safely try to remove the child if you are concerned about their condition.



Safety checklist to keep kids safe in cars

- ☐ Do you always take your child with you when you leave the car?
- ☐ Do you check that everyone is out of the car before walking away?
- ☐ Do you store the car keys out of reach so your child can't get into the car or lock the car from the inside?
- ☐ Do you make sure that you never let your children play in the car?



*A driveway is a
small road.*



Don't let children play
in the driveway.





✓ *If you are the only one at home, have children in the car with you when moving it.*

✓ *Restrict access to the driveway from the house and front yard by using fences and gates.*



✓ *Always walk around the car and check before moving it.*

Farms may not have a clear driveway.

✓ Create a safe play area away from where farm vehicles and machinery are used.

Remember... Don't go if you don't know!

You can prevent driveway runovers.



Safety checklist to prevent driveway runovers

- ☐ Are you aware of your car's blind space?
- ☐ Do you know where children are when you move the car?
- ☐ Do they have a safe place to wave bye-bye from?
- ☐ Are children safely holding hands with another adult when a car is being moved?
- ☐ If you are the only adult at home, are children inside the car with you?
- ☐ Do you have a safe play area for children that is away from the driveway?
- ☐ Have you walked around your car and checked before getting in to move it?
- ☐ Do you always have children in mind when using your reversing mirrors, sensors or cameras?
- ☐ Have you put your hand-brake on before getting out of the car?

✓ *Hold your child's hand to cross the road.*



✓ *Always cross at the crossing or where you can see clearly in both directions.*

Set a good example for your child. Teach your child about road safety from an early age when out and about.



✗ *Car parks are not a safe place to play.*

All cars have a large blind space behind them – some up to 15 metres long.

✓ Hold your child's hand in the car park at all times. Children are small and hard for drivers to see making a car park very dangerous.



✓ *Teach your child:*

Stop at the kerb

Look for traffic in both directions

Listen for traffic

Think is it safe to cross?



Safety checklist

keep kids safe around cars

- ☐ Are you careful when walking past driveways to make sure there are no moving cars?
- ☐ Do you hold your child's hand when near any traffic? They can move into danger very quickly.
- ☐ Do you put the wrist strap around your wrist when using your child's pram to stop it rolling away?
- ☐ Does your child wear bright clothes when playing outside and walking to school so they can be seen by other cars?
- ☐ Does your child know to stop, look, listen and think before crossing the road? It is important to teach children about road safety.

Kidsafe SA

Kidsafe SA is here to support you. You can contact us by:

Phone: (08) 7089 8554

Email: enquiries@kidsafesa.com.au

www.kidsafesa.com.au

Follow us on:



Other Useful Contacts and Information

The Royal Life Saving Society of Australia

A useful Home Pool Safety Checklist, available to download at:

www.royallifesaving.com.au

Metropolitan Fire Service

www.mfs.sa.gov.au

Your First Steps

A useful guide to infant and nursery product information, available at:

www.babyproductsafety.gov.au

The Dog and Cat Management Board

Useful information about living safely with pets, available at:

www.dogandcatboard.com.au

Raising Children Network

The Australian Parenting website:

www.raisingchildren.net.au/

Helpful Kidsafe SA Information Sheets

Many more resources can be found at: **www.kidsafesa.com.au/resources**

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www.kidsafesa.com.au