

safety and your pre-schooler

Did you know that in New Zealand around 13,000 children under five years of age are admitted to hospital each year with injuries?

Most injuries happen in and around the home, and many can be prevented by making simple changes to your environment. Remember, even with changes, you still need to make sure you supervise your child to prevent injuries from occurring.



Children like to copy your good safety practices. But pre-school children are still at an age where they can easily forget the safety rules and the reasons for them.

read Plunket's top tips and complete the checklist to keep your child safe.

top tips to keep your pre-schooler safe

Car and road safety

Your child must travel in a car seat every time they go in the car.

- Make sure the car seat is suitable for their size and weight. Using a car seat with a harness that fits your child provides the best protection. Then move to a booster seat.
- The safest place for all car seats is in the back seat.

Your pre-schooler needs your guidance to keep them safe around traffic. At this age your child still has difficulty judging the speed, distance and danger of the traffic. By talking about road safety with your child and praising their good habits you are helping them learn they can keep safe around roads.

- We talk about keeping safe around traffic.
- A safe, enclosed outside play area, away from the driveway and road, will help to keep them safe.
- Hold your child's hand when walking on the footpath together or crossing the road.
- Set a good example when you cross the road because your children learn from your good habits.
- Encourage your child to wear their helmet when riding a bike, and don't forget to wear yours too.

Preventing burns

Your pre-schooler may sometimes forget what is safe to touch and what can sometimes be hot.

- Your hot water tap temperature should be around 50 degrees Celsius. If it feels too hot, talk to a plumber about how you can turn the temperature down.
- Fill your bath with cold water first, and then add hot water to bring it up to temperature.
- Fires and heaters still need to be protected with a guard – make sure the guard is attached to the wall so your child can't get around it.
- When cooking, use the back elements of the stove first and keep all handles turned away from the front of the stove.
- Candles need to be on a stable surface away from curious fingers, and your matches and lighters kept out of sight and out of reach.
- Every household needs working smoke alarms and an escape plan in case of fire.

Preventing choking and suffocation

Your child is still constantly learning, experimenting and becoming more independent. However, they can still choke easily on food, toys or plastic wrapping.

- You may still need to cut up your pre-schooler's food. Make sure they sit while they eat.
- Small toys, parts of toys, coins – anything smaller than a ping pong ball – is a choking hazard.
- Plastic bags can be dangerous and need to be stored out of reach. If they fit over your child's head, they are a suffocation risk.

Make sure you learn how to save your child's life if they choke. The **RED** section of your Well Child Tamariki Ora book has details of what to do if a child is choking.

Preventing drowning

It only takes 5cm of water for a child to drown in. It can happen silently and very swiftly.

- **Never** leave your child alone near water – not even for a second.
- To keep your child safe, empty the bath and paddling pool as soon as they are finished with it.
- Keep within easy reach of your child when they play around water.
- Make sure your child can't get to your neighbour's swimming pool or spa.

Preventing falls

As your child continues to gain confidence, they will still fall and sometimes get into dangerous areas.

- Encouraging your child to hold the hand rail when using the stairs will help prevent them falling.
- Keeping safety catches on windows will prevent your child from climbing out.

Preventing poisoning

Keeping all poisons including household cleaners and medications out of reach and out of sight will reduce the risk of poisoning.

- Check the paint on older furniture, toys and houses. If the paint is lead-based, it can poison young children.
- Ask for child-resistant tops on medicines but remember they are not child-proof. Some three- and four-year olds can open them within seconds. Safe storage is always essential.
- Never store poisonous liquids in soft-drink bottles.

More young children are poisoned by liquid Paracetamol than any other medicine. Follow the instructions to make sure you give the correct amount of the correct strength of Paracetamol to your child.

Keep the 24 hour National Poisons Centre phone number beside your phone, 0800 POISON, or 0800 764 766.

Plunketline 24/7 0800 933 922



checklist



You can use this checklist to make sure your pre-schooler is kept safe.

- Windows have safety catches and blind cords are wound up, out of reach.
Blind cord winders and window catches can be purchased from some hardware and nursery stores.
- I always fill the bath with cold water first and then add hot water to get a safe temperature.
- The table cloth is put away so my child can't pull it off.
- The electric jug is kept well away from the edge of the bench and the cord doesn't hang over the edge.
- There is a fire guard around the fire and heaters in our home.
Fire guards can be purchased from hardware stores.
- Clothes are snug-fitting to reduce the risk of them catching fire.
- There are working smoke alarms in our home and there is an escape plan in case of fire.
Smoke alarms can be purchased from supermarkets and hardware stores.
- Children are watched within grabbing distance when in and around water.
- The bath and paddling pools are emptied as soon as they are finished with.
- The swimming and spa pools are fenced correctly, and there is a self-latching gate in good working order.
If you are unsure, the local council can provide information about fencing requirements.
- I have the right type of car seat for my child and it is fitted correctly. I know where to go for advice about a booster seat when my child needs it.
If you are unsure about when to move your child to a booster seat, the Safe2Go technician at your local Plunket Car Seat Rental Scheme can help.
- Poisons, medicines, cleaning and dishwasher products are locked away up high, out of sight and out of reach.
Cupboard locks can be purchased from hardware and some nursery stores.
- Emergency phone numbers including the National Poisons Centre phone number 0800 POISON, or 0800 764 766 are kept beside the phone.