

Like many Mom's, I'm overconfident in my children's understanding of what is okay to touch and what isn't. In fact, when my second child arrived, my Polar Bear, I did very little to childproof my new home. I felt that children were inherently smart and that they could take most of what the world could dish out, especially in this modern-day age.

The truth is that childproofing will minimize your child's chances of getting hurt, or worse. According to The National Center for Health Statistics, approximately 10.4 million children under three were admitted to emergency rooms in the United States as a result of household accidents in the last decade. The number one cause of injuries was attributed to falls and the number one cause of serious injuries resulting in death was attributed to furniture falling on the child. It's no doubt that children need our protection. And the best way to protect is to prevent.

The Huffington Post Canada recommends using anchors rather than latches as effective solutions to preventing furniture from falling on loved ones. They recommend childproofing before children are mobile and state that getting on your hands and knees to explore your home from the child's point of view really helps parents identify areas of concern.

The University of Alabama conducted a study where they arranged for first-time-moms of children aged 12 to 36 months to walk through scenarios and identify potential hazards. The study concluded that fewer than half the hazards were recognized. Parents Magazine put together their own project for readers to use to educate themselves; they incorporated drawings of typical households and circled potential hazards. I have included a few for reference and more can be found here:

<https://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/safety/toddlerproofing/home-safe-home-childproof-your-home-room-by-room/>



It's smart to be prepared for the worst, so I've compiled a short list of childproofing must-haves that are nearly universal. I've used these products before and can say with certainty that they helped protect my children:

- Toilet lock – As you can plainly see, I didn't invest in this must-have soon enough (Mommy was present through this adventure but it could have happened when I wasn't there). Childproofing the toilet is extremely important and the toilet lock, any brand, is a must-have

- Bath spout covers – These nifty covers are to be placed over your tub spout to protect your baby's head from the faucet
- Finger pinch guards – These guards are placed high up on doors (out of reach) and prevent doors from closing all the way, protecting fingers
- Tamper-proof plugs – Have a professional install these for you. I know it's expensive but I can't stress the importance of this must-have enough. Electricity and children don't mix.
- Drawer and cupboard latches – These are what come to mind when most people think of childproofing. Common as they are, they should not be overlooked when making your home child-friendly.
- Baby gates – A pain to install and use but nothing compared to the pain a child feels when falling down stairs. This type of accident always results in a trip to the hospital so it's crucial to have this must-have. Additionally, only hardware mounted gates are approved for stairs. Do not use pressure mounted gates as these can come loose and fall with your baby, adding extra danger to the situation.

If you need help determining the right childproofing gadgets for your unique home, please contact KARA. Additional tips and resources on childproofing can be obtained during programs or just having a chat with a wonderful staff member. They have years of experience and know quite a few talented handymen to help make your home safe for your loved ones. All the best and stay safe!