



Dogs like Andre can get into trash cans if they aren't locked away or covered.

Staff photo by Jade McDowell

# Child-proofing and pet-proofing your home

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East Oregonian

Welcoming a new little one into your home — be they fur-covered or diaper-covered — can turn previously benign household objects into a hazard.

Strategies for child-proofing and pet-proofing a home are often simple and relatively inexpensive, but they do require a thorough examination of the entire house and yard.

Mary Shaver, owner of Busy Bee Preschool and Child Care, said the first step is locking up sharp objects, household cleaners, medicines, cosmetics and other items that could be dangerous if a little one decides to play with them or drink them.

“Even something like perfume can be toxic to a child,” she said.

The same concerns apply to the back yard, where Shaver said certain plants and bushes can also be toxic if a child decides to eat them while their parent’s back is turned. She



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

A child safety gate can also work to keep pets out of rooms that contain things that might be dangerous to them.

said she keeps the number for poison control by the phone in case a child does ingest something they shouldn’t.

Indoors, she said parents should also be especially careful when cooking. At Busy Bee, the adults have removed the knobs on the

gas stove so that a child cannot turn them on without access to where the knobs are kept. They also have plastic covers over all the electrical outlets.

“That’s a biggie, because kids like to stick things in there,” she said.

Other tips found on

WebMD for making your home safer for infants and young children include:

- Install safety latches on cupboards and drawers in kitchens and bathrooms.
- Secure bookcases and other furniture items that could tip over if a child tried to climb on them.
- Make sure window blinds do not have looped cords that can be a strangulation hazard.
- Place corner protectors and bumpers over hard edges like fireplace hearths where a child could fall and cut their head.
- Install safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Install a toilet lock to keep the toilet lid down to prevent accidental drowning.

Many of the same safety tips also apply to welcoming a new puppy or kitten into the home. Toilet lids should also be kept closed, for example, to keep animals from drowning or ingesting dangerous cleaners.

“Cats love to drink out of the toilet,” said Darcy Coleman of Pioneer Humane Society in Pendleton.

Other suggestions Coleman had, not already mentioned above, were to keep trash cans covered or in a latched cabinet, place dangling wires out of reach, cover heating vents or other holes that animals could get stuck in and check washers and dryers before turning them on.

“Make sure your cat hasn’t jumped into your dryer before you turn it on, because they love to do that,” Coleman said. “It’s nice and warm in there.”

In the garage and driveway, pet owners should also be careful to clean up all antifreeze spills, as even a taste is highly poisonous to animals.

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