

No disease is as deadly to youngsters as the carelessness that breeds accidents—carelessness that parents can prevent

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as told to Carl Bakal

NOT LONG AGO, a three-year-old girl in a small Midwestern city was left alone for a few minutes at the breakfast table. She grabbed a fork and tried to spear a slice of bread from the electric toaster, as she had seen her parents do.

With adult skill, this common though ill-advised practice seldom results in electric shock. In this case, however, the girl happened to have her other hand, which was moist, on the metal casing of the toaster—a perfect conductor for electricity.

When the mother returned to the kitchen, she found her daughter unconscious from burns and shock. Despite immediate treatment, the child could not be revived.

In another city, nine children were playing—unattended—at the home of one when a fire broke out near the front door. It spread so rapidly that the oldest child could lead only six of the others to safety. Two perished in the flames. The fire originated near a wall switch controlling the porch light. The owners of the house had known about the defective switch—but never did anything to correct it.

These are fairly typical of the accidents which kill 15,000 American children each year—one every 35 minutes! In fact, accidents are the leading cause of death from the ages of 1 to 34.

But the picture is even grimmer than that. Each year one of every three children under 15 receives an accidental injury requiring medical care or restriction of activity for at least one day. And six out of every ten of these injuries take place in the home! The leading causes include falls, fires, drownings—but at the top of any list should go the carelessness which leads to an attitude of "accidents will happen."

This isn't so. You can safeguard your child from accidents just as you would from illness. Here are six important ways:

1. Remember—

Out of Sight, Out of Mind!

Did you know that aspirin kills more children than all other medicines combined? Make all medicines, insecticides, cleansers, paints, varnishes, disinfectants inaccessible to your child. Knives,

scissors, nail files, and other dangerous objects also should be kept out of reach. And destroy plastic bags which can suffocate children.

2. Children Should Be Seen and Heard

Youngsters, especially preschoolers, need constant supervision. Never leave a child alone in the house, even for a few minutes. One minute is all it takes for disaster. Put gates on stairways and gratings, and secure screens on windows. Turn handles of pots and pans away from the front of the range. Make sure there are no scatter rugs in heavily trafficked areas of the house. And while you are going about your daily tasks, keep more than an occasional eye on your offspring, even if he seems to be playing quietly.

3. Experience Is a Dangerous Teacher

This is especially true if the child doesn't know some of the ground rules of safety. He should be taught to avoid matches, for instance. And not to touch anything electric with wet hands. He should be trained to look in driveways before going past and to cross streets at crosswalks and only on the "go" signal. These precautions may seem obvious to you—but they aren't to your child. Children must be carefully taught.

4. Show the Way to Safety

Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, but it also can be harmful. Bad habits are imitated along with good ones. The child who was electrocuted by the toaster was only doing what she had seen her parents do.

5. Meet Emergencies—in Advance

Do you have first-aid kits on hand? Has at least one member of your family taken a first-aid course? Recently, a 10-year-old Minnesota girl saved the life of her baby sister because she knew how to administer mouth-to-mouth respiration. Emergency telephone numbers should be posted prominently beside your phone. When crises occur, it is important to keep calm; you'll be able to do so only if you are prepared.

6. Be a Safety Leader

Support community programs for safer schools, playgrounds, housing, and transportation. Make sure there are adequate fire-prevention programs and rescue services. If you want these things which spell safety for you and your child, you personally will have to work for them.



**6 STEPS
TO
SAFEGUARD
YOUR CHILD**

COVER:

The golden-haired little girl was caught by Dave Preston just as she was trying on Mama's chapeau. Parents will want to read "6 Steps to Safeguard Your Child," above.

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