

# Home safety checklist

## for grandparents of children 0–4 years of age

Did you know that in Australia, childhood injuries are a leading cause of death and reason for admission to hospital? More children die from unintentional injuries (36%) than cancer (19%) and diseases of the nervous system (11%) combined (ABS 2006).

The main causes of unintentional childhood deaths from injuries are vehicle accidents, drowning and accidental suffocation (mainly from unsafe sleeping environments). The main types of injuries requiring hospital admission are from falls (usually from furniture and play equipment); scalds (usually from hot water, drinks and food); and accidental poisonings (usually from medications, cleaning products and alcohol). Children 0–4 years generally, but particularly children 1–2 years of age, are vulnerable to injuries as they begin to explore their environment, but are unable to recognise danger, or take action to keep themselves safe. Nearly 60% of injuries in children 0–4 years happen in the home and backyard. Young children are vulnerable in homes because homes are designed for adults. Heights, space, and structures are built for adult use and comfort, but these often present hazards to children.

### How to use this checklist:

- Take the checklist and a pen with you, and walk from room to room in your home, as well as the outdoor areas. As you go, answer the questions.
- REMEMBER to look at your home from the eye level of your young child. You will be amazed at how different it looks from their level and perspective!
- The following checklist is a general guide only. Every home is different, so some items may not apply.

### There are positive steps that you, as a grandparent, can take to make sure your home is safer for your young grandchildren.

By choosing to undertake this simple home safety audit, you are on your way to identifying and addressing many common safety hazards around your home and outdoor areas. Most childhood injuries can be prevented; they are not accidents, chance events, or an inevitable part of growing up. By making changes to your home, buying safer products and providing effective adult supervision, you can reduce the risk of your grandchildren being injured. If you cannot afford to make the necessary changes to your home, you should talk to your grandchild's parents. For more information on how to make your home safer, please contact **Kidsafe SA** on **(08) 8161 6318** or **www.kidsafesa.com.au**. In addition, many grandparents have said that the best thing they ever did to help them be more confident in caring for their young grandchild is a basic first aid course. You can contact St John or Red Cross for information about these types of courses.

#### Consider making changes to items that received a NO response for a safer home and farm!

General safety	Yes	No
Is there an electrical safety switch (circuit breaker) to prevent electrocution?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have working smoke alarms fitted in the house?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are safety plugs fitted in unused power points?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are appliances, and plugs in good condition? (No frayed cords or damaged plugs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have long cords been bound with twist ties, or extra cord hidden?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there barrier gates on steps, stairs, and changes in floor levels to prevent falls?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all railings/balustrade free of footholds that your grandchild can climb?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a home fire escape plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all mouse and rat traps/baits inaccessible to your grandchild?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a dog? If so, do you always supervise your dog with your child or if you can't supervise them together, separate them? Never leave a child alone with a dog, no matter how friendly it is.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Home safety checklist for grandparents of children 0–4 years of age

Kitchen	Yes	No
Do your appliances have short cords that do not dangle over the bench?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use the back hot plates and turn pot handles around to prevent pots being pulled from the hot plate, or do you have a stove guard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a child-resistant lock on your oven door?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are matches, lighters, knives, scissors, and other dangerous objects stored in a place where your young child cannot reach them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are plastic bags tied in the middle and kept out of reach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the kettle/jug, including the cord, out of your grandchild's reach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have locks on cupboard doors and drawers where dangerous household goods (e.g. cleaning products) are kept or do you store them out of reach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the high chair stable and does it have a 5 point harness to restrain your young child safely?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a fire blanket and a fire extinguisher located near an exit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all medications stored safely i.e. do you have a locked medicine cupboard, a lock on the fridge door or a lockable storage box in the fridge?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the microwave positioned out of reach of your grandchild?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use placemats, rather than tablecloths?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are cups of hot tea/coffee kept out of reach of your grandchild?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you keep the dishwasher closed at all times?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bathroom	Yes	No
Are medicines and razors kept in a locked cupboard, or out of reach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the shampoos, soaps, and cosmetics kept out of reach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are hair dryers, straighteners/curlers and electric razors unplugged when not in use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your grandchild constantly supervised by an adult when in the bathroom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a child-resistant lock on the toilet or bathroom door?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you removed all chemicals from the toilet and bathroom floor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the hot water delivery temperature for your bathroom at a maximum of 50°C, or do you have tap protectors fitted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the bath have a non-slip surface or non-slip mats?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the bath water temperature always 'tested' before putting your grandchild in (start with cold, then hot, then finish with cold)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the bath always kept empty when not in use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laundry	Yes	No
Are cleaners, bleaches, and detergents stored out of reach, or in a lockable cupboard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all buckets, the sink and washing machine kept empty when not in use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the top loading washing machine switch off when the machine is opened?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are front loading washing machines and dryer doors securely closed to prevent your grandchild opening them and climbing in?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Grandchild's/spare bedroom

	Yes	No
Is your grandchild's bed/cot safe? (children under 9 years should not sleep in bunk beds, and cots need to meet the Australian Standard(AS/NZS 2172). Check that cot rails are between 50mm and 95mm apart to avoid entrapment of their head)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the cot mattress fit snugly to avoid your grandchild becoming wedged?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the cot free of all soft items – toys, bumpers, and pillows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the cot away from the window and power points?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are electrical appliances and their cords out of reach of your grandchild?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are curtain and blind cords secured up high and out of reach of your grandchild?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is everything you need kept close to the baby change table, as it is important never to leave a baby unattended on a change table?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the toys suitable for your grandchild's age? (e.g. no loose small parts that could pose a choking hazard)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are toys kept where your grandchild can reach them without climbing on furniture?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is all top heavy furniture, such as bookcases and tall-boy drawers, secured to the wall to prevent them from tipping over if your grandchild climbs on them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Living areas

	Yes	No
Are sharp edges on tables and furniture covered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are blind and curtain cords secured up high and out of reach of your grandchild?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are glass doors protected by safety film, colourful stickers, or made of safety glass?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is alcohol stored in a lockable cupboard, or stored up high and out of reach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are cigarettes, ashtrays, matches, and lighters out of reach?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are hot drinks placed well out of reach of your grandchild?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there child resistant fire screens attached to the wall around fire places, fuel stoves, and heaters?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are heaters kept at least 1 metre away from curtains, furniture, or other flammable material?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are large televisions secured to prevent toppling over onto your grandchild?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all breakable items removed, or moved so they are out of reach of your grandchild?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Backyard

	Yes	No
Is your grandchild supervised at all times while playing outside?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your grandchild's play area separated from the driveway, and is access to the driveway and the street/road restricted?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the ignition keys removed from all vehicles, and the vehicles locked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have the correct child restraints fitted in your car?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use the child-proof locks on the car doors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the swimming pool or spa fully enclosed by a safety fence with a functioning self latching gate, and with nothing near the fence that could be used to climb on?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the backyard free of drowning hazards? e.g. uncovered ponds, pet's water containers, buckets, tanks, troughs, dams etc. (*note that young children can drown in as little as 5cm of water)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the play equipment stable, secured, and in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a soft surface under play equipment in the backyard to cushion falls? e.g. bark chips or well watered lawn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your grandchild wear a helmet and protective gear when riding a bike or scooter, or when using in-line skates, skateboards or rollerblades?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can the shed/garage/workshop be locked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all garden tools, mowers, chainsaws and other dangerous tools locked away?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you make sure that your grandchild is well away from the lawn mower when mowing the lawns to prevent injury from flying stones and other objects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are pesticides, paints, chemicals and other poisons stored in tightly covered and labelled original containers, out of reach of your grandchild?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are ladders stored safely so that your young child cannot climb them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are rain water tanks sealed securely and any ladders removed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are garden statues and birdbaths cemented in to prevent a crushing hazard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Farm yard and rural safety

Farms are a unique environment, and can be very exciting for young children. Farms are not only a place to live and a place to play, but they are also a workplace. Many children are seriously injured each year on farms. Your grandchild relies on you for protection.

Farm yard and rural safety	Yes	No
Do you know where your grandchild is at all times?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a safe playing space outside which is visible from the house?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a fence around the house with a self-latching gate to keep your young child close to the house, and away from machinery and livestock?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you check outside for snakes before letting your grandchild into the yard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you always stay with your grandchild when outside in a playpen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you removed old machinery, junk, tractor tyres, and woodpiles from where your grandchild plays?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are firearms stored unloaded and locked away in the gun safe?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are guns kept out of reach of your grandchild, and unloaded, when being transported in a vehicle?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are fuels tanks locked, and other highly flammable substances stored safely?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are agricultural chemicals stored in their original containers, correctly labelled and safely stored?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are silo doors locked, with ladders removed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you let workers know when your grandchild is on the farm?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you check your grandchild is a safe distance away before starting a tractor or any other farm machinery or equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you removed all keys from farm vehicles and machinery when not in use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you the correct child restraints in your farm utility/car?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you able to lock sheds and workshops?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is a fitted helmet worn each time your grandchild goes horse riding, or rides a bicycle?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are water tanks sealed and ladders removed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you keep your grandchild away from All Terrain Vehicles (ATV) and farm bikes? (Children under 8 years of age and these types of vehicles do not mix. Many burns and crush injuries result when these types of vehicles overturn)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are animal pens and stockyards inaccessible to your grandchild?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are working dogs kept securely away from your grandchild?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you always supervise your grandchild around any animal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you ensure your grandchild is supervised at a safe distance from where hay is being cut, baled and stacked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you always supervise your grandchild around water hazards? (This includes pool, ponds, dams, wells, tanks, animal troughs, irrigation channels, effluent ponds etc. Children should never be left alone unsupervised near water)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you established a clear set of rules for your young child to follow and are you consistent in applying those rules?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For more information, contact:

Kidsafe SA Inc.  
 Women's and Children's Hospital  
 72 King William Rd,  
 North Adelaide SA 5006  
 Phone: (08) 8161 6318  
 Email: sa@kidsafe.org.au  
 Website: www.kidsafesa.com.au

Kidsafe © 2010