

# KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

## A Guide for Caregivers



The Children's Aid Society  
OF HAMILTON

Poscor Centre for Children & Families  
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## NOTES

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## Mission Statement

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton, in partnership with families and our community, is committed to the safety, protection and well-being of children and the strengthening of families, while valuing diversity and promoting equity.

[illegible]

The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton understands that in today's world there are many factors to think about when trying to keep children safe.

This booklet was created to support you in creating a safe environment for children in and around your home. We hope you will find the booklet informative and helpful.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding any of the information enclosed, please discuss your concerns with your Child Protection Worker or contact the appropriate resource listed within the booklet.







## **RESOURCES & CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **The Children's Aid Society of Hamilton**

905-522-1121 • [www.hamiltoncas.com](http://www.hamiltoncas.com)

### **Public Health**

905-546-3550 • [www.publichealth.gc.ca](http://www.publichealth.gc.ca)

### **Consumer Product Recalls**

[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps-recalls)

### **Ontario Poison Centre**

1-800-268-9017

### **Office of the Fire Marshal**

1-416-325-3100 • [www.ofm.gov.on.ca](http://www.ofm.gov.on.ca)

### **St. John Ambulance**

905-387-1880 • [www.sja.ca](http://www.sja.ca)

### **Ministry of Transportation**

1-800-268-4686 • [www.mto.gov.on.ca](http://www.mto.gov.on.ca)

### **Transport Canada**

1-800-333-0371 • [www.tc.gc.ca](http://www.tc.gc.ca)

### **Canadian Red Cross**

905-522-8485 • [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca)

### **SIDS**

1-800-END-SIDS • [www.sidscanada.org](http://www.sidscanada.org)

Family Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Pediatrician: \_\_\_\_\_

Child Protection Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

**In case of EMERGENCY call 911**


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Child car seats must meet **Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards**. Buckles and straps must be fastened according to the manufacturer's instructions.



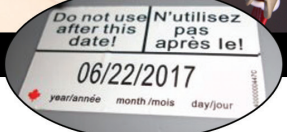
Children are **SAFEST IN THE BACK**



**NO SMOKING - IT'S THE LAW!**  
It is illegal to smoke in a motor vehicle while someone else under the age of 16 is present.




**CAR SEATS EXPIRE**  
Be sure to check for an expiration date



**7,000**  
Number of children in Canada (infants to 12 year olds) hurt or killed on the roads annually.  
~ Transport Canada

**SEATBELT**

**BOOSTER SEAT**  **CHILD CAR SEAT**

All children must be **PROPERLY SECURED**  
Seat choice is dependent on height, weight and age

## WATER SAFETY

### LIFE JACKETS

Life jackets can help save lives when used appropriately.

- Ensure all life jackets have a label indicating it has been approved by Transport Canada or for older models by the Canadian Coast Guard, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.
- Ensure you are using the correct life jacket for the individual. For children, life jackets are measured by weight, for adults, by chest size. The life jacket should fit snugly.
- Ensure all buckles and zippers are in good working order and are secure when in use.
- For children under age five, choose a life vest with a strap between the legs to prevent it from riding up, and with a neck support to keep their face out of the water.
- Inflatable toys, water wings and puddle jumpers are not designed to protect against drowning.



### POOLS, PONDS, HOT TUBS AND SPAS

According to the Consumer Product and Safety Commission, fences surrounding pools, ponds, hot tubs and spas should:

- surround the pool on all four sides;
- be at least 4 ft high (122 cm);
- be self closing and self latching;
- be locked when the pool is not in use.

Caregivers should empty all portable toddler pools and water tables after each use. Keep young, non-swimmers within arms' reach at all times. Ensure you have first aid equipment and a phone in the pool area. Consider becoming certified in First Aid and CPR and keeping that certification current.

## WATER SAFETY

### DROWNING

**Drowning happens quickly and silently - often in only seconds.** It is one of the leading causes of unintentional death for Canadian children ages one to four. A small child can drown in only a few centimeters of water (enough to cover the nose and mouth). Young children most often drown in backyard pools, toddler pools, the bathtub or at the beach.

### KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

- Children under five should be in arms' reach of an adult at all times when near water. Do not rely on older siblings or other children to supervise young children.
- Always actively watch children around water – even if they can swim.
- Never leave a child alone in the bathtub or around any water (river, toddler pool, sink or toilet, etc.).
- Consider requiring that all non-swimmers wear life jackets at all times in, on or around water.

### BATH SAFETY

Never leave a child unattended in a bathtub for any reason. Health Canada does not recommend the use of bath seats/bath rings as children have been injured by slipping through the holes or tipping over in the chair.

In order to prevent burns, set your hot water heater to **49 degrees celsius, or lower.** Always test the water temperature before placing a child in the bathtub.



## CAR SEAT SAFETY

Car crashes are the number one cause of death for Canadian children (MTO, 2011). Using a properly installed and appropriate car seat for your child, can significantly reduce the chance of injury during a collision.

### INFANTS: Birth to 9 kg (20 lbs)

- Rear facing
- 45 degree angle
- No more than 2.5 cm (1 in) of movement at anchor point
- The shoulder harness should come out below shoulder level
- Shoulder harness/strap should be flat against chest, not twisted
- Chest clip should be secured at armpit level
- Allow only one finger of space between baby and harness at collar bone
- A child should remain rear facing until they are at least 20 lbs **AND** over one year old.

### TODDLER: 9-18 kg (20-40 lbs)

- Forward facing
- Must use a tether strap to secure the seat from moving forward in a crash
- No more than 2.5 cm (1 in) of movement at anchor point
- Shoulder harness should come out at or above the child's shoulders
- Chest clip should be secured at armpit level
- Only allow one finger space between strap and child's chest.



**You can get your car seat or booster seat installed or inspected by certified car seat technicians at car seat and booster seat clinics hosted by the City of Hamilton's Public Health Services.**

**Call Health Connections at 905-546-3550 or visit [www.hamilton.ca/public-health](http://www.hamilton.ca/public-health) for details.**





## How Safe Is YOUR Home?

**Complete this safety checklist to find out!**

**Yes No N/A**

- |                          |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Medication is stored out of reach of children   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Alcohol is stored out of reach of children  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All cleaning products and poisonous products are stored out of reach of children  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Knives, scissors and other sharp objects are stored out of reach of children  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sources of water (pool, hot tub, ravine) are fenced and secured with a locked gate  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tools are secured and any power tools are stored in a locked cabinet  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Guns and firearms are stored unloaded in a locked container with ammunition stored separately                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All windows and screens above the first floor (windows, balcony doors, etc.) are adequately secured using safety latches or locks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Large pieces of furniture (dressers, TV, shelves, mirrors) are secured to the wall to prevent toppling                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Baby gates are in use at the top of all stairs  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Blind cords are tied up and out of reach of children  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | No crib/bed/dresser is placed in front of a window  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | No bunk bed is placed under a ceiling fan   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There are no locks on a child's bedroom door  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All exterior doors have functioning locks   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All unused electrical outlets are covered   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The thermostat on the water heater is set to 49 degrees celsius or less to prevent burns  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | We have a home fire escape plan   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | We have working smoke alarms installed on every storey of our home  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | We have a working smoke alarm installed outside all sleeping areas  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | We have a working carbon monoxide detector installed outside all sleeping areas   |

## FIRE SAFETY

### SMOKE ALARMS

The Ontario Fire Code requires that working smoke alarms be installed on every storey of the home and outside all sleeping areas. It's the law! For extra protection, the Office of the Fire Marshal recommends installing a smoke alarm in every bedroom.

**Tips to ensure your smoke alarm is in good working order:**

- Test your smoke alarms once each month;
- Change smoke alarm batteries annually *AND* whenever the low-battery warning sounds;
- Replace smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old.

### CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

If your home has a fuel-burning appliance, a fireplace or an attached garage, a carbon monoxide alarm should be installed adjacent to each sleeping area. Fuel burning appliances include furnaces, hot water heaters, gas or wood fireplaces, portable fuel-burning heaters and generators, barbecues, stoves and vehicles.

### YOUR LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT

- Alarmed and Ready (smoke alarm installation): 905-546-3382
- Arson Prevention Program for Children: 905-546-2424, ext. 7794
- Fire Station Tours: 905-546-3333, option # 4
- Volunteer Inspection Program: 905-546-3382

### **DURING A FIRE**



If clothing catches on fire:

#### **STOP, DROP AND ROLL**

- In dense smoke, crawl on floor to nearest exit
  - Test every door for signs of fire
  - Leave personal belongings behind

**Once out, stay out!**

## FIRE PREVENTION TIPS

- Keep bedroom doors closed while sleeping
- Store all flammable material away from heat sources
- Keep matches and lighters out of sight and reach of children
- Keep in mind that child-resistant lighters are not child-proof
- Teach young children not to touch matches or lighters and to tell an adult if they find them
- Fireplaces and wood stoves should have screens to prevent sparks from exiting
- Chimneys should be cleaned and inspected every year by a professional
- If anyone in the home smokes, they should smoke outside
- Adult smokers should have only one lighter or book of matches and should keep it with them at all times
- Always stay in the kitchen when you are cooking
- Always blow out candles before leaving the room
- Keep lit candles away from items that can catch fire, such as toys, clothing, curtains, Christmas trees and decorations
- Place candles in a sturdy, burn resistant container that won't tip over and is big enough to collect dripping wax
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets
- Extension cords should only be used as a temporary connection
- Check electrical appliances regularly for damaged cords and replace loose, frayed or damaged cords immediately
- Don't let trash accumulate in the attic, basement or garage
- Don't run extension cords behind rugs or curtains
- Keep all exits in the home clear and easy to use
- If parents suspect their child is involved in inappropriate fire play they should call their local fire department for information and assistance
- Consider purchasing a fire extinguisher labeled ABC for the kitchen, basement and garage.



## SAFETY AROUND THE HOME

### MEDICINE

Medication poses a serious risk to children and should be stored out of a child's reach and, whenever possible, in a locked cabinet. When storing medication in a purse or diaper bag, always ensure the article is stored out of reach of children.



Keep in mind that child-resistant closures are not child-proof and still require safe storage out of the reach of children.

### OTHER ITEMS TO ADDRESS

- Alcohol should be stored out of reach of children or locked.
- Set the thermostat on your **water heater to 49 degrees Celsius or less** to prevent burns.
- All windows and screens above the first floor (windows, balcony doors, etc.) should be adequately secured using safety latches or locks.
- There should be no locks on a child's bedroom door (inside or out).
- Blind cords should be tied up and out of reach of children.
- Make sure plastic bags are kept out of the reach of children to prevent suffocation.
- All unused electrical outlets should be covered.
- Put a barrier around fireplaces to prevent children from being burned by hot surfaces, during and after use.
- Keep cords for electrical appliances, such as kettles and toasters, out of the reach of children. Children can be injured if they pull an appliance off the counter.
- All exterior doors should have functioning locks.
- Pools and other sources of water are to be fenced and locked.
- Tools should be stored out of reach of children and any power tools should be stored in a locked cabinet.
- Guns and firearms must be stored unloaded in a locked container with ammunition stored separately.

## **SAFETY AROUND THE HOME**



There are many potential hazards for children in the average home. The following list provides suggestions on ways to improve the safety of your home:

### **BABY GATES**

Wall mounted baby gates must be used at the top of all stairs. Pressure mounted gates are recommended at the bottom of stairs and in doorways.

### **FURNITURE**

Large pieces of furniture (dressers, TV, shelves, mirrors) should be secured to the wall to prevent toppling over. No crib/bed/dresser should be placed in front of a window. No bunk bed should be placed under a ceiling fan.

### **HOUSEHOLD CHEMICAL PRODUCTS**

All cleaning products and poisonous products should be stored out of reach of children and in a locked cabinet whenever possible. Keep household chemical products in original containers; never cover up or remove labels.

### **IN THE KITCHEN**

When cooking, turn pot handles to the centre of the stove to prevent children from pulling the boiling water onto themselves. Knives, scissors and other sharp objects should be stored out of reach of children.



## **FIRE ESCAPE PLAN**



**Develop a  
Home Fire Escape  
Plan Today...**

**It Could Save Your  
Life Tonight!**

Statistics show that most fire fatalities occur in the home between 2:00 - 4:00 am, while occupants are asleep. That is why it is critical to develop an escape plan so you can react quickly during a fire. Quick response is extremely important because:

- The smoke is black and very thick making it impossible to see;
- There is no time for indecision; a home can be engulfed in five minutes;
- Most people are killed by smoke inhalation, not the flame of the fire;
- The heat of the fire is extremely intense and can kill you instantly.

### **RESOURCES:**

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA): [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)  
Office of the Fire Marshall (OFM): [www.ofm.gov.on.ca](http://www.ofm.gov.on.ca)  
Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council:  
[www.firesafetycouncil.com/english/pubsafe.htm](http://www.firesafetycouncil.com/english/pubsafe.htm)

## FIRE ESCAPE PLAN



To create your family's Fire Escape Plan, use the grid enclosed (see page 13 & 14).  
**Draw a floor plan for each level of your home keeping the points below in mind.**

**Include all possible emergency exits.** Draw in all the doors, windows and stairways. This will illustrate all possible escape routes at a glance. Include any features that would help in your escape such as the roof of a garage or porch.

**Show two ways out of every room, if possible.** The door will be the main exit, however if the door is blocked by smoke or fire, identify an alternate escape route such as a window. Make sure that all windows can open easily and that everyone knows how to escape through them to safety. Consider placing an escape ladder in bedrooms above the first floor.

**Does anyone need help to escape?** Decide in advance who will assist the very young, older adults or persons with disabilities. A few minutes of planning will save valuable seconds in a real emergency.

**Choose a meeting place outside.** This should be a safe distance from your home and a place everyone will remember. A tree, street light or neighbour's home are all good choices. In case of a fire, everyone will go to this meeting place to be accounted for.

**Call the fire department from outside your home.** Don't waste valuable time calling from inside. Once outside use a cell phone or neighbour's phone.

**Once out, STAY OUT.** Never re-enter a burning building for any reason.

**Practice your escape.** Walk through your escape route as a family, making sure all options are practical and easy to use. Hold a fire drill twice a year and time how long it takes to escape. Make sure everyone memorizes escape routes. Knowing what to do can save precious time in a real emergency.

## SAFE SLEEP

### BEDSIDE SLEEP PRODUCTS

Health Canada does not recommend using bedside sleep products that have one side lowered, as the space between the adult bed and infant sleep product is too wide and a baby may become trapped.

### BED SHARING

Babies should never be placed to sleep on standard beds, water beds, air mattresses, couches, futons or chairs. A baby can suffocate when sleeping on these unsafe surfaces. Babies should never sleep on the same surface as an adult or another child. Babies have been hurt or died because of:

- falling off an adult bed;
- being trapped between a mattress and headboard or mattress and wall;
- being smothered by soft bedding (comforters/duvets) or pillows;
- being smothered while bed sharing with an adult, particularly one who is extremely fatigued or impaired by alcohol or drugs.

### GENERAL SLEEP SAFETY TIPS

- Cords on window blinds, shades and curtains are a strangulation hazard. Tie cords out of reach at all times.
- Place your baby's sleeping area away from hazards such as windows, patio doors, lamps, plugs, cords and small objects that could injure your baby.
- Before putting your baby to bed, always scan the surroundings for potential hazards. If hazards are identified, remove them.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for the safe use of any baby or child product, particularly those used for sleep.
- Check regularly to make sure all hardware is secure and that there are no damaged or sharp parts that may be dangerous.



## **SAFE SLEEP**

### **PLAYPENS**

Playpens are NOT intended to be used for unsupervised sleep as they do not meet the same safety requirements and are not as durable as cribs.

### **SLEEP POSITIONERS**

Health Canada does not recommend the use of sleep positioners as babies can suffocate on them. Once a baby can roll over they do not have to be kept on their back all night.

### **BUMPER PADS**

Health Canada does not recommend the use of bumper pads as babies can suffocate if their faces become pressed against the fabric. Additional concerns pertain to the long strings/ties attached to bumper pads as a baby may become tangled or strangle on the cords.

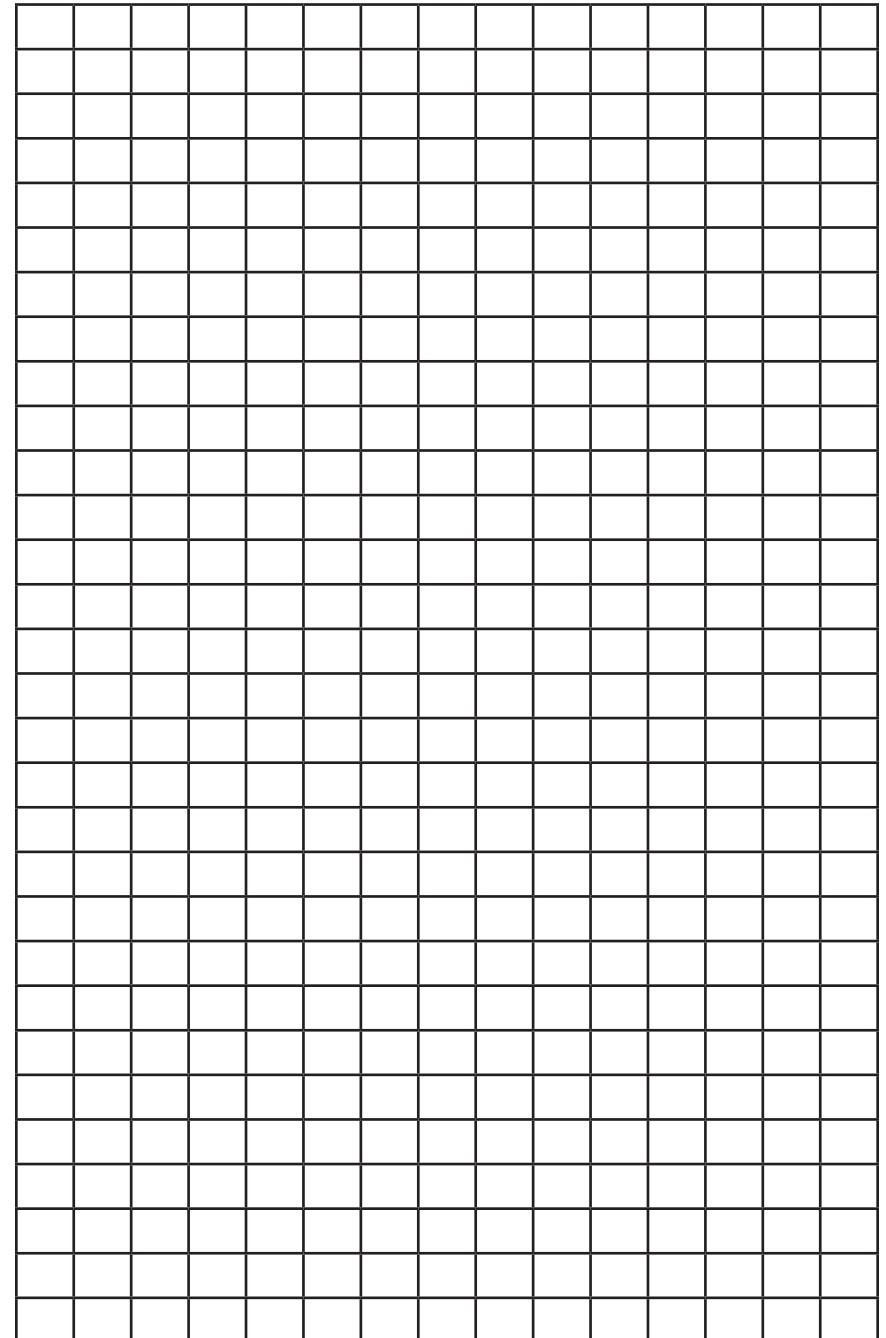
### **OTHER PRODUCTS** (*car seats, swings, strollers, etc*)

It is not safe for a baby to sleep for long periods in strollers, car seats, swings, bouncers, slings, etc. that keep the baby in a seated semi-reclined position. In this position the baby's airway may become constricted causing breathing difficulty and even death. Once you reach your destination or the baby has been lulled to sleep move the baby to a crib, cradle or bassinet.

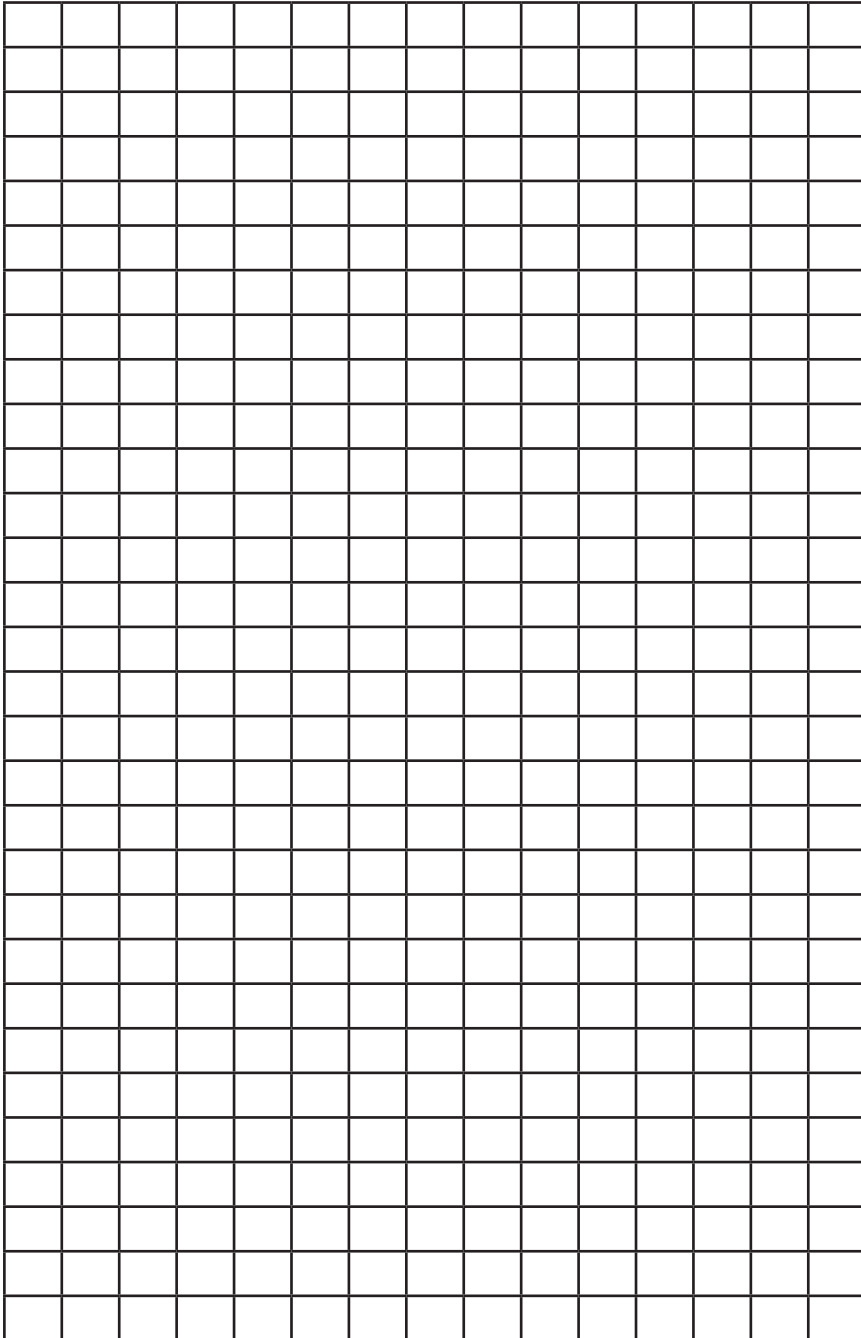
### **PORTABLE BED RAILS**

Health Canada does not recommend placing a child younger than two years on a bed with a portable bed rail as they may become trapped between the rail and mattress. To keep younger children safe if they fall out of bed, keep the floor around the bed clear and use a crib mattress on the floor beside the bed to cushion their fall. Health Canada recommends only buying portable bed rails that meet the latest ASTM International Standard.

## **OUR HOME ESCAPE PLAN**



## OUR HOME ESCAPE PLAN



## SAFE SLEEP

### CRADLES

Cradles that meet Canadian safety regulations are appropriate places for your baby to sleep until he/she reaches the maximum weight recommended by the manufacturer OR until your baby can push up on his/her hands and knees, whichever comes first.

- Do not use cradles with decorative cut outs or corner posts that are more than 3 mm in height as these may cause injury to the baby. Spacing between the bars should be no more than 6 cm (2.4 in).
- The mattress must not be thicker than 3.8 cm (1.5 in).
- There must not be a gap more than 3 cm (1.2 in) between the mattress and cradle sides.

### BUNK BEDS

Health Canada recommends that children under six years of age should never use the upper bunk of bunk beds. Other guidelines related to bunk bed use include:

- Only allow one person at a time on the top bunk.
- Teach your children to use the ladder and ensure the ladder is always securely attached to the bed.
- Children should not be allowed to play on the top bunk.
- Make sure the top bunk has guard rails on all four sides, even if pushed up against the wall.



## SAFE SLEEP

### CRIBS

A crib that meets current Canadian Safety regulations is the **SAFEST** place for your baby to sleep.

- A crib should not be used if the child is taller than 90 cm (35.4 in) or is able to climb out of it, whichever comes first.
- Crib slats must be no more than 6 cm (2.4 in) apart on all sides.
- The mattress must not be thicker than 15 cm (6 in) and should be firm with no holes, tears or soft spots.
- Place the mattress support in its lowest position **AND** remove mobiles and toy bars, as soon as your baby can push up on his/her hand and knees.
- Bumper pads, stuffed toys or waterproof sheets should NOT be used.
- Retighten all screws every three months and regularly inspect the crib for hazards such as holes, exposed bolt ends, broken or missing parts.

### BASSINETS

Bassinets that meet current Canadian safety regulations are appropriate places for your baby to sleep until he/she reaches the maximum weight recommended OR can roll over, whichever comes first.

- The mattress must not be thicker than 3.8 cm (1.5 in).
- There must not be a gap of more than 3 cm (1.2 in) between the mattress and any part of the bassinet's sides.



### Follow the ABC's of safe sleep:

**A** is for **alone**

**B** is for **back** to sleep

**C** is for sleeping in a **crib**



Do not over dress your baby.



Ensure baby's crib is completely empty aside from a mattress and fitted sheet.

Make sure the mattress is firm and fits tightly against the side of the crib.

Do not use heavy blankets, pillows, stuffed toys, bumper pads or other soft items such as sleep wedges or positioners

## **SAFE SLEEP**

It is recommended that caregivers follow the ***ABC's of Safe Sleep***:

**A** is for **Alone**

**B** is for **Back** to sleep

**C** is for sleeping in a **Crib**



The safest place for your baby to sleep is on his/her back, in a crib, cradle or bassinet.

Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada recommend room sharing for the first six months of your baby's life. This involves placing your baby to sleep in a crib, cradle or bassinet that is within arm's reach of where you sleep.

## **SAFE SLEEP**

### ***Reducing the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)***

While the rate of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) has declined in Canada, it remains the leading cause of death of healthy infants. Current evidence demonstrates that unsafe infant sleep environments can play a role in sudden infant deaths.

To help reduce the risk of SIDS, follow the guidelines below:

- Put your baby on his/her back to sleep for nap time and bed time.
- Ensure the baby's crib is empty aside from a mattress and fitted sheet.
- Make sure the mattress is firm and fits tightly against the sides of the crib.
- Avoid the use of heavy blankets, pillows, stuffed toys, bumper pads and other soft items such as sleep wedges or positioners.
- Instead of a blanket, consider a one-piece sleeper to keep your baby warm. Blankets can cause suffocation if the baby's head gets covered during sleep.
- Make sure your baby does not get too warm or overheated. Keep the room at a comfortable temperature for you and baby will be fine.
- Keep your home smoke free. Cigarette smoke increases the risk of SIDS (both prenatal and after birth).