



# Child Safety Locks and Gates



Children are naturally curious. As soon as they can crawl, they want to explore all the things they see around them. That's why it is important to install safety locks and gates throughout your home to protect little ones from getting into danger.

## Stairs

Children get hurt on stairs every day. Every 6 minutes a child under the age of 5 is taken to the hospital emergency department because of a stair-related injury. That's why it is important to install safety gates to block stairways at the both the bottom and top.

- Look for safety gates that are hardware-mounted. Look for the JPMA (Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association) Certification Seal on a product, which tells you the gate has been sample tested annually to the highest product specific standards.
- Avoid accordion-style gates, which can trap your child's head, and pressure mounted gates, which can be pushed loose.
- Check the banisters and railings of the stairs to make sure your child can't fit through the rails. Install a guard if necessary.
- Install a gate at the doorway of the child's room to prevent him from ever reaching the stairs.
- Supervise children around stairs, even with gates installed.

## Windows

Every year, over 5,000 children are injured because of falls from windows. Most of these injuries can be prevented by taking a few simple precautions.

- Install window guards in the bottom half of a double hung window or over the entire opening of a crank style window on all windows that are 12 feet or more above the ground (second story and above). Look for window guards that are childproof but are removable or releasable from the inside without the separate use of tools, keys, or excessive force so they can be removed by an adult or rescue personnel in case of a fire.
- Install window stops so windows can't be opened more than 4 inches. Children can fall from windows opened as little as 5 inches. Note: If using window stops, one window in each room needs to be free of these devices in order to allow for emergency escape.
- Install window locks, which are inexpensive and can be used to secure the window in the closed position.
- When opening windows for ventilation, only open windows that your child can't reach, or open windows from the top, not the bottom.
- Don't rely on screens to protect your child. They are not strong enough to prevent falls.

- Keep chairs, beds, cribs, and other furniture and anything a child can climb on away from windows.
- Plant bushes or plant beds under windows to create soft landing surfaces to help prevent serious injuries in case of a fall.
- Always supervise children and keep them away from windows.

### **Decks, Porches, and Balconies**

To keep children from falling, use safety netting, Plexiglass, or other materials to block any openings wider than 4 inches on railings, decks, and landings.

### **Other Forbidden Spaces**

Certain areas of the home pose specific dangers to children.

- Secure drawers and cabinets where sharp objects, cleaners, medications, and other potentially toxic substances are stored with child safety locks or latches.
- Use an appliance latch to keep children from climbing into the refrigerator.
- Place knob covers on stove knobs to keep children from turning on the stove.
- Install fencing around swimming pools and hot tubs at least 4 feet high with a self-closing, self-latching gate.
- Install a toilet-seat lock to prevent children from drowning.
- Store trash cans in a cabinet with a safety latch or use a can with a child-resistant cover.
- Lock the doors to the basement, garage, and any other dangerous areas.

These items are all easy to find at most home improvement and baby and child supply stores.

**Remember: Supervision is the best way to protect children.**