Indoor Safety Hazards

Remember, no list can capture every hazard or potential hazard. Consider children’s ever-changing behavior, their development, emerging skills, and possible interactions with the environment to assist you in being aware of hazardous situations. Ensure cribs and floor space are free of toys, stuffed animals, thick blankets and pillows as these can also become major hazards.

Physical Structure
- Unprotected electrical outlets
- Electrical cords accessible to children
- Strings, cords accessible to children
- Substances labeled “keep out of reach of children” not locked away (e.g., medicines, cleaning solutions)
- Rugs, mats that have foot-catching edges or that slide on the floor
- Unprotected radiator or heater
- Open stairwell access
- Doors left open so children have access to closets, exits
- Children play near doors that open inward
- Peeling paint
- Protruding nails or screws
- Splintering woodwork

Furniture
- Unsteady; shaky to the point of collapsing or causing a child to lose balance
- Sharp corners or points
- Splintering
- Peeling paint
- Protruding nails or screws
- Lightweight; may tip when child pulls up on it
- Bean bag chairs used with infants
- Too large for size of child using furniture
- Inappropriate size and design of equipment for the intended users

Furniture Placement
- Tall furniture interferes with supervision
- Furniture pieces too close to each other or in fall zone of climbing equipment
- Lack of a protective surface around climbing equipment
- Rocking chairs accessible to mobile infants or toddlers
- Furniture placed in a manner that encourages children to run, causing collisions and falls
- Furniture placed near hazards that children could reach if they climb
Routine care
- Bleach, cleaning solution or disinfecting solution used where children can inhale it (e.g., near diapering surface or meal and snack table)
- Broken diapering-table or feeding-chair safety straps; straps not used; crib slats more than 2 3/8 inches apart
- Lack of a 6-inch raised edge on diapering table
- Chance of unsupervised access to containers of water, including toilets
- Slippery surfaces; slick tile floor; spilled water on floor
- Lightweight step stool that moves easily when stepped on
- Step stool without handrails
- Water too hot—more than 120-degrees Fahrenheit
- Infants put to sleep on stomach or side
- Crib mattress that does not fit snugly, allows two or more fingers to be inserted between crib side
- Loose blankets or sheets, thick blankets, plush animals, or clothing with hoods or strings in crib
- Toys hung across crib or crib mobile in reach of a child who can sit or stand
- Microwave ovens used to heat bottles or baby food
- Hot water containers (e.g., crock pots) can be pulled down by child; access to cord

Teacher Materials
- Staples or push pins used on displays in children’s reach
- Materials (e.g., scissors, pencils, pens, pen caps, stapler, etc.) in reach of children
- Unlocked storage cupboards
- Purses, backpacks, personal belongings in reach of children
- Music players that can be pulled down by a child; access to cord
- Plastic bags in reach of children

Choking Hazards (excluding food)
- Small objects that fit into choke-test tube
- Small objects that are less than 1 ¼ inch diameter and 2 ½ inches long
Children’s Materials

- Larger or heavier toys stored on top of shelves that can be pulled down
- For children under 18 months unsafe art or sensory materials (e.g., red kidney beans, Styrofoam, balloons, corn starch and flour, glitter, shaving cream, sand or water for children
- Any materials labeled “keep out of reach of children”; any materials used with children younger than the age requirement
- Children’s backpacks, diaper bags containing hazardous materials (e.g., diaper cream, medicine) in reach of children


Health and Safety in Family Child Care Home-Participant Guide. Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 2010