

A Grandparent's Guide

TO CHILD SAFETY BASICS





Welcome

As a grandparent, you bring love, wisdom, and joy to your grandchildren's lives. You already have years of experience caring for children, but many safety guidelines have changed since you raised your own kids. These updated tips are here to support you — whether you're watching your grandchildren for an afternoon, overnight, or more.

A little preparation goes a long way!

“ Becoming a grandparent is one of life's greatest joys—and a great responsibility. This guide helps provide grandparents with the knowledge and confidence to keep young children safe. I'm grateful to see resources like this that empower families across generations. ”

— Joseph L. Wright, MD, MPH

Senior Vice President and Chief Health Equity Officer, American Academy of Pediatrics
Safe Kids Worldwide Board Member



Car Seats & Travel

- If you're planning on driving your grandchildren, **discuss car seat installation and how to adjust the harness or seatbelt with the parents** and practice before the trip.
- Car seats can feel tricky, but you don't have to figure it out alone. Safe Kids Worldwide supports **free car seat checks with trained Child Passenger Safety Technicians** who can help make sure everything is installed correctly. Visit events.safekids.org to find a seat check near you.
- The inside of parked cars can heat up to deadly levels in a matter of minutes – cracking the window doesn't help. **Never leave a child alone in a car, not even for a minute.** If driving with grandchildren isn't part of your regular routine, place a personal item (like your purse, phone, or briefcase) in the back seat as a reminder to **“look before you lock.”**
- Before driving, **walk around the car** to make sure grandchildren aren't in blind spots or behind the vehicle.

DID YOU KNOW?

Car seats can be challenging to use and install, especially if you haven't used one in a while.



*Want more guidance? Visit our **Ultimate Car Seat Guide** at ucsg.safekids.org for tips on choosing, installing, and using the right car seat.*

Water Safety

ALL WATER

- **Always supervise grandchildren** when they are in or near water, whether a pool, bucket, lake, pond, or river. **Keep young children and those who can't swim within arm's reach of an adult.**
- **Learn CPR** with both compressions and breaths. Infant and child CPR skills can help you effectively respond during an emergency.

POOLS & HOT TUBS

- Make sure there are layers of protection in place if you have a pool, hot tub, water feature, or other body of water accessible from your property. Use door locks or alarms to **ensure grandchildren cannot access water by themselves. Pools and hot tubs should be surrounded on all sides by a fence** at least 4-feet tall with a self-closing and self-latching gate. Empty kiddie pools right after use.

OPEN WATER

- When boating, **ensure grandchildren use a U.S. Coast Guard approved life jacket** appropriate for their age and weight.

BATH TIME

- **Always supervise grandchildren** in and near bathtubs. Make sure you have everything you need for bath time before placing a child in the tub. **Gather towels, clothes, soap, and toys before bath time** begins so that you don't have to leave your grandchildren alone. Remember, kids can drown in only two inches of water.

DID YOU KNOW?

Drowning can be both fast and silent, often occurring in as little as 20-60 seconds.



Safe Sleep for Babies

- If you remember different advice from years ago, you're not alone — experts have learned more since then. Today we know that babies are safest when sleeping:
 - **on their back**
 - **alone in their own sleep space**
 - **on a flat firm surface without any loose blankets, pillows, toys, or soft bedding**
- **Portable cribs, bassinets, or pack-n-plays are great options** if you have grandchildren spending the night.
- **Use a sleep sack** as a safe alternative to loose blankets or sheets.
- **Once babies can roll both ways**, let them choose their sleep position (but always start them on their back).

DID YOU KNOW?

Safe sleep recommendations have changed over the years.



Safe Storage

MEDICINE

- Before your grandchildren arrive, do a **scan of the house** for any accessible medicine, ointments, or vitamins. **Remember to store all medicine**, including medicine organizers and containers, **out of reach and sight**.
- **Avoid leaving medicine** on counters, nightstands, or in purses and bags — grandchildren are curious and are quick to grab what they see.
- If you need to give medicine to grandchildren, **remember to use the dosing device** that comes with the medicine, not a kitchen spoon. This ensures the right amount and helps prevent overdosing.

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

- Check to make sure **grandchildren cannot reach any household cleaners**, personal care items, or laundry packets.
- Button batteries commonly found in greeting cards, key fobs, and remote controls can cause life-threatening harm if swallowed. **Keep small electronics or devices that use button batteries out of children's reach.**

FIREARMS

- If you have guns at home, store them **unloaded, locked, and separate from ammunition — and always out of children's reach.**

DID YOU KNOW?

Most childhood poisonings happen when everyday medicine is left within a child's reach.



Safety at Play

OUTSIDE

- Make sure **grandchildren wear helmets** when biking, skating, or scootering.
- Identify **safe play areas away from parked or moving vehicles.**

INSIDE

- **Create a safe play area in your home for young grandchildren.** Remove small objects and keep them out of reach and sight. Move cords and strings out of reach, including those attached to window blinds. Ensure windows are locked and remove loose rugs.
- **Secure TVs and heavy furniture to the wall.**
- **Avoid storing remotes, toys, and other tempting objects in sight on high shelves** that grandchildren may climb to reach.

DID YOU KNOW?

Properly fitted helmets can reduce the risk of head injuries by at least 45%.



QUICK SAFETY CHECKLIST

- ☐ Install car seat correctly.
- ☐ Learn child CPR.
- ☐ Prepare safe sleep space.
- ☐ Store medicine, cleaners, and guns, locked and out of sight and reach.
- ☐ Clear play areas of small objects or choking hazards.
- ☐ Talk with parents about routines, allergies, and medicine schedule.
- ☐ Save emergency contacts & Poison Help Line in your phone.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Pediatrician: _____

Hospital/Urgent Care: _____

Poison Control: **1-800-222-1222**

Parent/Guardian: _____

“ Nothing is more important than the health and safety of our grandchildren. Loving them alone isn't enough – taking the time to learn safe practices is just as important to their well-being. ”

— Marilena Amoni

Former NHTSA Associate Administrator
Safe Kids Worldwide Board member



Visit www.safekids.org or scan the QR code to explore our full library of safety resources, including advice for keeping older children safe. Specifically, we recommend *A Parent's Guide to Safety*, *Baby Safety Basics*, and *The Ultimate Car Seat Guide* (online tool).

**SAFE
KIDS**
WORLDWIDE®

