

HOME SAFETY STRATEGIES

This guide has been created to support parents or carers to safely care for children with additional support needs, however, hints and tips listed could be helpful for anyone.

Commercially available products can help improve safety in the home for a child to live, explore and play in a safe and supported way are listed below. Please evaluate the benefits and risks of the advice and products prior to purchasing. Suggestions should also be used in collaboration with other behavioural and sensory strategies.

No home environment is risk free. Parents and carers are to remain vigilant to reduce potential risks at home.

If you are in rented accommodation, please gain permission from your landlord or housing officer prior to carrying out any physical building alternations.

Fire Safety Awareness

It's important to consider fire safety in the home. You can request a free fire safety visit from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service by:

- Calling **0800 0731 999**
- Texting **FIRE** to **80800** from your mobile phone
- Completing the **online form** - www.firescotland.gov.uk/contact-us/home-fire-safety-visits



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

Ensure smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and batteries are in working order and checked on a regular basis e.g. monthly.

Have an escape route planned in case of a fire.

Emergency Contact List

Keep an Emergency Contact List for family/friends/carers e.g. by the phone or on the kitchen wall, out of reach of children and for all to be aware of.

The next section of this documents is an A – Z list of home safety strategies and products



BEDROOM SAFETY

If possible, provide your child with his/her own bedroom to minimise disruption to other children, and to provide a safe and calm space. Try and keep bedroom clutter free of toys and furniture.

Falling out of bed

Placing a **mattress on the floor** can reduce the risk of injury if your child falls out of bed when sleeping.

A **bed guard** can prevent a child from falling out of bed in the night. The guard can also fold up neatly to be taken on holidays.



Jumping on the bed/breaking bed

Visit www.toughfurniture.com to view all their heavy-duty furniture range. For example -

Use a heavy duty, harder to break bed e.g. the **Tough Plus Bed** or a **Foam Bed Base** rather than a wooden framed bed.

Both types of beds can have either **Soft Touch** or a **Secure Foam** mattress on top.

The **Safe Bed Surrounds** from www.jumpbounce.co.uk are made of foam and PVC and can be customised. The surrounds are freestanding and attach with 4-inch Velcro flaps. It can also be modified to attach to walls.

Tough Plus Bed



Safe Bed Surrounds



CABINETS / CUPBOARDS

Sharps / chemicals / medication / breakables

Keep items such as knives, razor blades, scissors, medication and hazardous chemicals out of sight and reach. Install locks on cabinet doors and drawers.

Watch this video to see how a **magnetic lock** works:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCL3Qrf91O4>

The lock is totally concealed and will only open with the patented magnetic key. Drill/screw holes are only needed on the inside to fix the lock in place.

Drawer and **cupboard catches** can keep children away from precious, breakable and dangerous items.

Alternatively, relocate items to somewhere elsewhere in the home.

Fridge locks restrict access to the fridge. Sometimes using two locks at a time is necessary.

Magnetic Lock



Fridge Lock



CAR SAFETY

Removing seatbelt when car is moving

Check out www.incarsafetycentre.co.uk for car safety advice.

Various **seat belt guards** and harnesses are available to make it more challenging for a child to undo the seatbelt.

The **Premium Belt Lock Buckle Guard with Release Key** from Amazon auto locks and prevents unbuckling of seat belt during journeys.

Seat Belt Guard Release Key



Car Seat Harnesses

Crelling www.crelling.com offer a large range of seatbelts and harnesses to help keep children safe when on the move.

The Model 13 harness is a fully rear-fastening harness for single-seat vehicles. This model has the 'Steel-Safety buckle' fitted to the shoulder straps and the 'Side Press Release buckles' fitted to the waist and chest straps.

The Model 22 harness is fitted to the child **before** entering the vehicle. Additional fixings straps can be purchased for children travelling in more than one vehicle.

Some harnesses have a **Steel Safety Buckle** fitted on the waist belt for those with inquisitive fingers that can undo the press release buckle.

Wheelchair harnesses are also available

Model 13



Model 22



Steel Safety Buckle



COOKING

Playing with knobs/controls

Try **stove knob locks** which encase the oven controls to stop your child playing with the controls.

Hidden gas shut-off valves can be installed by a licenced gas fitter. When the valve is in the off position, the gas burner cannot be ignited nor can gas vapours be released <https://sgn.co.uk/LCV>

Cooker top/hob guards, oven guards and **microwave locks** are available.

Turn pan handles inwards and use the back burners whenever you can.

Stove knob locks





CURTAINS/BLINDS

Cords should have a child proof break that snaps open to remove the risk of entanglement and strangulation. Keep pull cords, chains, tapes and inner cords out of the reach of children and keep beds and furniture away from window covering cords.

Pulling on curtains

Use curtains with **Velcro tab top**. Loops of fabric are stitched to the top of the curtain and secured to the curtain pole with a Velcro seam to allow quick release.

Magnetic curtain rails pull apart under pressure and can be easily reattached.

Magnetic Curtain Rail



Pulling on blinds

Plastic **stick-on covering** (available from most DIY stores) to give privacy whilst still letting in the light.

Integral blinds can be fitted between 2 panes of glass that make up a double-glazed unit.

Gro Anywhere Blackout Blind can be cut to size then attached to the winder with double sided tape (included with purchase).

Place a weatherproof blind on an **outside**, ground floor window, from www.coversandall.co.uk

Use cordless blackout blinds where the cord is hidden inside. Replace with cordless, spring-loaded blinds if possible.

Gro Anywhere Blackout Blind



DOOR SAFETY

Caution must always be taken when preventing access to rooms or on external doors. Before fitting extra locks, fire safety should be taken into consideration. Seek advice from a Fire Safety Officer.

Running away from home

If doors are locked with keys, install a **key cabinet** high up so that keys can be found quickly in an emergency.

Install a **cam lock, slide bolts, door chains** or internal/external door locks to the top of doors to prevent access to 'out of bounds' rooms.

Use a **digital keypad** on internal or external doors to ensure that only people with the security code can open the door.

Use a **GPS** or Bluetooth children's tracking device. These can be secured to a watch/belt strap, placed in a trouser coin pocket, or key chained to the inside of a cargo trouser pocket.

A **door sensor** can alert you when your child has opened a door/is leaving the property.

Easylink UK has a door sensor with an **alarm pager** included, which sounds and vibrates when the door has been opened.

Sensors can be used on windows, cupboards, cabinets, fridge, drawers

Keypad



Apple AirTag



www.easylinkuk.co.uk





Internal Door Alternatives

A **stable door** (top and bottom half open separately) enable the child and parent to see each other in adjoining rooms while keeping the child safe. A bigger bottom section is most useful with the top section left open to enable noise to be heard. Top section can also be removed.

Fit doors with a **visual panel** enable you to see your child without disturbing them.

Installing **double door handles** i.e. adding a handle at the top of the door to ensure that the door will only open when both handles are operated at the same time.

Pet gates can be a ready-made solution when a gate is required that is higher than an average child gate.

Stable Door



Door slamming / fingers trapped in door frame

Fit a soft, flexible **door stopper**, **gel bumpers** or **slam stopper** to protect doors and doorframes from slamming.

Door **finger guards** prevent finger trapping in door hinge.

www.shop.fingerkeeper.co.uk www.handisure.com

Slam Stopper

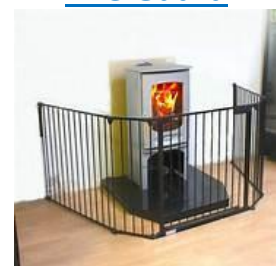


FIRE

Open fireplace / log burner

Same room supervision is a must if you have a fireplace, although **fire guards** would still be an additional safety measure. Fireguards allow you to attend to the fire while keeping children from burning themselves. They come in a variety of sizes and fit most fireplaces.

Fire Guard



FURNITURE

Consider minimal furniture in the bedroom to reduce risk to your child and damage to furniture.

Mouthing / biting furniture

Place strong plastic edging strips (available from DIY stores) on wooden surfaces such as windowsills and furniture.

Consider offering a safe, chewable object to meet oral sensory needs.



Shaking / tipping / climbing on / jumping off / throwing furniture

Assess the furniture **layout** in the room to reduce access to high areas, windows, etc.

Tough Furniture www.toughfurniture.com provides a range of furniture for challenging environments. This is specialist equipment and therefore can be quite expensive.

Consider furniture with sloping tops to prevent climbing on the furniture - www.toughfurniture.com

Heavy furniture should be secured to walls using **furniture ties** and **anti-tip furniture strips** to avoid risk of toppling.

Lockable drawers can prevent your child from removing the drawers to use as a climbing frame, throwing the contents of drawers or throwing drawer itself.

Heavy Furniture



Anti Tip



Hitting body off corners of furniture

Fitting **corner protectors** over sharp edges of furniture can reduce the risk of injury.

Corner Protectors



GARDEN

A high level of garden supervision may still be required despite having safety measures in place

Climbing back garden fence

Additional or altered fencing and secure gates may be required to enable your child to play safely in your garden.

A **6-foot high vertical fence** with the arris rails (i.e. the horizontal fencing support rails) facing the outside reduces the chance of your child using the arris rail to climb over the fence.

Double slat fences can minimise foot holes.

Trampolines and creating **obstacle** courses in the garden can be a useful outlet for extra energy and to meet movement seeking behaviours.

Plant large **plants** along the fence to deter your child from climbing.

Trellises on top of fencing may increase the height of the fence but are often not very secure and could fall should your child try to climb over it.

Fence



Trampoline



Climbing front garden fence

Additional or altered fencing and secure gate may be required to help prevent your child from running onto the road.

The height restriction for a front garden fence is **3ft**.

A **roller barrier** can be attached to the top of the fence to prevent climbing
www.rollerbarrier.com www.insight-security.com

Roller Barrier

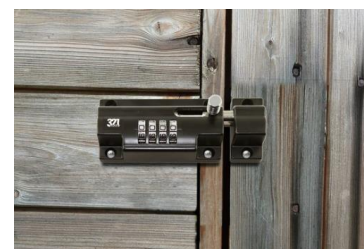


Climbing over a gate

Secure a large wooden board to the gate to cover arris rails if your child is using them to climb over the gate.

Ensure the gate has a lockable form of security that your child cannot access e.g. a **sliding bolt** with a **padlock** or **combination lock**.

Sliding Bolt Lock Combination





GLASS

Smashed window / mirror

Check that all glass on internal doors is fitted with safety glass.

Glass Safety Film holds the broken pieces of glass together should it break, greatly reducing risk of injury. Cut film to approximately 12mm wider and taller than each pane (excess is easily trimmed off after application). Film is easy to cut to size using a window scraper and a cutting knife.

Stick **protective window film** onto the windows. If window protective film is not successful, interior window protection frames with lockable polycarbonate doors are available.

Replace window with strengthened safety glass or makrolon polycarbonate sheets. Made to measure makrolon sheets and acrylic windows are available.

Safety / Protective Film



Smashed TV / computer

Wall mount TV high up and out of reach.

TV screen protectors/ **polycarbonate screens** can protect your TV from damage, scratches, fingerprints, thrown remote or toys.

www.toughfurniture.com offer solid **lockable cabinets** with unbreakable polycarbonate screen to protect your TV or computer and hides away buttons and wires. The unit is accessible using a key or star key option.

www.toughfurniture.com



LIGHTING

Pulling down light fixtures

Replace pendant lights with **flush** light fittings, **dome** type lights or recessed **spotlights**.

Use LED or energy saving bulbs to reduce the risk of burns as they do not produce as much heat.

Dome Light



OUTDOORS

Children should always be closely supervised when outdoors. Children with limited safety awareness and who are unpredictable with their movements when out and about are at greater risk

Running away / near to main roads

Backpacks with **reins** and **wrist strap** reins provides moderate support. Walking reins with a **harness** can provide more substantial support.

Where reins are not supportive enough, a **buggy** or **wheelchair** with a harness may be more suitable for your child.

Backpack with Rein





RADIATORS

Burning Self on Radiator / Pipes

Rearrange furniture to reduce access to the radiator.

Fit **radiator covers** or **box in** the radiator to eliminate the danger of burns and limit the amount of noise which can be generated by hitting them.

Cover the low-level radiator pipe using **pipe insulation foam** or **heat resistant tape**.

Use **thermostatic valves** on each radiator to control heat.

If considering replacing radiators, there are **low surface temperature** radiators that are not hot to touch, or an alternative option is to install **underfloor heating** to avoid having radiators on show at all.

Radiator Cover



Insulation Foam



SOCKETS AND SWITCHES

Please note, plastic plug socket blockers that fit into sockets have been proven to be unsafe

Fingers in plug sockets / Turning light switch on/off

Plastic covers that fit over the entire electrical fittings of a light switch or socket. The light switch or socket cannot be used until the cover is opened, (which is difficult for a child to do).

Key operated socket covers are also available.

Plug sockets can be recessed into the wall by a certified electrician.

Socket / Switch Cover

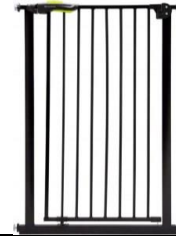


STAIRS

Climbing over stair gate

A pet gates is higher than a standard child gate. If possible, opt for a gate that secures by being screwed into the doorframe rather than the style where it is pressed up to/against the door frame.

Pet Stair Gate



Frequently falling on stairs

Ensure stairs are clutter free.
Consider liaising with a Physiotherapy for advice.
Take your child to an Opticians for an eye test.
Install an additional bannister rail.

Double Bannister Rail



Swinging around bannisters

Encourage **gross motor play** in a more appropriate environment e.g. outdoors, playground, garden.

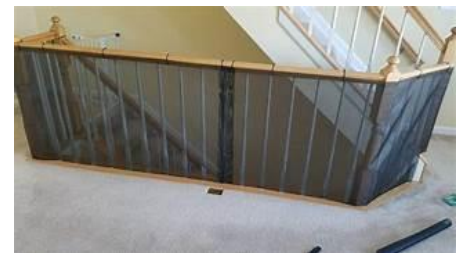
Consider replacing with a **heightened gate**.

Create a **Perspex wall** on top of bannister², reaching to the ceiling.

Double height spindles that reach the ceiling.

Plastic, see-through **Bannister sheets, screen** or **net** can prevent a child from slipping between bannisters or dropping items through the gaps in the spindles.

Bannister Screen





SLEEP

Struggles to fall asleep / remain asleep

Aim to establish a good night-time routine. This should include winding down an hour before bedtime, making the bedroom a calm environment in the evening, no screen time, and doing relaxing activities in lead up to bedtime. Reduce sensory stimulation such as toys with lights and sounds and use black out blinds to reduce light disturbance.

Gro-Clock Night Light with timing sensor to encourage going to sleep, helping little ones to stay in bed asleep until it's the right time to get up and begin the day.

Speak to GP re use of medication such as Melatonin.

A bed tent can reduce visual distractions, create a calm space, and help a child feel secure. Search 'bed tent' for several options to appear. An example is from **The Safety Sleeper**, which was designed by the mother of a child with Autism.

Gro-Clock



www.safetysleeper.com



Leaving bed throughout the night

A **Bed Occupancy Sensor** is a pressure pad that raises an alarm call to the parent if a child has left their bed during the night. It is placed on top of the mattress, underneath the bed sheet.

A **door sensor** can be fitted to alert if child is leaving their room/property.

A **video monitor** (allow users to privately access their live-streaming video and audio footage via the internet using smartphones) can offer peace of mind and flexibility to check on child. Particularly useful when sleeping on a different floor to your child.

A **motion detector with alarm pager** to alert you when your child is wandering around their room, or has left their bedroom.

Bed Occupancy Sensor



www.easylinkuk.co.uk



WALLS

Hitting walls, painting walls

Painted walls are easy to clean and eliminate the potential for unplanned wallpaper stripping/shredding/eating.

Washable paints are preferable and special effect paints are widely available with a protective washable finish.

Posters, pictures and photos can be covered by a **protective sheet** of polycarbonate which will not crack or shatter. Polycarbonate picture frames are available.

Gym mats attached to the walls with Velcro may be a successful solution. Padded wall cladding and protective wall features are available.

Wall Mats





WATER SAFETY

Scalds and burns

Children's skin is more delicate than adults. A higher setting on a water tank can cause severe burns. Prevent scalding by lowering the temperature on water tank/combi boiler. Alternatively, attach a **Thermostatic Mixing Valve**, which mixes hot and cold water to produce a temperature control flow.

Special fittings can prevent baths or basins overflowing. The **Nova-Flo** is a flood prevention device that turns off the water to a bath or basin as soon as the water reaches the overflow. It's hidden away and automatically resets once the taps are turned to the closed position.

www.nova-flo.com



Playing with water / flooding

Magiplug is a bath plug that opens when the water reaches a certain level, to prevent bath overflow. The fast flowrate means that the Magiplug can keep up with continuing water inflow to a greater degree than a conventional in-built overflow.

A **Tap Strap** can prevent young children from turning taps on. Suitable for bath and basin use, however, it only works on crosshead style taps.

When bathing, run cold water into the bath first, use a non-slip bathmat, and check the temperature first before your child enters the bath.

Empty bath water immediately after bathing.

www.magiplug.com



Tap Strap



Blocking sink / toilet

Water pipes can be boxed in by a joiner or plumber.

The toilet cisterns can be **concealed** to prevent your child from opening and accessing the cistern water.

Close the toilet seat firmly with a **multi-purpose lock**.

Toilet Lock





WINDOWS

Please do not allow a vulnerable child to have access to a window opening greater than 4" (10cm).

Opening window / throwing objects out of window

A window restrictor is designed to keep children falling out of windows. Always check to ensure compatibility with your window type first.

Window catches lock a window in an open position for ventilation but prevent children from opening them any further.

Window blocks or **slide jammer** fit to runners limit how far a sliding window can open.

Window Locks are advisable for potential escapees and can be easily fitted to most windows (sliding window, vertical/horizontal opening, sash, wooden, PVC).

A **window sensor** can be installed to send an alarm or alert that a window has been opened.

Check out www.solonsecurity.co.uk (other suppliers available)

Window Restrictor



Snaplock



Slide Jammer



Vat Exemption

When buying equipment and safety adaptations for a child or adult with a disability, the purchase is exempt from VAT. Most suppliers should have a VAT exemption form; however, a template is available from the HMRC website www.hmrc.gov.uk.

Charities - Charities may be able to help towards funding equipment (*list is not exclusive*) -

- Kindred www.kindred-scotland.org
- Family Fund www.familyfund.org.uk
- Turn2us www.turn2us.org.uk
- Radio Forth Cash for Kids www.forthonline.co.uk
- Newlife www.newlifecharity.co.uk
- Take a Break www.takeabreakscotland.org.uk

Services and Organisations

- If you feel that your child has additional needs that are not covered in this guide, and would like your child's home safety options to be assessed by an Occupational Therapist, please email **Falkirk Council Children's Occupational Therapy** at FCCOT@falkirk.gov.uk to make a referral.
- Some sensory information, such as bright lights, cooking smells or a loud extractor fan, can be overwhelming, whereas jumping off furniture or crashing into things may be a child's way of seeking more sensory information. If you think your child would benefit from a sensory processing assessment, complete an **Occupational Therapy for Children and Young People Request for Assistance Form** - <https://nhsforthvalley.com/health-services/az-of-services/childrens-services/childrens-occupational-therapy/>
- The **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)** offers a variety of services specially designed to help children and young people when they need specialised help because their issues are more severe and complex. CAMHS can be contacted by emailing fv.camhs@nhs.scot or calling the South CAMHS Team at the Manor, Camelon, on 01324 610 846.
- **Sleep Scotland** support children, young people and their families to have healthy sleep patterns by providing a free Sleep Support Line. Trained Sleep Counsellors can also work in a person-centered approach to provide support and guidance - <https://www.sleepscotland.org>
- Falkirk Council's **Small Repair and Handyperson Service** can carry out joinery, plumbing and electrical works that take no more than 2 hours to complete. Alternatively, the handyperson service covers health and safety related jobs that take no more than an hour to complete. A list of example jobs can be found here - www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/homes-property/housing-support/repairs-maintenance/small-repair. To make contact, call 01324 590 797 or email smallrepairservice@falkirk.gov.uk





- Child Accident Prevention Trust www.capt.org.uk
- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents www.rospa.com
- Local First Aid course www.daisyfirstaid.com. Email stephanie@daisyfirstaid.com or call/text 07709 341 707.

Website Links

This list is not exclusive; however, the companies below are well established providers for home safety products and fittings.

www.amazon.com

www.babysecurity.co.uk

www.clippasafe.co.uk

www.coversandall.co.uk

www.crelling.com

www.fledglings.org.uk

www.fledglings.org.uk

www.handisure.com

www.incarsafetycentre.co.uk

www.insight-security.com

www.jumpbounce.co.uk

www.rollerbarrier.com

www.safe.co.uk

www.safetots.co.uk

www.safetyfirst.co.uk

www.screwfix.com

www.shop.fingerkeeper.co.uk

www.solonsecurity.co.uk

www.toughfurniture.com

Also check out local DIY stores 😊