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Child safety questions and answers

The majority of children reported missing each year are runaways or the objects of custody disputes. In fact, a child is much less likely to be abducted than to be in a car accident; however, media attention would lead people to believe that child abduction is quite common. Of the children that are abducted, 25 percent are taken by strangers; most abducted children are taken by someone they know.Small children are at particular risk of being victimized. They are taught to respect adults, to be polite, not to question older people, and certainly not to yell or fight. In addition, they are easily swayed by offers of food or treats. Their small size also makes it easy for someone to physically abduct them.When a child is reported missing, law enforcement agencies become involved. It is essential to report a missing child to law enforcement immediately. Many states have Amber Alert systems that rapidly notify the public when a child has been abducted. Cases of missing children can also be logged into the FBI's National Crime Information Center computer.Parents' organizations are also taking a vigorous role, not only in helping to locate missing children but also in preventing abductions. The oldest group is Child Find, established in 1980. This group publishes an annual directory of missing children. Other groups provide information and educational materials to parents and lobby for stiffer penalties for offenders.The individual family still has the major responsibility for preventing child abduction. There are a number of precautions you can take. For example, never leave an infant alone in a car, stroller, or shopping cart, even for a second. If your child is in child care, be sure the center has a strict policy regarding pick-up.If you are in a large public area, such as a mall or the airport, consider using a child harness. While some people object to "keeping a child on a leash," harnesses ensure that your busy toddler is physically connected to you and cannot wander away or be abducted. Electronic devices that sound an alarm when a child wanders beyond a certain distance from a parent are also available.Starting when he is three years old, you can discuss the problem directly with your child. Approach this subject simply and straightforwardly. Talk about what to do, but not about the consequences of kidnapping to avoid scaring your child needlessly. Broach the subject gradually, as different situations arise. Provide frequent gentle reminders by asking your child how he would respond to a stranger.When instructing your child to avoid "strangers," define the word. Explain to your child that he should avoid conversation or contact with anyone who you have not met together. Be sure your child understands that no one may take him someplace without you coming along and that no one may touch him in any way that makes him feel uncomfortable. Remind your child that this includes family members, friends, neighbors, and other people he knows.Teach your child to say "No" to anyone he does not know, who makes him feel afraid, or who wants to take him someplace. If someone your child does not know offers him candy or asks him to help find a lost puppy, he should be taught to say "No." He should ignore people who ask him for directions or beckon him closer. If they persist, he should run or yell and even fight if the person attempts to touch him.Teach your child his name, complete address (including city and state) and phone number (including area code). Don't buy items, such as T-shirts, with your child's name on them. A stranger could use that knowledge to approach your child in a nonthreatening way. Establish a code word for emergency use in case your child needs to be picked up by someone else. Read-aloud books and videos are available to help teach your child these lessons. You may want to keep a file with your child's fingerprints, dental records, and current photographs. The value of fingerprinting, however, is controversial. Though it helps you feel you are taking steps to protect your children, it will not prevent their disappearance. It will only help identify a small child who doesn't know his or her name or one who has recently been murdered. Some people consider fingerprinting, especially when schools or police receive copies, a violation of a child's constitutional rights to privacy and to freedom from self-incrimination. Others feel it alarms children unnecessarily. Whether to fingerprint your child must be your individual decision.You can take many precautions, then, to protect your child when away from home, from car seats to careful driving, from fingerprinting to teaching your child to say "No." While you don't want to become excessively wary, you do need to be concerned-for your child's sake.As more and more children use the Internet to do homework, play games, and chat with friends, it becomes more important for parents to set rules and limitations to protect their children. Although it is difficult to monitor your child's Internet use, you can demonstrate an interest in which Web sites your child visits, who he contacts, and how he uses the Internet. Talk with your child about the friends he makes on the Internet. Explain why your child must never give out any identifying information that could lead someone to find him; this includes home and school addresses, school activities, and travel plans. Do not allow your child to meet anyone from the Internet in person, either at home or anywhere else. Gently remind your child that he doesn't really know anything about the friends he meets on the Internet. Although people may send him a picture, it's possible that they are entirely different from how they present themselves to your child.Encourage your child to engage in activities that do not involve the Internet. Your child's school and local law enforcement agencies may offer educational materials on Internet safety.Though they rarely serious, playground accidents are the leading cause of injury to elementary school children. Read about how parental supervision increases playground safety next.This information is solely for informational purposes. IT IS NOT INTENDED TO PROVIDE MEDICAL ADVICE. Neither the Editors of Consumer Guide (R), Publications International, Ltd., the author nor publisher take responsibility for any possible consequences from any treatment, procedure, exercise, dietary modification, action or application of medication which results from reading or following the information contained in this information. The publication of this information does not constitute the practice of medicine, and this information does not replace the advice of your physician or other health care provider. Before undertaking any course of treatment, the reader must seek the advice of their physician or other health care provider. Photo Courtesy: Lauren Bates/Getty Images Toddlers have a knack for getting into everything — literally everything! — from cupboards to trash cans to electrical outlets and more. For parents, nothing is more important than keeping their kiddos safe, but dodging trouble can feel like a round-the-clock chore. With the help of a few handy tools, parenting a toddler can start to feel a little easier. From the classic baby gate to fresh redesigns and techy gadgets, these 30 child safety products are an absolute must for toddler households. After all, when the tyke is safe, the parents are happy! The ever important need to keep kids away from electricity is a key safety element, and outlet covers have been around for decades. With so many outlets to cover and so little time, you need a sizeable 32-pack of Childproof Outlet Covers to keep your little ones safe. After all, outlets are curious things to little kids. They look like mysterious little holes in the wall that would be great for hiding things. Add the fact that grown-ups stick things in them all the time, and you could have a real problem on your hands. As adults, you obviously know wall sockets are dangerous, but kids have no concept of amps, volts or anything related to electricity. Every home has places where kids just don't belong: the pantry, mom and dad's bathroom, the garage, outside (alone), just to name a few. One sure-fire way to keep curious adventurers out of dangerous areas is by installing Safety Door Knob Covers. As with many baby safety products, there are countless options out there, but this set comes with very good reviews from other parents. The covers feature high-friction buttons to make it easier for adult hands to open safeguarded doors, while little ones remain completely baffled. If you're environmentally conscious, they're even eco-friendly. Not all doors have knobs, but that doesn't mean some doors can't be protected. If your front door or laundry room has a lever handle instead of a doorknob, these Lever Handle Safety Locks by Tutu can keep handles from being pulled up and down. Finding lever handle safety locks isn't difficult, but many only block the lever from moving up or down, not both. This versatile design not only stops all movement on door handles, but it can be used to secure faucets, window handles and even drawers as well. To top it all off, tool-free installation makes it easy to use in any household with toddlers. Another essential item for safety-conscious parents, these Munchkin XtraGuard Multi-Use Latches can secure ovens, cabinets, drawers and so much more. Take ovens, for example. Yummy treats come out of them, they put out good smells and they even have a cool light that allows you to watch goodies cook. To an adult, those things might not seem all that exciting, but to a kid, it's a thrill and a half. These latches eliminate risk and install using adhesive that is also easy to remove when the time comes. The latches are guaranteed not to damage appliances or fixtures and are easy to operate. They say safety comes at a price, but when that price is less than \$7, who can argue about paying it? To kids, stove knobs look pretty inviting. Fortunately, safety is always an easy option with a pack of Safety 1st Stove Knob Covers. This top-rated item keeps costs low and safety high. The covers fit over any standard stove knob and protect little ones from the hazards of playing with fire — literally. The knobs are interactive, easy to use and sometimes even provide sensory feedback in the form of clicking or smooth gliding. For stoves with knobs behind the burners, kiddos have a harder time reaching them, but for gas ranges where the knobs are usually on the front, the danger is real — and so is this solution. From coffee tables to fireplaces, sharp corners and edges are everywhere — and your toddler is sure to find them. To round things out on the dangerous corners in your home, pick up a pack of Corner Protector Corner Guards and start baby-proofing without sacrificing style. The handy shields give you the exact peace of mind you need the next time your toddler comes roaring into the room full tilt. The clear nubs fit snugly over the corners of tables to prevent pokes and scrapes. Durable adhesive patches make the protectors easy to use and simple to remove. As noted above, corner guards are important elements in any baby-safe household, but depending on the furniture, you might need a little extra cushioning on more than just corners. For softening sharp edges for accident-prone toddlers, try a pack of Roving Cove Edge and Corner Guards. This bestselling set comes with a roll of edge-guarding bumper pads as well as corner protectors. Instead of being formed out of rounded plastic, this set takes a different approach with high-density foam to keep little ones safe. Roving Cove's furniture bumpers come in three colors to ensure a close match to your furniture's original color. All padding is self-adhesive with pre-attached backing strips. Baby gates have protected babies and toddlers for generations. This Easy Step Baby Gate by Regalo combines style and functionality by creating a classy barrier that expands to fit just about any standard doorway. The handy walk-through feature makes it easy for adults to get past the gate without climbing awkwardly over the top. You may remember squeaky, spring-loaded barricades from days gone by, but quality is typically different these days. Tension-mounted gates are still the go-to, but the construction is far superior. When a regular baby gate just won't cut it, you may need something a little bigger. The Regalo Super Wide Adjustable Baby Gate and Play Yard spreads out 192 inches to create stress-free containment systems for toddlers and toys. It can be used in a straight line to cover a large opening or in a circle to create a play yard. Use the gate to cordon off fireplaces and kitchens or to create a standalone playpen in the middle of an open room. This style tends to be more expensive than conventional baby gates, but the versatility knows no bounds. Safety on the road is just as important as safety at home, and the Graco 4Ever 4-in-1 Convertible Car Seat is the only safety seat your child will ever need. Without the proper car seat, the road is a dangerous place to be, but that doesn't mean you want to buy a new seat for each stage of life. How about a safety seat that grows with your child? This seat converts from an infant's rear-facing, harness-buckle seat all the way up to a backless booster seat for big kids. It's guaranteed for 10 years of safety, without additional upgrades needed, making it easily worth the hefty price tag of around \$300. Many people don't consider wobbly furniture and TVs when they're childproofing their homes. When little ones are learning to walk, they will grab on to anything for balance, but you can ensure your child and your valuable items remain safe with Family Care's Anti-Tip Furniture Kit. The straps in the kit easily mount to your wall and furniture to create a secure hold. Attach the straps to dressers, shelves, TV stands and even directly to TVs. Some versions come with adhesive straps, but for maximum safety, you want a kit with screws that create a firm hold. Between potty training and curiosity, it's only a matter of time before any toddler decides to go on an at-home water splunking adventure. The simple yet effective design of these baby-proofing Swing Shut Toilet Locks allows adults easy access while ensuring the toilet stays safely closed when faced with toddlers. Besides safety issues, no matter how immaculately clean a bathroom may seem, studies have shown that bacteria colonies reestablish themselves within 24 hours of the deepest clean. 3M adhesive keeps the lock firmly in place on the toilet lid to prevent any exploratory splashing sessions. Once you don't need them anymore, they come off just like Command Strips. Conventional cabinet locks might not be enough to keep certain adventurous toddlers out of trouble. For doors that need to be extra secure, Magnetic Cabinet Locks might be the answer. This sneaky design is invisible from the front, which is great for maintaining a clean, sleek kitchen. To release the lock, you simply hold a magnetic key up to the door. This set comes with 20 locks and three keys, making it an ideal choice for securing your whole house. The best thing about this whopper of a deal is that it comes in at around \$20, making it a real bargain as well. Most child safety items involve keeping things closed, locked or barricaded. In this case, the goal is to keep it open with Wittle Finger Pinch Guards. Use the guards to keep doors from shutting all the way, so you don't have to worry about little fingers getting pinched or smashed. These simple foam crescents wrap around the edge of any door, creating a soft bumper that won't damage doorways and can be removed at any time. While every door might not need these padded barriers, closet doors, sliding doors and heavy doors in high-traffic areas are great candidates for this simple tool. Safety 1st strikes again with the clever Dual-Purpose Outlet Cover and Cord Shortener. Classic outlet protectors render the plugs unusable, but this nifty device leaves outlets open and keeps cords clear of grabby hands. It's an absolute must for offices, living rooms, libraries and more. This item is on the bestseller list for obvious reasons. It prevents prying fingers from checking out the zappy holes in the wall while keeping outlets open for use. Internal braces allow cords to be wrapped around the inside to shorten the slack before the cover is popped on, locking cords and plugs safely inside. If there's one thing toddlers are great at, it's escaping after lights out. When it comes to baby monitors, the DXR-8 Video Baby Monitor by Infant Optics is a popular choice. If your little one has a room far away from your own, hearing them go bump in the night may not be possible without a monitor. They don't have to see you, but it's important for you to see them. With interchangeable lenses and a remote-control camera, keeping an eye on your tyke is easier than ever. Now you can see when your little monkey is climbing out of the crib, allowing you to pop in like magic and remind them it's time for bed. Going for a walk, especially in crowded areas, isn't always an easy task when your little one likes to wander. It only takes a moment to lose sight of a child in a bustling throng, but you can easily keep your child close with the Anti-Lost Wrist Link Safety System from Blissetime. The soft material makes these mutual braces comfortable, while the coated steel coil keeps you and your child close together. These wrist links are a subtle way to keep track of your child, whether it's out at the fair or while walking through a busy shopping mall. The best part? They cost less than \$10 and come in fun colors! If the kiddie cuffs seem a little unconventional, there's always another type of popular leash. Plain harness options are available, but you can go for both fashionable and functional with the Munchkin Brica By-My-Side Safety Harness Backpack. It offers the perfect combination of subtlety and safety. Like the wrist links, the backpack harness keeps kids safe in crowded places or in areas where they could easily get lost. With the added backpack, they can also pack a water bottle, snacks and a plush friend to keep them company. This pack comes in green and pink and has a unique bungee tether that helps absorb movement shocks for everyone. Whether they are playing indoors on hard floors or outside on the pavement, it's important for little ones to have soft landing surfaces. The market is saturated with play mats, from roll-up blankets to tiles of astroturf, but classic foam mats like the ProSource Puzzle Foam Mat are perfect for use inside and out. Babies are resilient, but it's always better to soften the blow by putting down play mats when there's no carpeting or grass nearby. The foam easily wipes clean, and the pieces can be disassembled and reassembled into fun, stackable cubes when not in use as a playmat. You can purchase the mats in two sizes, making them ideal for any budget. Hearing protection is important, no matter how old you are, but for a kid, it's especially critical. Whether your kiddo is in the room while you listen to music, riding with dad on the lawnmower or with you at a sporting event, you can keep their ears safely covered with the Pro For Sho Safety Earmuffs. These trendy, noise-reducing earmuffs cost less than \$20 and come in ten different colors. They don't have to just be for safety on the go. If your toddlers need quiet to sleep, cover their ears and let them drift off to sleep in silence, regardless of what's happening around them. These earmuffs also come in sizes large enough for the adults in the family so everyone can match! Toddlers are drawn to railings like moths to a flame. Banister guards come in many shapes and sizes, from plastic safety mesh to soft screens, but the KidKusion Clear Bannister Guard lets you protect your child's head, arms and legs from going through railings without messing up the beauty of your staircase. The clear guard is practically invisible and zip-ties to your indoor or outdoor banisters for easy installation. Railings are usually put in place to keep people from falling over edges, but they are an inherent safety hazard for curious kids. Make sure you take steps to prevent disaster in your home. On the slightly pricier side of protection, KidKusion also makes a Retractable Safety Barrier for your driveway. One of the best things about this item is that it takes a long time for your kiddo to age out of it. Homes on busy streets or with sloped driveways can continue to use this product for years past toddlerhood. The safety barrier can keep little ones from running into the road — and prevents their toys from doing the same. Runaway balls and wayward tricycles are safely brought to a halt by the durable retractable netting. For households in busy neighborhoods, this investment could be invaluable. You've probably seen those neon yellow signs telling neighborhood drivers to slow down and watch out for kids. The Step2 KidAlert Neon Safety Sign is an invaluable addition to your safety gear if your kids love to play outside. The sign is easy to assemble and serves as a reminder to drivers that there are kids at play. Multiple options are typically available, but Step2 also offers a great price at just under \$25. Used to protect kids of any age, this safety sign is an investment that is sure to last through the years. Kids want to be kids outside, and safety always comes first. Sure, door locks and safety gates are standard equipment, but did you know that water in a garden hose left in the sun can heat up to near-boiling temperatures? Keep your kids away from hot hoses with the Yard Butler Deluxe Wall Mount Hose Hanger. Hose reels don't have to be fancy or expensive, and this simple product solves the problem in an inexpensive way. Considering most kids like to play with garden hoses, a hot hose can quickly spell disaster when you aren't paying attention. The goal is to keep your hose out of small kids' reach, even if you can't keep it out of the sun, and this product does the job perfectly. No matter where in the world you are, you can count on sunny days. Keeping kids' skin safe from the sun with a product like Banana Boat's Kids Sport Sunscreen is critical, especially when they're really young. With so many brands to choose from, it can seem like a daunting task to pick the right option, but, sometimes, the right choice is the obvious one. Brands like Banana Boat have been around for ages for a reason. Whether you purchase sunscreen at your local store or look for deals online, you can't go wrong with this time-tested classic. The sport line stays on through sweat and water, and the convenient spray bottles make it easy to evenly apply. Sunscreen is a great start for outdoor safety, but whether playtime happens on the beach or in the front yard, there's no such thing as "too safe." Some clothing comes with SPF or UPF ratings, such as UPF 50+ Cotton Sun Hats from Jan & Jul. Covering up to protect tender skin is a great way to avoid the sun's harmful rays. Long sleeves and swimsuit cover-ups are good options at certain times, but a sun hat provides a quick and easy option for instant protection. These hats come in a variety of colors and patterns and expand to fit growing noggins. Sunscreen can cover just about anywhere, but there's one part of your body it can't protect: your eyes. Finding sunglasses for adults is a no-brainer, but for little kids with little heads, you need to look for a brand like Top Flyer that makes great First Sunglasses for Kids in an assortment of styles. Going above and beyond other sellers, Top Flyer not only offers a variety of colors but several other customizations. You can choose from polarized and non-polarized lenses, strap or no strap (to keep your little one's glasses from getting lost), and single or multipacks. If you have a vacation coming up and you will have a toddler of walking (or running) age with you, make sure it's easy for other adults to quickly return your lost child to you by using ID Safety Wristbands. These bands make it simple to reunite you and your child if you become separated. The old Sharpie on the arm may work in a pinch, but this option is sanitary, non-staining and cute! Write down your contact info on the bracelet and establish a game plan for what to do if your child gets lost. Another mom with kids and a shop owner are good suggestions for who they can safely approach to get back where they belong. Big crowds and large parks are common places for kids to get separated from their guardians. Shouting doesn't always help them find their way back — and their little voices aren't loud enough to carry long distances — but a nice, loud Safety Whistle just might do the trick. Instead of trying to teach toddlers how to dial cell phones for help, keep it simple and give them inexpensive whistles to blow as hard as they can to attract your attention when they get lost. Whistles offer a cheap, simple solution for anyone keeping an eye on toddlers who like to wander. If you're looking for a more permanent form of identification for toddlers, you might want to consider a shoelace tag like the GoTags Shoe ID Tag. It's more difficult to lose or remove, and it's always on your child — as long as the shoes are on, of course. The tags are incredibly durable and fully customizable with up to four lines of text. They are perfect for listing an address and a phone number in case your little one gets separated in a crowd. The most valuable item of all, of course, is your own two eyes to keep precocious toddlers in check, but the best age-appropriate safety measures make an excellent backup system for the unexpected.

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