

## Home safety advice.

*When your child's behaviour is made harder to manage by their additional needs it can be difficult to know what to do. This advice is initial ideas to try yourself. You know that children's behaviour happens for a reason, and they will be getting something out of it. As well as thinking about what would make them and you safer, you can talk to other people who know or work with your child about why they might be doing what they're doing, and whether there are other ways to manage or distract them.*

Children with challenging behaviour may need close supervision even with precautions in place, and other solutions to give you a break will then need to be explored.

### Kitchen Safety



#### General considerations

- Put potentially dangerous items in the kitchen, like knives, medicines or cleaning products out of reach. Consider buying a safe or lockable security cupboard (e.g. £46 from Screwfix as above) if there is a serious problem and cupboard door opening restrictors don't work.
- Electric cookers are safer than gas cookers.
- Consider fire safety and escape routes if fitting any door locks.

#### Restrictors for door, cupboards and fridges:

- Thumb turn locks on the inside of room doors with a coin turn option on the outside are a safer option for securing the kitchen at night to prevent unsupervised night time visits, than sliding bolts. It should be possible to open door locks from both sides to prevent anyone being trapped inside.



Inside room

Outside room

- Extra high child safety gates are another option you've probably already thought of



- There are many brands of cupboard and drawer locks on the market in hardware stores and online.

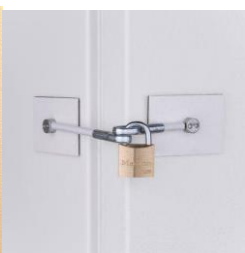


Push catches (different options for position)

Magnetic lock



- Fridge and oven door opening restrictors are readily available online and can slow up or stop a child getting into fridge or oven but are also inconvenient for you. Different types have different pros and cons, and anything with a key poses risk of losing that key.



# Front Door Safety

Because children with learning difficulties may have little awareness of traffic, or sense of stranger danger, and often like to be outside as much as possible, you may be afraid that they may try and leave the home without you knowing. It is especially important to talk to others about this to try and make sure your child has enough opportunities to get out of the house, and is learning as much as they are able to about road safety and stranger danger.

## General considerations:

- Many social landlords (Council and housing associations) are not willing to sanction or put **any** additional locks or bolts on front doors because it will void the guarantees on their fire doors. This will be the case if you live in a block where your door opens onto a communal walkway of any kind.
- Before fitting any extra locks, fire safety should be taken into consideration. The Fire Service is able to advise anyone who asks, with a free home safety assessment. Tel 0800 028 4428 or request online, <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/book-a-home-fire-safety-visit/>
- Key locks should be avoided due to danger of losing keys or not being able to find them quickly in an emergency.

## Examples of possible solutions:

- Slide bolts and door chains sited at the top of doors where your landlord will allow this, which some will.



- Sensors or contact alarms fitted to doors to alert you when your child has entered an area or opened a door.



The above are available from hardware stores and online retailers. Any other additions to front doors would be difficult to do without a landlord's permission and co-operation.

# Stair and bedroom safety

## General considerations

- A safety gate should only be fitted if there is no danger of the child attempting to climb over it.

## Examples of possible solutions

- Large dog gates are higher and more robust than a standard children's safety gate. If possible, trial one before purchasing.



- Half door fitted at the bottom of the staircase, with a bolt fitted where your child can't reach it.

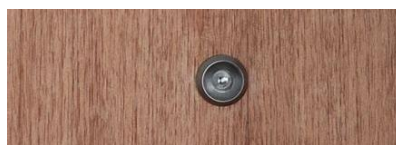


- When a safety gate or half door is not enough, a stable door (top and bottom half open separately) may be fitted on a bedroom doorway. This may allow you to see and supervise your child while keeping them safe from unsupervised wandering.

N.B. social landlords may say no to this if it interferes with fire resistance of a door.



- A visual panel or spy hole in a bedroom door allows you to check on your child without disturbing them. The spy hole should have 180° viewing range and can be purchased at most DIY stores.



- There are a range of phone and tablet apps that provide video and audio monitoring to a child's bedroom or another room

# Window Safety

## General Considerations:

- If possible, keep the area below windows clear of furniture to prevent your child from climbing.
- Windows may need to be kept locked while your child is in the room. When your child is out of the room the windows can be opened for air circulation.
- Councils and Housing Associations may not agree to provision of window opening restrictors due to fire escape concerns.
- Before fitting any extra locks, fire safety should be taken into consideration. The Fire Service is able to provide advice.

## Examples of Possible Solutions:

- Glass safety film can be stuck to windows to prevent harm if child attempts to break a window.



- Window opening restrictors and window locks.



- If it is not possible to lock windows, a contact alarm similar to the door contact alarms may be fitted to alert you if your child opens the window.



- For children who have a tendency to pull on curtain rails, curtains can be fixed with Velcro attaching loops or strips so the curtain will come down instead of the whole rail, or use blinds that can be pulled up out of the way.



- If it is not possible to keep curtains or blinds in place, adhesive window glazing to give privacy whilst letting in light area.



## Furniture and Fixtures Safety

Children with very physical behaviour may need more durable, heavy furniture. Your child may bite or chew furniture or throw or damage items, and may be at risk of hurting themselves and others. Your child may also be inclined to climb on furniture.

### General considerations:

- Consider minimal furniture in the child's bedroom to reduce risk and damage furniture.



- Use of corner protectors can reduce the risk of injury to your child on sharp corners of furniture. They are available online and at hardware stores



- Consider the layout of furniture to reduce your child's access to high areas and windows.

## Wardrobes and Cupboards:

- Furniture which is fitted or fixed to the wall or floor is more secure.
- Lockable drawers can prevent your child from removing the drawers to use as a climbing frame or damaging the contents of drawers.



- Tough Furniture provides a range of furniture called Tough Plus. It is expensive so if you were interested you made need to apply to a charity for help to fund it.



## TV, Computer and Ipad:

- Polycarbonate screen covers are readily available.
- TVs can be wall-mounted out of reach of your child.
- Tough Ipad holders are readily available



- TV and computer cupboards



# Electrical Safety

## General considerations:

- When employing a tradesman for electrical works, it is advisable to use a qualified electrician who is registered with NICEIC, which maintains a register of qualified, competent electricians. Contact via [www.niceic.com](http://www.niceic.com) or 0870 013 0382.

## Sockets

- The Child Accident Prevention Trust says that children are at very little risk from electric shocks. Electrical sockets are designed to be safe. But electricity can be dangerous in other ways. Old electrical appliances and wiring, and children playing with electrical appliances, can cause burns and house fires. Socket covers are available online and from hardware stores, but they don't recommend these.



## Lights

- If hitting or grabbing lights is an issue think about swapping pendant fittings for flush fittings



- Light switches could be located outside a room, if absolutely necessary.

## Electrical Products

- A cable tidy is a protective sheath that is designed to encase wires and cables. This prevents children from being able to chew or pull on wires.



- A cable bridge is a range of ridged plastic cable bridges that can be fixed to floors, walls or desks using screws or double-sided tape.



# Garden Safety

## Fencing:

- Consider having large plants along the fence to deter your child from climbing the fence.



- Large wooden boards could be fixed to the inside of the fencing to cover up arris rails (horizontal fencing support rails) to reduce climbing risks.
- As there are limitations on the height allowed for garden fencing, alternative measures are better such as planting.

## Garden Gates:

- Where there is a risk your child will leave through the garden gate, ensure that the gate has a lockable form of security that your child cannot access. A sliding bolt with a padlock could be used, or a bicycle lock.
- Putting a spring on a gate may help ensure that the gate is not left open.



# Radiators and Exposed Pipes Safety

## Radiators:

- Rearrange furniture to block access to the radiator if possible.
- Radiator covers and guards can be readily purchased. These are either made from padded material that protects children from the heat of the radiator and from sharp edges, or from wood which can be fitted around.

## Water Pipes and Cisterns:

- Water pipes can be boxed in by a reliable carpenter or plumber.

## Community Safety

Taking your child out and about may be extremely challenging.

- Walking reins or wrist straps may or may not be helpful.



Backpack with rein



Wrist rein

- Reins may not be sufficient for children who refuse to walk. The local wheelchair service may be able to assist for older children. Buggies and wheelchairs can be fitted with 5-point harnesses and would have footrests to prevent the child from dragging their feet. AJM Wheelchair Services for buggies and wheelchairs. To access this service a referral is required from a health professional, for example, your family doctor.

### Trackers and personal locators:

For a child who will escape and tracker or locator may provide another option

- Iseeka, [www.iseeka.co.uk](http://www.iseeka.co.uk) 0844 543 6363
- Buddi, [www.buddi.co.uk](http://www.buddi.co.uk) 0871 423 8756
- Child Safe Zones, [www.childsafezones.co.uk](http://www.childsafezones.co.uk) 0870 062 4919

## Water Management

A child with challenging behaviour may really enjoy water but may use water inappropriately in the home, causing flooding and damage to the property.

### General considerations

- Ensure that your child has adequate access to drinking water throughout the day, for example in the form of bottled water.
- Make sure that you do not stop your child from getting to the toilet when necessary.
- Magiplug for sink or bath – the pressure of the water above opens the plug when the sink or bath is full. **Amazon**, Nottingham Rehab Supplies (NRS), [www.nrs-uk.co.uk](http://www.nrs-uk.co.uk) 0845 120 4522 and other retailers



- Adjust the thermostat water temperature to prevent water reaching scalding temperatures.
- Lock for toilet seat.



- Thumb turn and coin type latches on the bathroom doors.
- Slide bolt fitted high up on the outside of the bathroom door that the child cannot reach.

## Vehicle Safety

Children with challenging behaviour may have little awareness of danger and may need additional car seat restraints or specialist car seats to keep them safe while travelling in a vehicle.

### General considerations

- It is not safe to hold a child on your lap, even if you are using a seat belt. If the vehicle is involved in an accident the child could be injured. It is legal requirement for all passengers to wear passenger restraints.
- When a child has an additional restraint the carer and passengers in the vehicle should be aware of how to unfasten it in the event of an emergency.
- Always ensure that car seats are correctly fitted in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

### Examples of Possible Solutions

- Harness used in conjunction with the vehicle seat belt. Some harnesses are specifically designed for children with challenging behaviour. Crelling offer a sale or return facility to allow a 14 day trial period. If the harness is not returned they will invoice for the goods. If the harness is returned there is a charge for postage and packing.
- Specialist car seats with a 5-point harness can be purchased and suit children up to about twelve years of age.

### Examples of Suppliers and sources of advice

#### Harnesses:

- Crelling Harnesses, [www.crelling.com](http://www.crelling.com) 01253 852 298
- Windmill Special Needs – Unisafety Easy Travel Magnet Harness, [www.windmillspecialneeds.co.uk](http://www.windmillspecialneeds.co.uk) 0161 345 5361

#### Specialist Car Seats:

- In-Car Safety Centre, [www.incarsafetycentre.co.uk](http://www.incarsafetycentre.co.uk) 01908 220 909

The lists of companies provided in these information leaflets are not approved

lists.

## Advisory and Supply Suggestions

**London Fire Brigade** offers free home fire safety visits. You can contact them to request fire safety advice or a home visit, and they may fit free smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

### Radiator Covers:

- **Coverad** [www.coverad.co.uk](http://www.coverad.co.uk) 01256 844 685
- **Jtech Services** [www.jtechservices.co.uk](http://www.jtechservices.co.uk) 01952 404 352
- **Radshield** [www.radshield.org.uk](http://www.radshield.org.uk) 01760 724 444
- **Yorkshire Radiator Covers** [www.yorkshireradiatorcovers.co.uk](http://www.yorkshireradiatorcovers.co.uk) 01427 875 637
- **Premier Radiator Cabinets** [www.premierradiatorcovers.co.uk](http://www.premierradiatorcovers.co.uk) 0151 933 0070
- **Guardsman Products** [www.radiator-guards.co.uk](http://www.radiator-guards.co.uk) 01782 717 818

### General safety:

- Child Alert [www.childalert.co.uk](http://www.childalert.co.uk) 07973215407
- Plug Lock [www.pluglock.co.uk](http://www.pluglock.co.uk) 01535 646 071
- Maplin [www.maplin.co.uk](http://www.maplin.co.uk) 020 8686 6081
- Kiddicare [www.kiddicare.com](http://www.kiddicare.com) 0871 781 7000
- Fledglings [www.fledglings.org.uk](http://www.fledglings.org.uk) 0845 458 1124
- **Safetots** - child safety [www.safetots.co.uk](http://www.safetots.co.uk) 01438 728 888
- **Kid Rapt** - child safety [www.childsafety.co.uk](http://www.childsafety.co.uk) 01582 493 382
- Stores such as Argos, Homebase, Wickes, B&Q.
- **Screwfix** [www.screwfix.com](http://www.screwfix.com) 0500 414 141