

Babyproofing

“Okay, I’ll go get it for you, Mommy will get it for you.”

Calvin just turned one. To call him “active” might just be a bit of an understatement.

“We use the gate to keep him in the living room as opposed to running all over the house and getting into things that he shouldn’t get into.”

Calvin’s mom, Melissa, also puts gates at the top and bottom of the staircase. But as Melissa and Jason know, safety gates are just the beginning when it comes to baby proofing a home.

“You have to be pretty thorough with your baby proofing.”

So, where to begin?

“Take a tour of your own home and think about it from your child’s perspective. Go room by room by room and see where are the places that he or she can get hurt.”

Let’s try it. First up: the living room. One of the biggest potential dangers here: sharp edges on furniture.

“It has to be covered by something made of rubber; and you can buy corner guards they are quite good, and really decrease the likelihood that your child is going to hurt himself or herself.”

Flat screen TVs are an often-overlooked danger in the living room, yet one of the biggest.

“So many of them get toppled over by children who are just learning to stand and then they want to touch and can fall over on our children and hurt them. So, anything that can fall needs to be mounted to the wall.”

Jason and Melissa mounted *their* flat screen. And, take a close look, just underneath: all electrical cords up high and secured. In fact, all types of cords throughout the home should be well out of reach.

“It’s this constant whirl of activity in your mind I think, And It gets better as you have more children.”

Edward and his wife, Ali, have three children. Baby Eric is just four months old. It won’t be long before he starts crawling. So, they’re baby-proofing the kitchen, starting with safety latches on cabinets and cupboards.

“And that means a childproof latch not just babies, but children, because as kids grow older and get stronger, they get smarter, and they learn how to open those drawers.”

Ali and Edward are careful about countertops, as well. A few to do’s: Unplug small appliances when they’re not in use; and push them far back out of reach. Do the same with any cooking tools or utensils. Next stop: the bathroom. Many pediatricians say it can be the most hazardous part of the house.

“You’ve got the toilet bowl that children love to play in. You’ve got electricity in the same area as water. You’ve got the bathtub. You’ve got so many dangers. Children should never, ever, be in a bathroom without an adult present. Children have drowned in just a few inches of water.”

Make sure there are safety latches for the toilet lid as well as all drawers and cabinets.

“Hey Bubba.”

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Finally, the nursery. Most important: your baby's crib. The mattress should fit tightly so there's no gap into which little arms or legs can slip and get caught. And see these slats? Look closely at the amount of space in between.

"The slats on the crib should be far enough apart so that a hand or a foot will be able to go in and out and never get stuck."

"Time for night, night."

To reduce the risk of suffocation, the crib should be bare. Equally important for preventing sudden infant death syndrome, or SIDS, babies should always be placed to sleep on their backs. By remaining vigilant, you'll help keep your baby out of harm's way at home. It's a lesson that even Eric's older sisters, Louise and Sophie, have taken to heart.

"It's important that I pick-up my toys, because Eric could pick one up and put it in his mouth and choke."

"When we're on the couch, if he rolls, like, he could fall off the couch, and if someone just like sat with him like I did, like he would be safer, much safer."