

Play It Safe

Should I child proof my house, even if I don't have children?

Is your home designed for kids? Probably not. But it is important to create a home that's safe for kids, even if you don't have children, especially if you want it to appear family-friendly.

Safety gates, outlet covers and cabinet locks are some of the more obvious tools to child-proof your home, but potential hazards lurk elsewhere. Think about how kids often run into a room - and think about the sharp corner on tables, counters and bookshelves. In the kitchen, consider installing padding on the corners of islands and counter-tops. You might also want to consider installing a stove-top barrier to prevent pots from falling or being pulled off the stove and to protect children from hot splatters and spills.

Floor vents can also attract curious hands; if pulled out from the floor, the grate's sharp edges can be dangerous. To deal with this danger, screw the vents into the floor. Standard doorstops - the kind with the rubber tips - are another often overlooked hazard. The tips can easily be pulled off and pose a potential choking hazard. Consider replacing these with solid, one-piece doorstops.

These solutions for warding off accidents are easy and inexpensive - and worthwhile in more ways than one.

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