

## SAFETY

### SKILL ASSESSMENT

The following questions will help you identify the skills in which you excel and target those which you need to develop. By yourself or with your team, try to answer each of the questions as honestly as possible. After completing this independent living skill assessment, review it with your team and identify those skills you would like to strengthen.

	<i>I do not know about this</i>	<i>I need to know more about this</i>	<i>I know about this</i>
1. Know why a baby's crib should not be placed next to a window.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Know why the mattress should fit snugly next to the crib.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Know why plastic materials should not be used as mattress covers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Know why a baby needs a crib with safety latches and locks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Know why the slats in a baby's crib should be no wider than 2-3/8 inches apart.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Know when to place and remove bumper pads.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Know when to remove mobiles and crib toys.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Know why a baby's crib shouldn't be left near an open window.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Know why a baby should not be left alone on a bed or changing table.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Know why young parents must baby-proof their home and how to do it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Know why baby bottles should not be heated in a microwave.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Know how to protect a baby from burns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Know which toys are safe for babies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Know why some foods are not safe for babies to eat.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Know why tying a pacifier on a string around a baby's neck is very dangerous.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Know why it is dangerous as well as illegal for babies to ride on someone's lap in the car.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. Know what to do in case there's a fire in your home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Know what to do if your child has swallowed a poison.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You have now completed the assessment section and identified those safety skills that you would like to strengthen in order to make better decisions on your own. The following guide can help you in planning how you can learn about and practice these skills. Choose a few skills that you want to develop and, with your team, write down your plan of action. Remember, once you accomplish these goals you can go back to your assessment tool and select new goals to build on your new skills.

**EXAMPLE**

**GOAL:**

**IMPROVE SAFETY SKILLS**

State Skill 1:

Plan:

When:

Who:

**To child-proof my living space**



**To child-proof all electrical outlets by purchasing and installing outlet plugs.**



**1 hour a day for the next 2 weeks**



**Myself**

**To secure all household cleaners and other potentially harmful substances out of reach in locked places.**



**1.5 hours a day for the next 2 weeks**



**Myself**

**To child-proof all cabinet doors by purchasing and installing appropriate devices.**



**1.5 hours a day for the next 2 weeks**



**Myself**

**GOAL: WORK ON PRE-NATAL CARE SKILL**

State Skill 1:  
To be developed  
and/or improved.

Plan:  
How do you plan to learn,  
develop and improve this skill?

When:  
When, where, and how often will you  
work on this skill and by when will you  
have mastered this?

Who:  
Who will assist you?



State Skill 2:  
To be developed  
and/or improved.

Plan:  
How do you plan to learn,  
develop and improve this skill?

When:  
When, where, and how often will you  
work on this skill and by when will you  
have mastered this?

Who:  
Who will assist you?



# SAFETY

## CAR SAFETY

Children under the age of five and up to 50 pounds must always be strapped into a car seat. Infant seats usually face the rear and are only designed to protect small babies. Older babies, toddlers, and young children ride in car seats that face the front. **NEVER** hold your child on your lap while the car is in motion, not even for one second! It can cost your child his/her life.

All car seats should be placed in the back seat of the car. Older children must use seat belts and sit in the back seat of the car.

## HOME SAFETY

### ACTIVITY

It is important to make your home as safe as possible for your child. Below is a list of questions which will help you determine just how childproof your home is. Circle the word that best describes your home.

<i><b>Kitchen safety</b></i>	Yes	No	Not Apply
1. Are coffee, hot liquids and hot foods placed out of your child's reach-not at the edge of a counter or table, not on a tablecloth which could be pulled down?			
2. Are cleaning supplies stored beyond your child's reach?			
3. Are cleaning supplies stored separately from food?			
4. Are food treats and other eye-catching items stored away from the stove?			
5. Are vitamins and medicine stored beyond your child's reach? (Children like to imitate adults taking medicine.)			
6. Do you use extra care when heating foods for and around your child? Do you turn pot handles toward the back of the stove, test temperature of heated/microwave foods before feeding them to your child, or keep your child in a safe place while you are cooking?			
7. Are knives and other sharp objects kept out of your child's reach?			
<i><b>Bathroom Safety</b></i>			
8. Are electrical appliances (radio, hair dryer, and space heater) used in your bathroom? (These can cause serious electrical shock or death if they are plugged in and fall into a tub of water while your child is in the water. They should be out of the bathroom or unplugged, away from water, and beyond your child's reach.)			
9. Does an adult always watch your child while in the tub? (Children can drown in a few inches of water within seconds. They can be burned by turning on the hot water by themselves.) <i><b>*Never leave your child alone in the tub to answer the phone or doorbell!</b></i>			

10. Is your home's hot water adjusted to a safe temperature? Make sure to prevent tap water scalds.			
<b><i>Child Area Safety</i></b>			
11. Are accesses to windows blocked so your child can't fall out?			
12. Are toddler gates used at the top and bottom of stairs? (Do not use accordion-type gates; they can cause strangulation and death.)			
13. Does the crib mattress fit snugly? (A loose-fitting mattress can cause strangulation or limb injuries. There should be no more than 2 fingers' distance between the mattress and the crib railing.)			
14. Are crib slats 2 3/8 inches or less apart? (Your child could be caught or strangled between bars that are greater than 2 3/8 inches apart.)			
15. Does the toy chest have a lightweight lid, no lid or a safe closing mechanism? (A dropping lid can cause suffocation or head/back injuries.)			
16. Do windows have screens that are secure?			
<b><i>General Safety</i></b>			
17. Does your house or apartment have 2 unobstructed exits (in case of a fire or other emergency)?			
18. Are electrical, extension and appliance cords in safe condition, not frayed or overloaded?			
19. Are electrical cords beyond your child's reach?			
20. Are plants placed out of your child's reach? (Some plants are poisonous.)			
21. Are all space heaters approved, in safe condition and inaccessible to your child? (Heaters should be stable, have a protective covering, and be placed at least 36 inches away from curtains, papers and furniture.)			
22. Is your wood-burning stove in safe condition and inaccessible to your child?			
23. Are stairs, protective walls, railings, porches and balconies sturdy and in good condition?			
24. Is hall and stairway lighting adequate to prevent falls?			
25. Does your house or apartment have any loose, chipping or peeling paint? (Children can be poisoned by lead paint.)			
26. Can your child get into the basement?			
27. Can your child get into the garage?			
28. Are pools on your property or in your neighborhood protected from use by unsupervised children?			
<b><i>Safety Supplies</i></b>			
29. Do you have a working smoke detector properly placed?			
30. Do you have a Massachusetts Poison Center phone number or sticker on your telephone?			
31. Do you have safety latches or locks on cabinets and drawers that are within your child's reach and contain any potentially dangerous items?			
32. Do you have shock stops in all unused electrical outlets? (These can keep your child from sticking an object into an exposed outlet or sucking on an exposed extension cord outlet.)			
33. Do you have a working fire extinguisher?			

<i>Safety Practices</i>			
34. Have you developed and practiced a fire escape plan in your home?			
35. Are matches and lighters kept out of your child's reach?			
36. If you smoke, do you safely dispose of cigarette butts and matches? (Careless smoking is the leading cause of fire deaths in Massachusetts.) You should put cigarettes out in a large, deep ashtray and then dump the contents in the toilet. No smoking in bed or when under the influence of alcohol or medication! Check stuffed furniture for cigarette butts before going to bed.			
37. Are pocketbooks with vitamins, birth control pills, cigarettes, matches, jewelry and calculators (which have easy-to-swallow button batteries) kept out of your child's reach?			
38. Have you secured area rugs? (On wood, ceramic tile or linoleum floors, area rugs can cause any one to slip and fall. Secure rugs with a piece of foam carpet backing, double-sided tape or rubber pad. You can buy these items at many carpet and department stores.)			
39. Do you keep stairs clean?			
40. Do you use rubber mats or no-skid stickers in the bathtub?			

## HOUSEHOLD PLANTS

Many plants in the United States are poisonous and, for preschoolers, plants are a common cause of poisoning. If some plant parts are eaten, they can cause a skin rash, stomach upset or even death.

Knowing that household plants can pose a real danger to children; test your knowledge of poisonous versus non-poisonous plants by completing the exercise below.

### **Directions:**

Classify each plant listed as either SAFE or POISONOUS by placing a check mark in the appropriate column.

	<b>SAFE</b>	<b>POISONOUS</b>
1. Begonia		
2. Azalea		
3. English Ivy		
4. Mistletoe		
5. Holly		
6. Spider plant		
7. Daffodil		
8. Buttercup		
9. Choke cherry		
10. Jade plant		
11. Boston fern		
12. African violet		
13. Autumn cross		

14. Laurel		
15. Lily-of-the-valley		
16. Tobacco		
17. Rubber plant		
18. Hyacinth		
19. Hydrangea		
20. Rhododendron		
21. Rhubarb leaves		

Remember, even a plant that is not poisonous can make your child sick if s/he eats too much of it. Keep young children away from all plants and teach them not to put plants, fruits and berries in their mouths.

#### Answers

1s,2p,3p,4p,5p,6s,7p,8p,9p,10s,11s,12s,13p,14p,15p,16p,17s,18p,19p,20p,21p.

For complete information on poisonous and safe plants, check library books, garden and florist shops, or the Arnold Arboretum in Boston at (617) 524-1718.

## **LEAD POISONING**

What is lead poisoning?

- Lead poisoning is caused by eating, chewing, or sucking on lead-painted objects such as window sills, railings, toys, furniture, jewelry or printed material. Other sources include contaminated soil or dust and fumes created by home renovation and sandblasting. The risk of lead poisoning is increased by normal hand-to-mouth activity in young children.
- Too much lead in the body can cause serious damage to the brain, kidneys, nervous system, and red blood cells. High levels can cause retardation, convulsions, coma and sometimes death. Low levels can slow a child's normal development and cause learning and behavioral problems.
- Children living in older urban areas where housing is often poorly maintained are most commonly affected. However, children of people who work with lead on the job and children living in older homes under renovation can be affected, too. Children whose diets do not provide enough calcium or iron can also be at increased risk.
- Most children have no symptoms, and when symptoms appear, they are often similar to common childhood complaints such as headaches, irritability, and tiredness, lack of appetite and stomach aches. Because these symptoms are not specific, parents and physicians may not suspect lead poisoning. A blood screening test is the only sure way to detect lead poisoning.

Check out the painted surfaces in your home:

- Window wells and sills
- Door frames and sills
- Walls
- Woodwork
- Floors and stairs
- Porches, outbuildings
- Railings and banisters
- Toys and play equipment
- Pipes and fixtures
- Furniture

Tips to prevent lead poisoning

- Have your child screened regularly
- Permanently cover lead-based paint on chewable surfaces
- Wet-mop dusty surfaces with tri-sodium phosphate (TSP), available in hardware stores
- Wash your own child's hands frequently
- Wash infant teething toys frequently
- If you work with lead on the job, shower and change clothes before you go home
- Provide well-balanced meals, low in fat and high in iron and calcium
- Get your soil tested
- Plant gardens away from painted structures and busy roads
- Learn the risk factors and sources of lead poisoning
- Inform relatives and friends about lead poisoning

For more information about lead poisoning, call the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 800-532-9571

## **POISONING**

Making your home child safe—avoiding accidental poisoning

- Be sure that all the medicine you buy (aspirin, cough syrup, prescription medication, etc.) is packaged in childproof containers.
- Keep all medicine, even vitamins, stored in a medicine cabinet that is locked or latched and placed above a child's reach.
- Store all cleaners and other potentially dangerous poisonous substances in their original containers in a locked cabinet.

Keep these substances away from food. Place them on a high shelf—above a child's reach.

## **EMERGENCY CARE**

Massachusetts Poison Information Center

Greater Boston Area—232-2120      Other MA areas—800-682-9211

Keep a bottle of ipecac syrup in your medicine cabinet. The Poison Information Center may advise you to give the syrup to a poisoned child. This causes the child to vomit. **Do not give the syrup to a child unless the Center or a doctor tell you to do so; it can be dangerous to use this substance with some poisons.** Vomiting is not always the best treatment for poisons! You can buy syrup of ipecac without a prescription, for about two dollars at drug stores.

**What to do if you think a child may have been poisoned**

1. Open the child's mouth and remove any remaining pills, pieces of paint, etc.
2. Take the child and the poison or container to the telephone. **Do not give the child anything to eat or drink (not even water, milk, or syrup of ipecac) until you call your doctor or the Poison Information Center.**
3. Call the Poison Information Center. Trained medical staff are available 24 hours each day to give you free treatment advice.

You will be asked the following information:

- Age of the child
- Weight of the child
- Name of substance swallowed
- Amount swallowed

**\*Remember, call for medical advice before giving the child anything to drink.**

**TIPS FOR TOY SAFETY**

- Most toys are labeled for ages of children. Before buying a toy, check to see if it is age appropriate.
- Do not allow your child to play with electrical toys that have frayed or loose wires. These toys should be thrown away if repairs would cost too much. Check to make sure that all electrical wiring states **UL Approved**.
- Toys with sharp points, jagged edges and rough surfaces are extremely dangerous. Don't buy them!
- If your child is on a riding toy, keep him or her away from stairs, porches, cars and pools.
- Check all toys to make certain that they do not have small detachable parts that could be swallowed or get stuck in your child's throat, nose or ears.

***Check All Toys for These Hazards***

- Sharp spikes or pins that have become exposed if your child has pulled the toy apart.
- Long cords or strings on toys. If the cord is longer than 12 inches, cut it shorter.
- Squeakers or other noise makers that are not attached to the toy and that could be removed and swallowed.

- Caps, guns and other toys that produce a very loud noise and could damage your child's hearing.
- Buttons, nuts, bolts and clamps that are loose.

## **FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION**

Did you know that most fatal fires occur when people are sleeping, usually between midnight and 6 am?

It's true! This is one reason why it's so important to have smoke detectors/alarms in your home/apartment. They will wake you when there's a fire, giving you time to escape. People who don't have smoke detectors may not wake up in time to escape the killing heat, smoke and flames of a house fire.

Most fire deaths occur from smoke inhalation not burns. As a house fire burns, it gives off toxic gasses, usually carbon monoxide, which can kill.

Smoke detectors are one of the most important life-saving devices you can own. Every home/apartment should have at least one smoke detector. Under Massachusetts law, landlords must provide smoke detectors in a building with three or more apartments. In some cities, such as Boston, all homes/apartments must have smoke detectors.

Fire extinguishers can be used to put out small fires and can help clear an escape route. Don't waste time trying to put out a house fire; that's the firemen's job. Your job is to escape.

Multi-purpose fire extinguishers are important household safety devices. The extinguishers labeled "ABC" are the best ones to buy; they can put out most fires—wood, paper, cloth, flammable liquids and electrical wires/appliances.

If your bedroom is above the first floor and you don't have a fire escape outside one of your bedroom windows, you should have a fire escape ladder. Should the stairway ever be blocked by fire, you'll have an escape route through the window. Fire escape ladders are collapsible and can be stored in a closet or under the bed.

You should always sleep with your bedroom door closed should a fire occur, the closed door will temporarily hold back the heat and the smoke.

Plan your fire escape route and have practice fire drills regularly.

Protect your baby from a fire! Buy flame retardant baby clothing and bedding materials. They may save your baby from much pain and disfiguring body scars—even save her/his life.

**Fire escape tips:**

If you are in bed when a fire occurs, do not sit up and jump out of bed. The air temperature at level of the bed will be cooler (although it will probably be warmer than 100° F) than the air a few feet above the bed (probably 200° F or more).

Fire officials recommend that you roll from the bed to the floor. Temperatures will be lowest there. Then crawl along the floor where the air will be less smoky and the heat less intense. Cover your nose and mouth with a cloth, a wet cloth, if possible. Touch the door before you open it. If it's hot, don't open it. Use another escape route. If it's cool, brace your shoulder against the door and open it slowly. Be ready to slam it if smoke or heat rush in.

**Get Out Quickly!**

Don't waste time trying to put out the fire.

Call the fire department.

Get dressed.

**Leave the house!****Every second counts!**

If you cannot escape through the door, use the window. If you're on the first floor, you're in luck. If not, choose a window that overlooks a ledge or roof that you can climb onto and wait for help to arrive.

Remember, if you sleep above the first floor and do not have a fire escape stairway outside one of your bedroom windows, you should have a fire escape ladder. If no ladder available, straddle the window sill by putting one leg out the window and keeping the other inside for balance.

Keep your head outside and wait for help.

**If your clothes ever catch on fire, remember to**

**STOP**—Stop where you are. Do not run.

**DROP**—Drop to the ground or floor and cover your face with your hand.

**ROLL**—Roll to put out the flames.