# Environmental Safety Hazards for Infants and Children

## CRITICAL ELEMENTS

### A. General Elements
- Refer to the “Developmental and Age Appropriate Plans of Care” for developmental and age specific safety interventions for each developmental/age group.
- Ensure that equipment alarm limits are set appropriately for age and according to policy.
- Ensure that equipment alarms are audible.

### B. Burns: Electrical/Liquid
- Keep electrical wires hidden or out of reach.
- Make sure there are no frayed or broken wires.
- Always check the temperature of liquids before feeding.
- Check the temperature of bath water.
- Place hot objects out of reach.

### C. Strangulation/Suffocation
- Keep all plastic bags stored out of reach.
- Keep all small objects stored out of reach.
- Do not tie pacifier on a string around infant’s neck.
- Do not use pillows for infants.
- Remove bibs at bedtime.
- Ensure that balloons are made of mylar and are kept out of reach.
- Avoid toys and other items with long strings.
- Remove all crib toys that are strung across crib or playpen.
- Never shake baby powder directly on infant and store closed baby powder container out of reach.
- All cables should be secured to prevent them from being accidentally disconnected.
- Maintain slack in lines, tubings, cords, etc.
- Remove all unnecessary linens from the crib or bed.
- Observe the placement and condition of all lines, tubes, and cords each time you enter a patient’s room.
- Carefully snug/secure mini blind cord to cleat. Never leave cords hanging freely or with loops in it.

### D. Aspiration/Drowning
- Never leave an infant/child alone in bath.
- Supervise infant/child near any source of water.
- Keep bathroom doors closed.
- Hold infant for feeding; do not prop bottle.
- Use pacifier with one-piece construction.
- Keep buttons, beads, syringe caps and other small objects out of reach.
- Keep floor free of any small objects.
- Avoid foods that can be aspirated; for example, hard candy, nuts, food with pits or seeds, popcorn, grapes, dried beans, marshmallows, celery, raw carrots and hot dogs.

### E. Poisoning
- Ensure that cleaning supplies are not accessible to patients.
- Keep all patient medications properly secured.
- Ensure that any personal care items, i.e. shampoos, deodorants, mouthwash, lotions/ointments, etc. or parent medications (prescription and over-the-counter) are kept out of reach.
### CRITICAL ELEMENTS

#### F. Falls
- Select a bed that is appropriate for the child’s developmental age.
- Ensure that warmer sides rails and isolette doors are closed.
- Ensure that crib rails are raised to full height at all times.
- When giving care to the child in crib/bed, keep one hand on him/her.
- Avoid using a highchair until the child can sit well without support.
- Secure all infants/children in infant seats and highchairs.
- Ensure that all ambulatory patients have safe shoes or socks on to avoid slipping.
- Keep exits, halls and passageways in rooms clear of toys, furniture or other items that could be obstructive.
- Never leave infant/child unattended on a raised surface.
- Ensure that all beds and cribs are in the locked position.
- Ensure floors are cleared of fluid or other objects that might contribute to falls.

#### G. Bodily Injury
- Keep sharp, jagged objects out of reach.
- Inspect toys for removable parts.
- Do not allow lollipops or similar objects in mouth when walking.
- Keep diaper pins closed and away from infant/child.

Source:
Wong and Whaley’s
Clinical Manual of Pediatric Nursing
Mosby, Inc.