

## Further Resources

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**Thoughtful planning means safer children.**



## Everyday Tips for Keeping Children Safe

Parenting is a profound opportunity to raise, shape, and guide another human being. These tips can help you embrace the joy of parenting while managing the immense responsibility.

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# Everyday Safety: Plan Ahead

Kids don't come with instruction manuals. Their behavior can push your limits. The good news? With some advanced planning and preparation, many challenging and even unsafe situations can be managed or avoided.

## Anticipate and Prepare



**Before any outing or activity, prepare yourself for how your child might react.** Anticipating their behaviors helps you respond calmly, instead of reacting to stress, frustration, or fear.

Consider:

- ★ Your child's age, abilities, and personality.
- ★ Family rules, rituals, and values (and those of others you might be with).
- ★ How your child might interact with others or react to the situation.

Example: when shopping with a toddler, keep in mind that they tend to have short attention spans, want to walk on their own, may demand treats, and enjoy exploring. Plan ahead by limiting shopping time, packing snacks, bringing a simple activity, or letting them help you find needed items.

## Set and Communicate Clear Expectations

Next, prepare your child for success by communicating expectations. **Talking to your child about your plans and setting expectations in advance helps your child feel safe and confident.**

- ★ Discuss behavior before playdates and outings.
- ★ Establish routines, such as buckling seatbelts before starting the car, holding hands when crossing the street, or checking in when playing on the playground.
- ★ Teach your child what to do in an emergency, such as getting separated from you while shopping or facing an unsafe situation at a playdate.

# Practice, Reflect, Evaluate

## Practice

Knowing what is expected is one thing, but remembering to follow through in the moment is another. **Children need practice and encouragement** to learn new skills, including how to manage emotions and behavior so they can meet your expectations.



Give your child a chance to practice by role-playing common situations. For example, if you are planning a grocery trip, act out what might happen when you walk down a snack aisle.

- ★ Will your child ask for a treat?
- ★ How will you respond?
- ★ How might your child react if you say no?

## Reflect and Evaluate

**After you've tried out your plan, take time to reflect.** What worked well? What could be improved next time?

You might not get it right every time – and that is normal. What matters is that you keep trying to prepare your child for safe and mentally healthy experiences.

Remember: children are not little adults. They are still developing the language, knowledge, and emotional control that you have built over years. As their first and most important teacher, your guidance is powerful.

