



AUTISM SAFETY

GUIDE



The Knapp Center for Childhood Development specializes in the treatment of children with autism spectrum disorder. We pride ourselves on using evidenced based assessment and treatment interventions supported by research to promote optimal functioning and to improve the quality of life for children with autism spectrum disorders and their families. The Knapp Center is dedicated to helping parents bring out the potential in their child by understanding their strengths, challenges, behavioral and learning differences and helping to create educational and therapeutic plans to maximize their development.

Our staff is comprised of experienced behavior analysts who are board certified and ABA therapists who work collaboratively with the family and schools to provide a comprehensive treatment plan to the children we serve. Our director, Dr. Knapp is a pediatric neuropsychologist and board certified behavior analyst who has over 15 years of experience in the treatment of children with ASD.

Services offered include assessments and evaluations, a variety of treatment programs and parent training. Specifically, we offer:

- ✦ Diagnostic and neuropsychological assessment
- ✦ Independent Education Evaluation
- ✦ Functional Behavioral Assessment
- ✦ In-home ABA Services
- ✦ Social Skills Treatment
- ✦ Summer Camps and ESY Programs
- ✦ Individual Therapy
- ✦ Parent Education Groups
- ✦ Treatment Consult Services

The Knapp Center services children age infancy through young adult years. We are located in Boardman, OH (Mahoning County, near Youngstown). We provide services to children and families residing in Eastern OH and Western PA.



Autism Safety Guide

Cecelia Maderitz, BA
Julie Knapp, PhD, BCBA-D

Safety for all children is important. For children with autism spectrum disorders, extra precaution is necessary. Through this guide, we will share tips, products, and strategies to help you keep your child safe in and around your home.

Topics include:

- ✦ Water safety
- ✦ Running away, elopement, and child identification
- ✦ Fire Safety
- ✦ Poison Control (especially important for those children who present with Pica)
- ✦ Firearms Safety
- ✦ Household product and furniture safety
- ✦ Household recommendations

We hope you enjoy this free publication offered to those raising children with autism. Funding for this project is from the Knapp Center for Childhood Development.

Thank you to Drs. Nancy Roizen, MD and Shanna Kralovic, MD, and Beth Mishkind, MSSA, LSW of Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital for their suggestions that is included in this guide.



Water Safety

Wandering and then drowning incidents are the leading cause of death in individuals with autism (National Association of Autism, 2012). Many children with autism are attracted to water and this increases the risk of drowning. To reduce risks of drowning incidents, consider the following:

1. Prevent children from having access to any large bodies of water (i.e., pool, pond, lake). This includes using gates to keep children in a specific area, or if necessary, using alarms to alert you when child has escaped from the home.

- * Wireless door or gate alarm
- * Can be purchased at <https://www.safetyturtle.com>
- * Cost approximately \$325.00



2. Use an alarm that will sound when the child gets wet.

- * Safety Turtle: a bracelet with an alarm on it that will sound when wet as long as the child is within range of the base unit.
- * Can be purchased at <https://www.safetyturtle.com>
- * Cost approximately \$250-300



3. Pool alarm

- * The Pool Protector Alarm has an electronic sensor for detecting motion, such as a child falling into a pool.
- * Can be purchased at <http://www.milestonesafety.com>
- * Cost approximately \$110



4. If you have an above ground pool, remove the ladder when pool is not in use.

5. For all pools and spas, take anti-entrapment precautions:

- * Anti-entrapment drain covers help prevent the suction from drawing part of the child's body or hair on their head into the drain, which can cause drowning

- o Can be purchased at pool stores
- o Cost approximately \$70-90



- * Safety vacuum release systems detect any blockage of a drain and automatically shuts off the suction to prevent entrapment

- * Equip pools and spas with multiple drains in order to decrease the amount of suction at any one drain site

6. Teach your child to swim.

7. Prevent child from using bathtub without adult supervision

- * If need be, you can keep the water turned off in the house when you are not using it.

- * You might also want to use an anti-scald device (this may need installed by a plumber).

- o Cost approximately \$150

8. Prevent child from accessing water in toilet.

- * Toilet Lid Lock

- * Can be purchased at www.mypreciouskid.com

- * Cost approximately \$7.99



Elopement

Wandering off, elopement, or running away is a common behavior displayed by individuals with autism. Not only does this cause much worry for parents, but it could also lead to harm, injury or even death of the child. Something may catch an individual's attention (e.g., a dog) and the individual may go to see it, wonder off and may not be able to find their way back. Some preventative measures for children who have a tendency to wander include:

1. Battery operated door/window alarms
 - * These may not keep your child from wandering off, but they can certainly alert you when they escape.
 - * Alarms can be purchased at Radio Shack or ordered at www.mypreciouskid.com
 - * Cost approximately \$9.99 and up
 - * Some alarm options include:

Swann Magnetic Wireless Door Alarm (\$9.99)



Swann PIR motion Alarm (\$24.00)



Door/Window Alarm (\$19.99)



2. Door knob covers
 - * Safety 1st twist & grab knob cover
 - * Can be purchased at Babies "R" Us
 - * Cost approximately \$3.99



3. Install deadbolt locks on both sides of the door that require a key. Don't let child see where key is kept hidden.



4. Install hook and eye locks on all doors.
5. Use pictures of stop signs on doors and windows as a visual prompt of child's permitted walking area.
6. Use Window Guardian Stoppers to reduce risk of child opening window and falling out. These stop windows from opening too far.

7. Fence in your yard.

8. Use safety netting for balconies or decks.



9. Use a monitor on your child that alerts you when they go beyond a safe distance.

- * Distance Monitor can be purchased at

- <http://www.milestonesafety.com>

- * Cost approximately \$18

If the individual does manage to wonder off, here are some ways to track him/her down...

1. GPS locators

- * Can be worn as jewelry such as a bracelet or fixated to the child's clothing

- * Can be purchased at

- o <http://www.brickhousesecurity.com>
 - o www.geminitracking.com
 - o www.nationalautismassociation.org
 - o www.ion-kids.com
 - o www.projectlifesaver.org
 - o www.caretrak.com
 - o www.mypreciouskid.com



- * Cost approximately \$29.95 and up
- * Here are some popular GPS Locators:

Lok8u GPS Child Locator (\$199.95)



Spark Nano 2.0 Real-Time Locator (\$199.95)



GPS Tracker (39.99)



2. Identification Badges

- * Can be purchased at...
 - o <http://www.kidstravelcard.com>
 - o www.myprecouiskid.com
 - o www.medicalidstore.com
 - o www.nationalautismassociation.org

- * Cost approximately \$7.99 and up
- * Here are some popular identification badges:

Safety ID card (\$10.95)



Shoe ID Tag (7.99)



Dog Tags to Wear on Clothing (\$10.00)



3. Emergency contact form with your child's information.

- * A form that you can fill out can be found at <http://www.safeassured-id.com/media/doc/autismemergencyform.pdf>
- * Give the completed form and a current picture of your child to your neighbors, the police and fire department.
- * Keep a duplicate form and post it in your home; keep a copy in your car.



- * Medical release card: Wallet ID Card Kit can be purchased at www.mypreciouskid.com

- o Cost approximately \$2.00



4. Child Safety Pack

- * Can be purchased at www.mypreciouskid.com

- * It contains:

- o 1 - Child ID Card
- o 1 - Child Car Seat ID Card
- o 1 - Medical Release Card
- o 1 - Child Luggage Tag ID Card
- o 2 - Shoe ID Stickers
- o 1 - Disposable Child ID bracelet
- o 1 - Child DNA Fingerprint Kit



- * Cost approximately \$15.99

5. Temporary Safety Tattoo

- * Can be purchased at

- o www.mypreciouskid.com
- o http://store.safetytat.com/store/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=20&products_id=95

- * Cost approximately \$9.99 and up

- * Here are some popular safety tattoos:

Autism (\$9.99)



Mischief Mouse (\$19.99)



SafetyTat.com © 2009 Patent Pending

Autism Non-Verbal (\$19.99)



www.SafetyTat.com © 2008 Patent Pending



Fire Safety

Individuals with autism may not understand the danger of fire, lighters, matches, or other hot items. Therefore, they may cause fire unintentionally. National statistics on fires indicate that 8 out of 10 fire deaths occur in the home. The Noblesville Fire Department in Indiana researched what precautions and preventative measures needs to be taken with children with Autism. The following are some of the suggestions they provided:

To Prevent Fires...

1. Cover unused outlets
 - * Outlet covers can be purchased at Babies "R" Us or at www.mypreciouskid.com
 - * Cost approximately \$2.49 and up
2. For outlets in use, cover with Outlet Plug Covers
 - * www.mypreciouskid.com
 - * Cost approximately \$6.99
3. Use childproof lighters
 - * BIC salon candle lighter can be purchased at Kmart
 - * Cost approximately \$5.99
4. Cover radiators & baseboard heaters with childproof screens.
5. For a gas fireplace, secure it with a valve cover or key.
6. To prevent stoves from being turned on, use knob protectors.
 - * Can be purchased at Babies "R" Us
 - * Cost approximately \$9.99



In case a fire does occur...

1. Install a smoke alarm. Some research indicates that a talking smoke alarm may be more effective in waking children up than a regular smoke alarm.

- ✚ Talking smoke alarm
- ✚ Signal One Vocal Smoke Alarm can be purchased at www.safemart.com
- ✚ Cost approximately \$30.00



2. Install a fire sprinkler system and a working fire extinguisher.
3. Have a home escape plan in place.
 - ✚ Practice the plan weekly or monthly
 - ✚ Create a plan for outside the home, once the escape is made.
4. Teach stop, drop and roll.
 - ✚ Use visuals and model the procedure.
5. Familiarize the child with the firemen gear by taking a tour of the fire department.
6. Place an emergency sticker on your windows/doors to notify emergency personnel that may be entering your home that there is a child with autism on the premises. (Also a good idea to put on your car!).

- ✚ Can be purchased at http://www.cafepress.com/+autism_emergency_warning_sticker_for_home
- ✚ Cost approximately \$4.00



Poison Control

As many as 25-30% of children with autism display Pica behavior or eating of non-food substances. Eating inappropriate substances greatly increases the risk of poisoning or choking. To reduce this risk, consider the following:

1. Remove any plants from the home that may be toxic.
Popular plants that are toxic include:
 - * Rhododendron
 - * Lilly of the Valley
 - * Holly
 - * English Ivy
2. Lock up all medications and vitamins.
3. Store substances that can cause harm in locked cabinets.
These include:
 - * Bathroom items such as hairspray, nail polish remover, mouthwash
 - * Alcohol
 - * Garage items such as antifreeze, fertilizer and other chemicals (i.e. paint, gasoline)
 - * Kitchen items such as food extracts that contain alcohol
 - * Keep the garbage locked up, as there can be many potential hazards in the garbage.
4. Keep the number for poison control on hand.
 - * (800) 222-1222



Firearm Safety

Nearly 1/3 of all American homes contain firearms. Children as young as three have enough finger strength to pull a trigger (www.kidshealth.org). If families are not willing to rid their home of firearms, then the following preventative measures should be taken:

1. Lock up your guns (simply hiding them is not enough). There are a variety of gun cabinets, gun safes and drawer safes on the market that can be purchased at local sporting goods stores and home improvement stores. Locking up all guns applies to:
 - * Handguns and Rifles
 - * BB Guns
 - * Pellet Guns
 - * Paintball Guns
2. Lock up ammunition separately from locked guns.
3. Lock up gun cleaners, as these can be poisonous.
4. Trigger locks and barrel locks (prevents action from being closed)
 - * Cost approximately \$5-10
 - * Can be purchased at www.triggerlock.com or local sporting goods stores
5. Most County Sheriff Offices and National Rifle Association has firearm safety manuals.



Home Safety

Many children with autism enjoy climbing on furniture and they often do not realize the dangers associated with it. Below are some preventative measures to decrease accidents and injuries:

1. Use furniture brackets and wall straps to secure furniture, electronics and appliances in place.

✦ These can be purchased at

- www.Amazon.com
- Target
- Walmart
- www.mypreciouskid.com

✦ Cost approximately \$4.98 and up

✦ Some popular brackets and straps include:

Hangman anti-tip kit TV Quake Straps- 400 pound furniture wall straps (\$6.99)



Falling furniture prevention devices (\$10.46)



TV Quake Straps – TV Tip Strap (\$19.99)



2. Use refrigerator straps to secure refrigerators in place.
 - ✦ Can be purchased at www.mypreciouskid.com
 - ✦ Cost approximately \$7.99
3. Secure wall hangings or make the following modifications:
 - ✦ Use screws as opposed to nails to secure in place.
 - ✦ Buy plastic picture frames as opposed to glass.
4. Keep dangerous items in locked drawers or cabinets. These include:
 - ✦ Knives, potato peelers, scissors and other sharp items
 - ✦ Tools and associated hardware
 - ✦ Razors, shampoo, curling irons, lotions
 - ✦ Cleaning supplies, laundry detergent
 - ✦ Candles, lighters, matches
 - ✦ Plastic bags and small objects such as pins, buttons and paper clips
5. There are multiple cabinet locks available, including:
 - ✦ Magnetic cabinet locks
 - These can be purchased at
 - <http://www.mypreciouskid.com/cabinet-lock.html>
 - www.mypreciouskid.com
 - ✦ Cabinet sliding locks
 - These can be purchased at www.Amazon.com

Magnetic cabinet lock and key locks (\$29.99 and \$7.99)



Cabinet sliding (\$5.76)



6. Cover coffee stand and other table corners to prevent injuries.

✦ Corner guards

- Can be purchased at major retailers such as Target or Babies R Us.
- Cost approximately \$12.99 and up

✦ Some popular corner guards include:

Jumbo edge cushion
(\$12.99)



Large brown corner cushions
(\$14.99)



7. If you have a laundry chute, lock it with a childproof lock.

8. Place a lock on dishwashers to prevent child from access to knives, breakable glassware and other dangerous objects.

✦ Can be purchased at

www.onestepahead.com

✦ Cost approximately \$5.95



9. Place knob protectors on stove and lock on oven to prevent child from turning stove on or climbing into oven.

✦ Can be purchased at www.onestepahead.com

Knob Protectors (\$10.95)



Stove Lock (\$5.95)



10. Windows can be a huge threat to safety, from breaking to opening and children falling out.

✦ If you're going to replace windows, consider:

- Plexiglas Windows versus glass windows
- Double pane windows versus single pane

✦ If your child can unlock windows, you may need extra protection to prevent them from opening them up.

www.onestepahead.com



✦ Costs approximately \$8.95

✦ Make sure there isn't any furniture near windows where the child can climb on to get to the window

11. Keep freezers, footlockers, crawl spaces and attics locked when you are not getting something out of them.

12. Use cordless window coverings. If your window dressings have cords, then use safety tassels and inner cord stops to prevent strangulation in young children.

13. Keep a first aid kit stocked, nearby and locked up.

14. Finally, keep a list containing emergency contacts in a centralized location (i.e., on the refrigerator)

- ✦ Doctor
- ✦ Local hospital
- ✦ Fire department
- ✦ Poison control

Knapp Center for Childhood Development

950 Windham Court, Suite 4, Boardman, OH 44512

(330) 629-2955; www.knappcenter.org