



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
EMERGENCY SERVICES

# Safe and Healthy Children: A Public Health Resource Manual for Child Care Providers





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# Child Safety and Injury Prevention



# Chapter 6: Child safety and injury prevention

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## Child safety and injury prevention

Injury is the leading cause of death and hospitalization for children in Canada. Everyone has a role to play in keeping children safe, especially child care providers. Make safety your habit.

Falls are the number one cause of all childhood injuries. Over 1,800 children under six years of age visit the Emergency Department each year in Waterloo Region due to injuries from falls.

Young children can be injured by falls when they:

- Fall from a raised surface such as out of a high chair or stroller, off a couch, or from a change table.
- Fall down stairs that are not properly guarded with a gate or when unsupervised by an adult.
- Fall from play equipment or fall while using wheeled toys like tricycles.
- Fall while running around and exploring their environment.

## Fall-related injuries can be prevented in your child care centre

Below are actions that can be taken to decrease the number of injuries at your centre.

### What child care centres can do:

- Provide child safety and injury prevention training to staff. Refer to Parachute Canada's free online curriculum [Child Injury Prevention \(Ages 0-6\)](#).
- Complete routine inspections of all harnesses on high chairs, strollers and other items. The harnesses should be free of debris with the buckles in good condition and working well.
- Conduct routine safety inspections using the safety inspection checklist available through the [Canadian Pediatric Society](#).
- Ensure all playground structures and toys are in good repair and free from hazards.
- Ensure playground surfacing is sand, pea gravel, wood chips or other recommended surfacing to cushion children when they fall.
- Create spaces which lead to decreased injury, such as positioning change table and garbage in close proximity.
- Implement policies to reduce injury, such as requiring all children to wear close-toed shoes (not flip flops) and use helmets whenever engaged in wheeled activities. Provide information to parents about the safety standards of your child care centre and inform them of their role in keeping children safe.
- Communicate safety information to parents regularly using bulletin boards, email, print resources and newsletters.

### What staff can do:

- Complete training on child safety and injury prevention.

- Complete routine inspections of toys and equipment used by children.
- Always use safety straps when children are on a raised surface like a high chair or change table.
- Collect all necessary diaper changing items before placing child on raised change table to ensure you can keep a hand on the child at all times.
- Never leave a child unattended on any raised surface.
- Know the current abilities and temperament of children you are supervising. Anticipate their next stage and abilities to ensure appropriate supervision is provided.
- Allow children to access toys and use play equipment that is appropriate for their age and stage.
- Encourage children to learn physical skills through play that will challenge their current abilities. Children aged five to nine years like to take chances in order to gain self-confidence. Caregivers need to be ready to step in if the child is in danger, but should not “hover”.
- Provide and/or direct caregivers and parents to resources as appropriate
  - [Region of Waterloo Home Safety Checklist for Children](#)
  - [Parachute Canada](#)
  - [Health Canada](#) for any product recall notices

#### **What parents can do:**

- Know the safety standards of the child care centre and understand your role in keeping children safe.
- Ask staff for information and resources on child safety.
- Complete a [Home Safety Checklist for Children](#) in your own home.
- Seek additional information on child injury topics at the [Parachute Canada website](#).
- Refer to [Health Canada](#) for any product recall notices.

## Car seat safety

Motor vehicle collisions remain a leading cause of unintentional injury and death for Canadian children, youth and young adults.

Drivers are responsible for all passengers under the age of 16. By Ontario law, infants and children must be buckled up in a car seat or booster seat made for their age, weight and height.

For a child to get the best protection from a car seat or booster seat:

- The seat has to be right for the age, height and weight of the child;
- The child must be properly harnessed into the seat; and
- The seat must be properly installed in the vehicle.

There are four stages of protection. The right stage for a child depends on their age, weight and height.

Please visit the [Health Canada](#) or [Parachute Canada](#) websites for information on the proper use of rear-facing, forward-facing, booster car seats and seat belt use for children.

## Factsheets and resources

1. Parachute Canada's free online curriculum [Child Injury Prevention \(Ages 0-6\)](#).
2. Safety inspection checklist available through the [Canadian Pediatric Society](#).
3. [Region of Waterloo Child Safety website page](#)
4. [Home Safety Checklist for Children](#)