

Protecting Our Children

How Safe Are Your Stairs?

(NAPSA)—The great rooms, sweeping staircases and oversized openings that make your home a haven can be hazardous territory for small children. In 2001, the National Safe Kids Campaign reported more than 2.5 million children were sent to the emergency room because of household falls. While September is officially Baby Safety Month, it's always a good time to learn about the safety gates and enclosures that play a key role in keeping babies safe from falls while exploring.

“Keeping parents informed about the various choices of safety gates available is crucial to keeping babies as safe as possible,” says Dr. Tanya Remer, pediatrician and member of the Evenflo Safe Baby and Toddler Council. “With safety gates to fit every household need, babies become free to develop their curiosity.”

Dr. Remer recommends using these questions as a guide to choosing a gate.

- Where will the gate be installed? At the top of the stairs, in a doorway, on the main floor?
- What ages of children will be restrained with a safety gate? (Most gates are recommended for children ages six to 24 months).
- Will household pets need access through the safety gate? (Pet gates usually pass child safety standards and are certified through the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association).
- How wide is the opening?
- To what surface will the gate be mounted?

Pressure-mounted gates are best-suited for such less hazardous locations as doorways,



The safety gate at the top of the stairs, a pediatrician points out, should be attached to the walls.

between rooms, at the bottom of stairways and for irregular openings. Some new models feature a walk-through or swing panel, made of soft nylon or plastic mesh. These gates can be opened easily with one hand and without bending over, which works well in high-traffic areas.

Hardware-mounted gates are best for the top of stairs. These gates can be permanently mounted to wood, dry wall (with studs underneath) and brick. Newer models have low-profile mountings that can be easily removed when baby has outgrown the gate.

To find more about safety gates, see www.evenflo.com, for a Gate Selector Application and gates that fit a variety of needs.