



# Safety Tips for Children with Hearing Loss

These tips can help you keep your child safe and add to general safety advice for your child's stage of development. Adapt these tips to meet the needs of your child and family. What works now may change as your child grows and develops.

## Tips for Using This Flyer:

- Give a copy to the people who care for your child. Mark tips that may help them.
- Talk with your child's care team including your child's health care provider, school nurse, principal, teacher, school staff and other caregivers.
- Involve your child. Talk about the steps you'll take. Ask your child "what if" questions to help them learn to problem solve.

## Fire Safety

- Can your child hear warning sounds and alarms? If not, install a flashing light (strobe) or vibrating smoke alarm (system that sets off a bed shaker device) on each level of your home, and in your child's bedroom. Test all alarms monthly and change the batteries yearly.
- Contact your local fire department for information on how to obtain a flashing or vibrating alarm system.
- Practice what the vibrating alarm feels like with your child and talk about what they should do when the alarm goes off.
- Do family members and other caregivers know fire safety messages in Sign Language?
- Is there a contact person in your neighborhood where your child can go for help in the event of a fire if a parent or caretaker is injured? Does that person know the signs for "fire", "help", "Mom", "Dad", etc.?
- Do you have a fire escape plan for your home and places such as theaters, places of worship and stores? Talk about and practice your plans with the whole family on a regular basis.
- Does your plan include a special meeting place outside your home where all family members can meet in case of a fire?
- Contact the school and learn your child's fire escape plan. Make sure your child knows the school fire drill procedures with or without an interpreter present.
- Do all adults and older children in your family know where the fire extinguisher is and how to use it?

## Choking

A hearing aid can pose a choking hazard to some very young children who use them. To reduce risk:

- Store hearing aid and batteries out of your child's reach in a tamper proof box.
- If you have older children who use a hearing aid, teach them to keep their hearing aid away from small children. Teach all the children in your household that the hearing aid is not a toy.

## Water Safety

Some children with hearing loss may have difficulty with position orientation in water.

- Always watch your child or have an adult closely watch your child in all water activities even when a lifeguard is on duty. A brightly colored swimsuit will make your child easy to spot.
- Have your child wear a life vest in a boat, on docks and near open water like lakes or rivers.
- Tell the lifeguard that your child is deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- Come up with a prearranged signal with your child to get her attention or to alert your child to danger while in the water.

## For More Information:

- Keeping Children with Special Needs Safe in the Home* from Safe Kids and the MetLife Foundation. A series of safety videos highlighting how you can take precautions in your home to help prevent injuries to children with physical, developmental or cognitive disabilities <http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/special-needs/>

Adapted in part from the Diagnosis Related Injury Prevention Suggestions developed by the Ohio Dept. of Health, revised with permission by the Center for Children with Special Needs, Seattle Children's Hospital.