



## **INFORMATION MATERIAL FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN**

for adapting their homes during  
the child's first year of life

In order to ensure a safe environment for the baby and to prevent accidents, parents should evaluate their home environment early on and take steps to increase the safety of the baby and avoid accidents. A baby's well-being fully depends on the care of adults. Do your part to avoid injuries by following the suggestions below.



## MOST IMPORTANT

1. The baby requires supervision from an adult around the clock. The caregiver must be responsible, aware of dangers and know how to prevent them.
2. Adapt the baby's environment so that it is age-appropriate, meets their needs and keeps them healthy.
3. If an accident has occurred, assess the seriousness of the situation, provide first aid, if necessary, consult a specialist or call for help.

## IN THE FIRST YEAR, YOUR BABY DEVELOPS VERY RAPIDLY

**At one month old** babies learn to follow the movement of their parents or objects and react to sounds by searching for them with their eyes.

**At two months old** they begin to smile, respond to smiling and talking by smiling back, and begin to show interest in toys and start observing them more.

**At three months old** babies start to coo, are interested in their fingers and put their hands in their mouth.

**At four months old** they can reach for and grab a hanging toy and put toys in their mouth.

**At four to five months old** babies learn to turn from their back to stomach and onto their back again, lie on their stomach, and support themselves with outstretched arms and one hand.

**At six months old** babies can rest fully on outstretched arms, start to move forward or crawl, take objects from one hand to the other, and some can already sit symmetrically and crawl on their hands and knees; all babies develop at their own pace. From six months onward they start to eat solid foods with a spoon.

From **the age of seven months** your baby acquires new skills very quickly, starts standing up with support and starts walking. Since a baby's head is disproportionately large compared to their body, it is more difficult for them to keep their balance like adults do, which entails a greater risk of falling and being injured. Keep the home tidy and adapt it as the

child grows to keep harmful things that could cause suffocation, poisoning, burns, drowning or other accidents, out of the reach of the child. The role of a caring and loving parent is to create a safe environment for the child to grow, develop and explore the world. The best protection for a child is adult supervision.

## THE BABY'S SLEEP

All studies suggest that sharing the room protects the child. Sleeping in the same room as the parents significantly reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), promotes successful breastfeeding, and helps to respond quickly to the infant's needs. The recommendation of the World Health Organization is to keep the child in the parents' room for the first 6–12 months. Sufficient sleep ensures a child's age-appropriate development and good health, and the quality of sleep can affect parents' daily coping, mental health and relationships.

- The cot must have its original slats that are spaced 4.5–6.5 cm apart to prevent the baby from getting stuck. The base of the bed must be adjustable so that it can be lowered as the baby grows. If the baby is already big enough to walk on their own, you can remove some of the slats to allow them to get out of the bed on their own if necessary, so they would not fall when climbing out.
- Do not put unnecessary things on the baby's bed. Toys, pillows, baby nests and bed cushions are not safe,

as the child can roll onto them or get stuck and they also pose a risk of suffocation. Ensure that the mattress is suitable for newborns and infants.

- The recommended temperature in the bedroom is approx 18–20 °C and the baby should be dressed accordingly; avoid the risk of overheating, do not cover their head, and dress them in enough clothes so that they do not need a blanket.
- If you want to swaddle the baby for sleep, you can do it in the first three months of their life, until they learn to roll onto their stomach, or you can use a sleeping bag.
- Put your baby down to sleep on their back to reduce the risk of SIDS; even a newborn who is placed on their side is able to turn over onto their stomach as they squirm while sleeping.
- If the baby shares the bed with the parents, the mattress must be firm, not sagging; the baby must sleep between the mother and the wall, not between the mother and the father, there must be no space between the wall and the mattress where the baby can roll off. When sleeping with the baby, their head must be higher than the mother's, so that the blanket is not accidentally pulled over their head at night.
- Co-sleeping should not be attempted if both parents are overweight, if one of the parents smokes, has consumed alcohol or taken sleeping pills, or if there are other children or a pet sleeping in the bed.

## DRESSING THE BABY

- Choose comfortable clothes that are gentle on the baby's skin, avoid long ribbons and cords in which the baby could get wrapped up when turning.
- When dressing your baby, be sure to take into account the room or ambient temperature, it is good to dress the baby in layers, which allows you to remove or add extra clothes if necessary, so you can avoid the risk of overheating or hypothermia. Thermoregulation of the body develops during the first year of life. As the baby's sweat glands are not yet functioning properly, the risk of overheating at high temperatures increases. Overheating is one of the causes of sudden infant death syndrome.
- As the baby grows, choose age-appropriate clothes that do not hinder the child's movement or tangle them up.
- Avoid long scarves and opt for a loop scarf instead, and the hat should also be without dangling strings.
- When the baby is already walking, choose comfortable and non-slip shoes.

## BATHING THE BABY AND HYGIENE

- The changing pad should be intact, safe, with tall edges and non-slip. Everything you need for changing, dressing, or cleaning your baby should be within reach, do not leave your baby unattended on the changing pad.



- Babies sometimes develop unexpectedly fast and start turning, sitting or walking when you least expect it or are prepared for it, so never leave your baby alone on the bed, sofa or changing table, even for a moment.
- Check that the bathroom floor is sufficiently rough or is covered with a non-slip coating.
- The temperature of the running water should be checked immediately before aiming the water at the baby (shower), it is safer to start with cold water and then add hot water when preparing the bath water. The faucet should be equipped with a thermostat and the maximum temperature of tap water should be set to below 45 °C.
- Never leave the baby unattended in

the bath or hot tub, even for a moment, and always empty the bath and hot tub after bathing.

- Keep care products, diapers, diaper packages etc out of the reach of the baby.

## **FEEDING THE BABY**

- If the baby gets breast milk or formula, it is not necessary to offer them other liquids (water, juice, tea) until they are six months old.
- If you are feeding your baby from a bottle, check that the bottle and pacifier are made of safe materials, are healthy, age-appropriate for the baby, and have been cared for / washed in a proper manner and using suitable tools.
- Formula must be prepared accor-

ding to the instructions on the package. The bottle must only be used for feeding a specific baby and must always be kept clean, otherwise the baby may get an intestinal infection and end up in the hospital.

- Always hold the baby in your lap when feeding them from a bottle, do not leave the baby alone in the bed when they are feeding.
- After feeding, keep the baby in an upright position for a few minutes to allow any of the swallowed air escape from the stomach, thus preventing food from being regurgitated and getting into the respiratory tract.
- During night feeds, use a night lamp with a yellow or orange light, as this kind of light does not interfere with the production of sleep hormones and the baby can be handled safely.
- Choose a safe place for feeding at night, avoid feeding in a rocking chair or armchair, because if you fall asleep due to fatigue, the baby may fall off your lap.
- If you start offering other food, make sure that the foods and drinks offered are appropriate to the age and skills of the baby, are at the right temperature and have the right composition. Offer the food on a spoon, be patient and don't rush, the baby is still learning a new skill. Do not try to make the baby laugh or encourage them to talk during feeding, as the baby may pull food into their airways. If you use a high

chair, secure the baby in it.

- If you offer finger foods such as grapes, cherry tomatoes, and other soft fruits and vegetables, cut them into smaller pieces to prevent choking.

## **OUTDOORS WITH THE BABY**

- The stroller must correspond to the age of the baby and the season, be intact, safe, in working order, and equipped with a reflector when you are going out in the dark. If you use a stroller, always fasten the child with safety belts.
- When leaving your baby to sleep outside, place the stroller in a place where it cannot tip over or roll away.
- The baby can only be left to sleep outside under supervision, make sure that pets do not get into the stroller.
- Place the stroller or pushchair into a shaded place to avoid the risk of overheating in direct sunlight.
- To prevent insect bites, cover the opening of the stroller with an insect net. To protect against wind, rain or snow, cover the stroller with a weatherproof cover intended only for this purpose.
- When you are outside with your baby in the summer, protect your baby's head from direct sunlight with a hat and their skin with sunscreen.
- In winter, temperatures as low as -10 °C are suitable for sleeping outside, but be aware of other factors such as wind chill and precipitation, which can make -8 °C feel like -15 °C.

## DRIVING / IN TRAFFIC WITH THE BABY

- When driving, always use a car seat that is of correct weight category and has not been involved in an accident; replace it with a safety seat in good time, because it is mostly designed for children up to 15 months of age or for children in a specific weight category. Place the car seat only with its back facing the direction of travel. A baby must not be driven in a car seat on the seat next to the driver if the car's front *airbag* has been activated. In the car seat, the baby must be at an angle of 45 degrees; if the position is too upright, their chin sinks to their chest and this can cause breathing difficulties, up to the point that the child cannot breathe at all. It is recommended to only take short trips, up to two hours. Being in a car seat for a long time puts a strain on

the baby's neck and back.

- Never leave the baby alone in the car, even for a short time.
- Always place the car seat (including a recliner chair) on the floor, not on a higher surface, always fasten the safety belts, even when placing the baby in the car seat for a short time.
- When riding a bike with a baby, use a bike seat that corresponds to the baby's weight category, and wear helmets and reflectors in the dark.

## BABY TOYS

- When choosing toys for your baby, make sure that they are intact, safe, do not contain small pieces, do not break easily and are age-appropriate.
- From time to time, check the safety and integrity of the baby's toys, care for them and keep them clean.
- Ask older children to keep their toys away from the baby.
- If you use a pacifier chain or

attachment, choose short crocheted cords or cords made of fabric, food-grade silicone, or safe plastic that do not pose a risk getting of around the baby's neck. Avoid handmade chains made of pearls and other small items.

## BABY AND PETS

Parents often think that their family pet is safe and are therefore less cautious. Do not leave the baby alone with a pet.



## HOME ENVIRONMENT

- When the baby begins to crawl and walk (also with support), make sure that the environment around them is safe. Small toys or other small objects belonging to another child, plastic covers, and bags should not be within the baby's reach, as they can pose a choking hazard.
- Cover the sharp edges and corners of upholstered furniture with special guards.
- The cords of curtains and blinds must not hang loosely, as the baby can get stuck in them and there is a risk of suffocation; opening the window fasteners must be restricted.
- Install stoppers on the doors that prevent the door from closing completely and ensure that you can unlock the toilet and bathroom door from the outside.
- To increase safety, fasten cabinets, dressers, shelves, floor lamps etc securely in place. Ensure that drawers and furniture doors close softly and have child-proof locks. Avoid putting a hanging tablecloth on the table.
- Check that the household chemicals, washing and cleaning products, alcoholic beverages, and medicines you have at home are in their original packaging and out of the reach of the baby, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Cover sockets, secure or hide loose wires.
- Check the plants in and around your home to make sure they are safe and out of your baby's reach.

- The outdoor area must be safe for the baby; driveways, unmaintained playgrounds, and open sandboxes can be dangerous for the baby.
- When you are carrying your baby, do not pick up hot drinks, food or objects.
- To prevent burns, install barriers for heaters and radiators. The oven and stove should have a child lock. Do not leave the baby alone near an open fireplace – risk of burns and fire.
- Do not smoke (including vape, hookah, cigarillo) at home, in the car or near the baby – cigarette smoke particles settle on furniture and the floor, poisoning others even after the cigarette has been put out; more than 80% of toxic cigarette smoke is invisible. It has been scientifically proven that an environment polluted with tobacco smoke is one of the causes of SIDS.
- Keep knives, scissors and other tools out of reach of the baby.

## OTHER HAZARDS

- In a shopping cart, fasten the baby to the designated seat with safety straps.
- When visiting with a baby, be especially attentive, as babies are curious in new environments and do not perceive danger.
- A stressed and depressed parent can unintentionally endanger the mental and physical health of the baby. Take care of your mental health as well as your partner's, and if necessary ask for help from your family doctor or consult a specialist.

# First year checklist for parents of infants

## BEDROOM

- The baby's bed is intact, with its original slats and a firm mattress that takes into account their age and needs.
  - There are no unnecessary items in the baby's bed (toys, bedding, blankets, pillows).
  - To avoid the risk of SIDS, I place the baby to sleep on their back until they learn to roll over by himself.
  - When placing the baby to sleep on their side, I make sure that they are fully supported from behind and there is no risk of them turning onto their stomach.
  - When the baby sleeps next to a parent, the baby's head is higher than the parent's head.
  - I dress the baby according to the temperature, avoiding the risk of overheating/hypothermia.
  - The bedroom temperature is *approx* 18–20 °C; overheating increases the risk of SIDS.
  - At night, a lamp with an orange light is lit for safe movement.
  - always place the recliner chair on the floor, not on a higher surface.
  - There is no smoking in the bedroom.
  - Pets do not share the bed with the baby.
- Detergents and household chemicals are kept in their original packaging, in a closed container and out of reach of the baby.
  - The changing table/pad is intact, safe, with tall edges and non-slip.
  - I am always with the baby in the bathroom and in the bath and empty the bath after bathing.
  - When dressing and changing the baby, I keep the care products at hand and never leave the baby alone on the changing table, even for a moment.
  - The sauna heater has guards to prevent burns; I prevent the baby from climbing on the sauna platform.
  - I have installed stoppers on the doors at home, which prevent the door from closing completely; toilet and bathroom door locks can be opened from the outside.

## BATHROOM AND SAUNA

- Before placing the baby in the water, I always check the temperature of the water coming from the tap or the bath water to make sure it is 37 °C.
  - The floor is dry or has an anti-slip cover to prevent falling when carrying the baby.
- I have checked the living room from the height of the baby's eyes, removed all small toys or other small objects, plastic covers, bags, objects that are prickly, can break easily or cut, and that are within the baby's reach and pose a risk.
  - I have checked that there are no toxic plants in the room.
  - I have covered the sockets with special plugs.
  - I check that there are no strings, wires, flowers, tablecloths etc loosely hanging from the curtains and blinds in the room, which the baby could grab, pull onto themselves or get stuck in.

- I make sure that the baby is not in front of the TV or another external stimulator, which can damage their immature developing nervous system.
- I avoid constant background noise, which is tiring and overstimulating for the baby.
- I make sure that the baby cannot climb onto a table, shelf or another surface from which they might fall off.
- I cover sharp furniture corners with padding.
- Furniture doors and drawers have a child-proof lock and close softly so that the baby's fingers do not get caught.
- I have blocked the baby's access to the windowsill and/or balcony, where they might fall off.
- I have put up a locked gate in front of the stairs both downstairs and upstairs, and have asked all family members to keep the gate closed.
- The stairs are equipped with a handrail, the steps are non-slip, I am careful when taking the baby upstairs and downstairs.
- Fireplaces and radiators are fenced off and at a safe distance for the baby.
- Each floor is equipped with a smoke detector which I check monthly.

## KITCHEN

- I cool the baby's food to a suitable temperature before feeding.
- Bottles, pacifiers, and utensils are age-appropriate, intact, clean and safe.
- I offer age-appropriate pureed food on a spoon or as large slices that the baby can grab and that do not fit in their

mouth all at once.

- When giving solid food, the baby is attached to the high chair in a sitting position and cannot climb out of it on their own; I am patient when feeding, I do not rush them.
- When I drink a hot drink or eat with a knife and fork, the baby is not in my lap or in a sling.
- The stove buttons are locked or protected, the oven door has a heat guard or the baby's access is prevented in some other way.
- There is no pet food, household chemicals, water containers, or breakable items on the floor.

## OUTDOOR AREA

- The stroller is intact, safe, suitable for the season, equipped with a reflector, and in working order.
- When the baby sleeps in the stroller, I make sure that the brake is applied on the wheels.
- If the baby sleeps in the stroller, they are secured with safety straps.
- I avoid direct sunlight on the stroller, which can cause overheating or sunburn on the baby's sensitive skin.
- I protect the stroller from dust, rain and other precipitation, from insects only with the cover intended for this purpose, as well as from gusts of wind, so that the stroller does not tip over.
- The baby is supervised when they are sleeping outside and I am aware that pets and preschool children, who can behave unpredictably, are not suitable for watching the baby.

- I make sure that the outdoor area is safe for the baby; driveways, unmaintained playgrounds and open sandboxes can be dangerous for the baby.
- I ensure that bodies of water and containers have limited access.
- I make sure that there are no toxic plants growing in the yard.
- I ensure that the pets who are outside are safe for the baby and I do not leave them unattended.

## **TRAFFIC**

- I secure the baby in the car seat with seat belts, even for a short ride.
- In the car, the baby is always in a car seat, which is attached according to the user manual.
- I ensure the car's airbag is turned off when the car seat is on the front seat.
- I always take the baby with me when I leave the car.
- I always place the carry cot on the floor, not on a higher surface.
- When riding a bicycle, I put a helmet on my baby and myself, and make sure that the baby is securely fastened in their seat.
- In the shopping cart, I use the seat intended for the baby, and never leave the cart unattended.

## **OBJECTS AND OTHER HAZARDS**

- When choosing toys, I make sure they meet the standard for children under one year of age, ie no small detachable parts or toxic materials, no strings, ribbons, plastic, or other detachable parts or batteries that can be removed easily.

- When choosing clothes for the baby, I avoid long strings, cords and scarves.
- I check that homemade toys, including pacifier clips, are not prone to breaking, so that small parts do not detach or pose a risk of entering the baby's mouth or airways.
- I keep the baby's pacifier, toys and hands clean so that the baby does not get infected with pathogens when they put them in their mouth.
- I always lift the baby gently and carefully to avoid shaking the baby.
- I ensure constant supervision of the baby, if I use a helper, I make sure that it is a safe person who can respond to the baby's needs, is not under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and does not smoke near the baby.
- I assess the caregiver's mobility and mental capacity to care for the baby.
- I have knowledge of first aid and emergency numbers are stored on my phone.
- I call for help or consult a specialist if there has been an accident: fall, crush, burn.
- I take care of my mental health, if necessary I ask for help from my family doctor, a psychologist or another specialist.

## **FIRST AID**

- My home pharmacy kit has supplies for cleaning and dressing a wound with a patch or bandage.
- I have phone numbers at hand, which I can call to ask for help.
- I will find an opportunity to complete first-aid training to help my child who has been injured in an accident.

**PÄÄSTEAMET**



**Injuries are preventable!**

National helplines:

Lasteabi.ee  
**116 111**

**112**  
SOS

**1220**  
Perearsti nõuanne  
Ülerigiline perearsti nõuandetelefon

Mürgistusinfo  
**16662**  
24h  
www.16662.ee