

On the Safe Side

Cindy Wolf

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A comprehensive guide for childproofing a home, *On the Safe Side* is both a security blanket for a first-time parent and a resource for experienced caregivers. This slim little volume packs a plethora of advice, taking the scary and unknown into the specific and doable to keep babies and toddlers safe. Like most new parents, Wolf was overwhelmed by her instant motherhood. As her first baby reached the toddler stage, she was not prepared for the unpredictability of his behavior in terms of safety. Her inability to find childproofing suggestions and sources under one cover motivated her to write *On the Safe Side*. Today she speaks with authority, with three children under five at home.

On the Safe Side is well organized. After some sobering statistics about household accidents in the home, Wolf begins with specific information about common and lesser-known hazards, from banisters and buckets to holidays and hygiene. Each succeeding chapter concentrates on a particular area of the house: living areas, kitchen and dining room, bathroom, baby's room, sibling and parents' rooms, garage and utility rooms. The last chapters cover the outdoors, away from home and environmental hazards.

The book has a simple index and extensive annotated lists and bibliography. The writing style is easy to read, and though sometimes necessarily repetitious, there is rarely a wasted word. Borrowed quotes, like "A sweater is a garment worn by a child when his mother feels chilly," at the beginning of each chapter lighten the otherwise serious tone of the book. This is an excellent book for anyone who has the care of our youngest citizens, even experienced grandmothers. It forces readers to think critically about their homes before something happens, then relax and watch their little ones grow.

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