

**Develop a schedule for monthly and quarterly checks.** Check your first-aid kit once a month to make sure that it is fully stocked. Hold a fire drill once a month as well. Review your family contact information every several months to make sure that it is up-to-date.

**Some things only need to be checked once!** Conduct a thorough safety check when you first open your home for family child care. For example, verify that your home does not have lead-based paint or radon, that radiator and hot water pipes are insulated, and that heaters or furnaces are enclosed by barricades. Many of these safety concerns will be part of your licensing inspection. When you purchase new equipment, such as a crib, changing table, or safety gate, make sure that it meets Consumer Product Safety Commission standards.

## Setting Up Your Home to Encourage Positive Behavior

Children respond best to environments that make them feel safe and secure. When they are given a special place to keep their belongings, children feel respected. When they know where to play, they are less likely to wander. When they know which things they may play with and which are off-limits, they learn to respect the rights of others. Children who have a wide variety of interesting and age-appropriate toys are more likely to become involved in purposeful play. When the environment supports group living, fights are rare and the day goes well.

When the environment is set up poorly, children may be confused. They may fight over toys or cry because they want a toy that another child is using. While there are many possible reasons for children's unwanted behavior, it's always a good idea to check the physical environment first to see if it is contributing to the problem. Here are some examples:

Unwanted Behavior	Possible Cause	How to Change the Environment
The children run around the home from room to room.	All of the rooms are interconnected.	Restructure the space by making one of the rooms out-of-bounds, by moving a piece of furniture in front of a pass-through, or by boxing in a play area with furnishings.

Unwanted Behavior	Possible Cause	How to Change the Environment
Children run without a purpose when they are inside.	There is no indoor area for active play and gross-motor activities.	Provide space for active play, such as dancing to music, rolling on rugs, or jumping on mattresses that are placed on the floor.
Children do not take care of materials or put them away.	Toys and materials are not organized in containers and are not placed where children can find and return them.	Store materials on low shelves that children can reach. Place toys with small pieces in dishpans or other containers. Label the shelves and containers so children know where to find and replace materials. Make a job chart to help children approach caring for FCC materials and furniture as a shared responsibility.
Infants, toddlers, and older children interfere with each other's activities.	Younger children do not have a safe space for crawling or toddling; older children do not have areas large enough for moving freely.	Set up safe, protected spaces where young infants can have tummy time and where mobile infants can crawl and walk. Include low tables where preschool children can play without being interrupted.
Children cry or fight a lot.	Children may be overstimulated by always being in a group or by having too many choices.	Have a quiet, cozy place for a child to spend some time alone, with one other child, or with an adult.

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