

# Healthy Indoor Environments

*Where We Live, Learn and Play*

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## Keeping Children Healthy in the Summer

*Written by Becca Stackhouse, FACS Extension Agent, Crisp County*



Georgia Healthy Housing  
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### Inside this issue:

Keeping Children Healthy

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### Playdough

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup salt  
2-3 cups flour  
1 tbsp vegetable oil  
1 tsp food coloring  
2 tbsp cream of tartar  
1 cup water

Mix the dry ingredients. Add oil, then the food coloring. Slowly add the water until you get the desired consistency. Have the children help knead the playdough.

Summer is in full swing, and you can anticipate the heat index staying high for the rest of the summer. Make sure you are ready with ways to stay safe, create fun and enjoy time with children this summer. A check list that includes ideas dealing with the sun, preparing meals, and encouraging activities can help to keep it simple and ensure safe and fun times.

Plan ahead for outdoor activities. Stay hydrated by taking breaks often for water, apply sunscreen and avoid too much sun. The rule of thumb is to reapply sunscreen every two hours, and more frequently if you're in water or sweating a lot. Keep meals small and light so that they are easily digestible. Plan for your outdoor activities by having the right equipment to play safely. Don't forget about bicycle helmets, life jackets, and other safety equipment. Always listen to your body, watch out for your kids, and if you are seeing any signs of a heat stroke (such as flushed hot and dry skin, lack of sweating, or fainting), be ready to call 9-1-1.

Summertime foods can be filling and delicious. Farmer's markets have plenty of fruits and vegetables available and they can be affordable and simple to prepare. Eating light, with quick proteins and easy salads or delicious fruits, makes getting on with summer activities a breeze.

Some days aren't fit for outside time because of excessive heat or bad weather. There's plenty to do inside that provides learning opportunities and fun with imagination as the key. Create engaging activities the children laughing, reading and talking.

A great way to incorporate art and teaching money skills is through making personal piggy banks out of household materials. Allow your child to decorate the bank to show off their personality. Then encourage ways to earn small sums of money, set goals and save in their new piggy bank. Another interactive activity that can lead to hours of fun is to make a batch of homemade playdough with your children. This encourages fine motor skills, strengthens their hands and builds concentration. Making playdough is quick and inexpensive and the children can help make it.

The best way for children to learn is to play! Make daily activities interactive and enjoy the time you have together.



## Look Again: Tips to Keep Children Safe from Heatstroke in Cars

*Written by Dr. Diane Bales, Human Development Extension Specialist*

We have all heard the shocking stories of young children who die inside a hot car. According to the National Safety Council, an average of 37 children die of pediatric vehicular heatstroke (PVH). Young children are especially at risk if left in a hot car. The bodies of infants and young children do not regulate temperature well, which makes them even more susceptible to heatstroke.

How does PVH happen? Sometimes these children climb into the car themselves and become trapped. Other times, a normally attentive parent is tired and distracted and accidentally forgets to drop off a child at child care, or a teacher unloading a bus after a child care field trip overlooks a child who has fallen asleep or is hiding under a seat.

Parents, teachers, and other adults should take the following steps to reduce the likelihood of this type of accident.

*The temperature inside a vehicle can rise 20 degrees within only 10 minutes.*

**Never leave child alone in a car**, even for a minute. The internal temperature of a car can rise 20 degrees within only 10 minutes.

**Lock vehicles** when not occupied to keep curious children out. Teach kids never to play or hide inside a car.

**Use visual reminders.** Most people believe they could never forget their child, but memory failures can happen to anyone. Every time you put your child in the car, leave something of the child's (such as a diaper bag or stuffed animal) on the front seat as a visual cue that your child is in the car. You could also put something you need at your destination (such as your purse or cell phone) in the back seat.

**Double-check.** Make a habit of opening the back door and looking in the back seat every time you get out of the car. Teachers in Georgia child care programs are required to do a 2-step check and sign a checklist each time they unload a bus or van to ensure that no child is left in the vehicle.

**Develop a plan.** Ask the child care program to call you, and the child's other emergency contacts if necessary, if your child is not dropped off as expected. This extra measure could save your child's life if he is locked inside a hot car.

**Act quickly** if you see a child inside a car alone, especially if that child is younger than age 6. Call 911 immediately and explain the situation. Check the car doors and remove the child if a door is unlocked. Stay with the car until help arrives.



Few people believe that they could ever forget a child. But human memory does fail, especially in times of stress. By following these guidelines, you can protect children from the deadly consequences of heatstroke in a hot car.



## The Time is Now to Prepare for Emergencies

Written by Dr. Pamela Turner, Housing & Environment Extension Specialist

Are you prepared for a severe storm? Tornadoes, severe storms, and flash floods can occur at any time. On average, Georgia has between 50-55 days with thunderstorms every year, and they are most common in the spring and summer months.

Make plans ahead of time so the storms don't catch you off guard. There are two major things you need to do to be prepared for emergency situations.

1. Develop an emergency kit
2. Create an emergency evacuation plan

Your first step is to use technology to your advantage and sign up for weather alerts on your phone and/or through email. For local information download the [Ready.Georgia](#) App.

As you get your home and family ready for emergencies, use the emergency kit checklist and planning resources on <http://ready.ga.gov/>.

Start by meeting together as a family and making an emergency plan. Part of the plan should include putting together an emergency kit or "Basic Ready Kit." Be sure to the kit and a copy of the plan in an easily accessible location. This isn't a one and done task. Emergency plans and kits should be reviewed and updated at least once a year.

Keep yourself and your family safe by preparing in advance of severe storms striking your community.



### Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Ready Kit:

- Water** At least 3 gallons per person, for drinking and hygiene
- Food** At least a 3-day supply of non-perishable food
- Can opener** For food, if kit contains canned food
- Radio** Battery-powered or hand crank NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries
- Emergency charger** for mobile devices
- Flashlight and extra batteries**
- First aid kit**
- Whistle** To signal for help
- Face mask** To help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter in place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties** For personal hygiene
- Wrench or pliers** To turn off utilities
- Local maps**



### Family Emergency Plan



Make sure your family has a plan in case of an emergency. Before an emergency happens, sit down together and decide how you will get in contact with each other, where you will go and what you will do in an emergency. Keep a copy of this plan in your emergency supply kit or another safe place where you can access it in the event of a disaster.

Neighborhood Meeting Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Out-of-Neighborhood Meeting Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Out-of-Town Meeting Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fill out the following information for each family member and keep it up to date.

|                      |                                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Name: _____          | Social Security Number: _____        |
| Date of Birth: _____ | Important Medical Information: _____ |
| Name: _____          | Social Security Number: _____        |
| Date of Birth: _____ | Important Medical Information: _____ |
| Name: _____          | Social Security Number: _____        |
| Date of Birth: _____ | Important Medical Information: _____ |
| Name: _____          | Social Security Number: _____        |
| Date of Birth: _____ | Important Medical Information: _____ |
| Name: _____          | Social Security Number: _____        |
| Date of Birth: _____ | Important Medical Information: _____ |
| Name: _____          | Social Security Number: _____        |
| Date of Birth: _____ | Important Medical Information: _____ |

Write down where your family spends the most time; work, school and other places you frequent. Schools, daycare providers, workplaces and apartment buildings should all have site-specific emergency plans that you and your family need to know about.

Work Location One: \_\_\_\_\_ School Location One: \_\_\_\_\_

Images source: [ready.ga.gov](http://ready.ga.gov/)

## Healthy Home Hacks

**Emergency plans** can be attached to a bulletin board you hang on the inside of the entryway closet. If you don't have a closet near the entryway, store your family emergency plan in a covered basket or container near the exterior door. ~ Pamela Turner

**Scratches** on your coffee table or any other wood surface are easily covered with crayons. Find a shade that matches the finish, and soften it with a hair dryer. Color in the scratches with the softened crayon and buff the repaired area with a clean rag. ~ Ines Beltran

**Removing stains:** To remove tough stains from fabrics, mix ¾ cup of hydrogen peroxide, a few teaspoons of baking soda, and a squirt or two of dish soap. Apply the mixture to the stain, let it sit for about 30 minutes, and wash as usual. Make small batches of the mixture as needed. ~ Keishon Thomas

## Helpful Hints for Healthy Indoor Environments

*Written by Dr. Pamela Turner, Housing & Environment Extension Specialist*

### Freshen the air

Smells can evoke emotional reactions. Research indicates that pleasant fragrances can improve your mood or sense of wellbeing. Some easy ways to remove odors and add pleasant fragrances to your home are listed below.

- ◇ Place some fresh rosemary, lavender, or thyme in a bowl and place on a table in the living room.
- ◇ Bake cookies or bread.
- ◇ Simmer citrus zest and a cinnamon stick in water for 10-15 minutes.
- ◇ Freshen the indoor air with a mixture of a few drops of your favorite essential oil, 1 cup of water, and 2 tablespoons of non-flavored vodka.
- ◇ To remove an unpleasant smell, set out a bowl of white vinegar or unused charcoal cat litter. Remove or replace after one week.
- ◇ Stick some cloves in an orange. Hang it with a ribbon in your kitchen.



*Images from Pixabay*



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