

KEEPING KIDS SAFE IN THE BACKYARD

Playing in the backyard is a quintessential part of growing up in South East Queensland. There is nothing better than running around and playing in the yard, but first it's important that the backyard is a safe place for your children to be. Follow these important tips for how your kids can stay safe in the backyard.



1. Undertake an audit of the plant life in your backyard and make sure there are no dangerous or poisonous plants. If there are any plants that you are unsure of take a clipping to your local nursery for identification. Remove any that are deemed unsafe.
2. Even if there are no specifically dangerous plants in the backyard, educate your children that they should never eat plants or berries in the yard, unless you say that they can.
3. Whilst ideally all backyards will be fully fenced, but if yours isn't you should create a clear boundary and make sure that a responsible adult is supervising them at all times. If you have a pool in your backyard special care should be taken to ensure that all fencing is up to current legislative standards, safe and secure. Any objects that can be pulled up to the pool fence and used to climb over should be removed immediately.
4. Take a walk around getting on your knees, so that you are at their eye level really works and view the backyard from your child's perspective. Are there dangers such as piles of wood they could climb up on and fall from? Holes in the lawn which are difficult to see where a child could twist an ankle or worse, whilst running around? Any tree branches which are low enough to be run into? Take special notice of anywhere that water can accumulate. Water, even a small amount can be a potential danger. Children can drown in as little as one inch of water. Still water is also a breeding ground for mosquitoes which carry disease. Empty any pooled water and remove the container before more rain arrives.
5. Ensure that children are not in the vicinity whilst you are using any type of pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers. It's a good idea to keep children off the lawn for 48 hours after application of these types of products.
6. Never mow with children nearby, the noise of the mower will impede your ability to know where they are. Never, ever allow a child to use or ride on a lawn mower.



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7. Ensure that all of your lawn maintenance tools and products are safely stored out of reach of children.
8. We all know how damaging the Queensland sun can be, so another part of backyard safety is to ensure that children always follow the slip, slop, slap and slide rules. Slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen, slap on a hat and slide on some sunglasses.

Playing in the backyard is fantastic for your child's physical and psychological health and it really doesn't take much time and effort to ensure that it is also a safe place for them to exercise, create, imagine and dream.



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