

## Top 10 Tips to Help Safeguard your Visually Impaired Child's Movement Around the Home.

1	<b>Get to know your home from your child's perspective.</b>	Learn about your house from your child's height. By crawling around on your hands and knees you get your child's perspective of the home and garden and can identify any safety hazards. Discuss with your child any hazards you find and how you can resolve them. Your child's view may be different to yours.
2	<b>Keeping the home tidy and clutter free.</b>	Encourage your child to take on some household responsibilities and make it part of their routine. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tidying their bedrooms, putting their toys and clothes away and taking out the rubbish.</li> <li>• Show your child where their toys and clothes are stored including the laundry basket for their dirty clothes.</li> </ul>
3	<b>Lighting.</b>	Your child may require high illumination or need diffused lighting to function well. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defusing blinds at windows can shut out or bring in light.</li> <li>• Dimmer switches are also useful for controlling lighting levels.</li> <li>• Use a task lamp for closer work, such as homework.</li> <li>• Plug in night lights can be helpful in hallways and landings.</li> </ul>
4	<b>Good contrast.</b>	Good contrast refers to the ability of our vision to distinguish between an object and its background. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floors, walls, doors or skirting boards are highlighted best if they are in contrasting colours.</li> <li>• Use different floor coverings (carpet, textured rugs, laminate or wood floors).</li> <li>• Use contrasting colours, such as black on white.</li> <li>• Using a roll of yellow tape to highlight corners or edges, such as stairs, handrails or door handles. This is a relatively inexpensive way to highlight potential hazards.</li> <li>• Place milk into a coloured jug or bowl and food on a white plate if you are serving colourful food. It is easier for your child locate items and reduce the chance of spilling.</li> </ul>
5	<b>Tripping and falling.</b>	Secure trailing wires and loose fitting carpets to minimise tripping and falling. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For very young children install stair gates.</li> <li>• When using the iron and ironing board make sure your child is aware that it is there. Explain the dangers, your child will understand better if he knows.</li> <li>• Always keep things in the same place and tidy away after use.</li> </ul>
6	<b>Bumping into things.</b>	A child soon gets to know their own home if they are familiar with all areas. However, very young children often learn the hard way and bump into things. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pad sharp edges of furniture, shelves, and fireplaces. You may have to highlight them too.</li> <li>• Leave doors fully open or closed to prevent head injuries.</li> </ul>
7	<b>Breakables.</b>	Keep breakables out of the reach of, or in a secured cupboard out of the sight of your child. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use childproof locks on your cupboards and drawers that contain hazardous substances, such as household bleach or medicines.</li> </ul>
8	<b>House rules.</b>	Create some house rules. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toys are not allowed in the kitchen.</li> <li>• Always use the handrail when using the stairs.</li> <li>• Encourage your child to travel at a safe but realistic speed, especially when close to danger areas like stairs.</li> </ul> <p>Remember, it is not just the child who has a visual impairment who might be harmed if rules are broken, it could be a family member, a visitor or a pet.</p>
9	<b>Fire.</b>	Even with the most organised household accidents happen. Have an escape route planned. Teach this to all your family members including your child with a visual impairment at an age appropriate time.
10	<b>To summarise.</b>	You can help to keep your child safe more than anyone else. Listen to their views and discuss together what helps them feel safe. Teach your child how to keep themselves safe around their home by using some of the tips above. Do not shield your child from hazards as they will not learn how to deal with them in real situations.