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### **Keep Children Safe While Cleaning the House**

There is nothing quite like a clean home. However, products used to clean the home can pose a danger to young children. National Poison Prevention Week will be observed March 16-22 this year and it annually highlights the dangers of poisonings and how to prevent them.

Parents and caregivers must take extra precautions when using household cleaners. One of the most important things parents can do is install child-proof locks on cabinets where cleaning supplies are stored. Never assume a cabinet is too high for a curious toddler. Also, keep all household products in their original package. The labels contain useful first aid information in the event of accidental exposure or ingestion.

Before using any cleaning product, read the directions to ensure you are using the product as it is designed to be used. When using a cleaning bucket, never leave it unattended. Buckets with even a small amount of water or other liquid can pose a danger to children.

Toddlers are 'top heavy' and may fall head first into an unattended bucket. A young child could easily drown in just a small amount of water in a bucket or tub.

When trying to find time to clean house, it is a good idea to schedule cleaning during "down times" such as when children are napping, at school or on a play date. Another helpful hint is to only take out the amount of cleaning product needed for each job as it is being done. Keep the rest of the cleaning supplies safely locked up so young explorers will not get their hands on them. Any spills should be wiped up immediately.

It's always a good idea to avoid distractions or interruptions when children are present during cleaning. If the doorbell rings, take your child with you to answer it. The same holds true for when the telephone rings. Better yet, let the answering machine take the call when you're in the middle of cleaning.

Post the Poison Control Center number by each telephone in the house. The number is 1-800-222-1222. Taking these preventative steps are simple and effective ways to ensure your home is as safe as possible. The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, or status as a veteran and is an equal opportunity employer. Information given herein is for educational purposes only. References made to commercial products or trade names are with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement is implied. Oklahoma State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, State and Local Governments Cooperating.