# Renting with Kids Guide

A friendly, practical guide to renting with children, from finding the right space and childproofing to schools, noise, neighbors and fair housing protections for families.

**OUR PROMISE TO YOU**

We wrote this guide for families and for the owners who rent to them, because a rental can be a wonderful place to raise children, full of first steps, birthday parties and growth marks on a doorframe. A little planning keeps little ones safe, neighbors friendly and the home in good shape. If anything here is unclear, we would genuinely love to help.

This guide shares general information to help you, and is not legal, medical or child-safety advice. Bunklow does not inspect homes or decide fair housing matters.

Over the years, we have rented to a great many families, and we have watched kids grow up in the homes we cared for. We have learned that the families who settle in happiest usually asked a few good questions before signing, childproofed in the first week, and got to know the neighbors early.

The good news is that renting with children is very doable. This guide walks through choosing the right home, safety and childproofing, kid-friendly habits that protect the home, noise and neighbors, schools and moving with kids, and the fair housing protections that families have. We hope it helps your family feel right at home.

## FOUR SIMPLE RULES

1. **Safety first**
   Childproof early: anchor furniture, cover outlets, lock away medicines and check window safety.
2. **Know your protections**
   Fair housing law protects families with children from discrimination.
3. **Be a good neighbor**
   A friendly hello and reasonable quiet hours go a long way.
4. **Report things early**
   Share broken or unsafe items in writing so they can be fixed quickly.

## FOR FAMILIES

### SETTLING IN WITH KIDS

- Childproof in the first week: anchor dressers and TVs, cover outlets and lock up cleaners and medicines.
- Check windows, stairs, railings, balconies and pool areas with your children in mind.
- Ask the owner before installing safety gates, window stops or anchors that need screws.
- Use washable paint-friendly options, like an easel or paper roll, for young artists.
- Introduce yourself to neighbors and share your quiet-time habits.
- Teach kids where the exits are, and practice your family fire escape plan.
- Share anything broken or unsafe in writing right away.

**FURNITURE TIP-OVERS**

**The CPSC warns that falling furniture and TVs injure many children each year. Anchoring them is one of the most important childproofing steps.**

### PLEASE BE CAREFUL WITH THESE

- Please don't leave young children unattended near water, windows or balconies.
- Please don't place cribs, beds or furniture kids can climb near windows.
- Please don't let children play in parking areas, driveways or near the street.
- Please don't drill or make changes without the owner's written permission.

**BUNKLY'S FIELD TIP**

**Get down on your hands and knees and crawl through each room. You'll spot outlets, cords and sharp corners exactly the way a toddler does.**

## IF A CHILD IS HURT OR AT RISK

1. Stay calm. If a child is seriously hurt, call 911 right away.
2. If a child swallows something harmful, call Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222.
3. Move children away from the unsafe area, and block it off if you can.
4. Take photos of what caused the problem once everyone is safe.
5. Share it with the owner or manager in writing right away.
6. Keep a record of who you told and when. You did exactly the right thing.

**BUNKLY'S FIELD TIP**

**Save Poison Help, 1-800-222-1222, in your phone and post it on the fridge. In a scary moment, nobody wants to search.**

## FOR OWNERS AND MANAGERS

### WELCOMING FAMILIES

- Treat every applicant equally. Refusing or steering families with children is generally against fair housing law.
- Use reasonable, consistent occupancy standards that follow the rules where the home is.
- Check window guards or stops, railings, stair balusters and pool barriers.
- Follow lead-based paint disclosure rules for homes built before 1978.
- Make sure smoke and carbon monoxide alarms work, and secure any furniture you provide.
- Share a list of nearby schools, parks and family resources as a welcome.

**Anchor dressers and TVs to the wall, with permission.**

## WHEN A FAMILY SHARES A CONCERN

- Thank the family, and treat child safety concerns as urgent.
- Fix broken railings, windows, latches and other hazards promptly.
- Approve reasonable childproofing requests, and agree in writing on any repairs at move-out.
- Handle noise concerns from neighbors fairly and kindly, remembering that children make normal noise.
- Write down what was reported, what was done and when, and follow up kindly to make sure all is well.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE RENTING

**Is the home near schools, parks and childcare? Are there stairs, a pool, a balcony or busy streets nearby?**

**May we install safety gates, anchors and window stops? Is there lead paint, and what are the noise and yard rules?**

### BUNKLY'S FIELD TIP

**Families often stay for years. Approving a few anchor screws and safety gates is a small price for a long, happy tenancy.**

## COMMON MYTHS, GENTLY CORRECTED

***"Owners can choose adults-only tenants."***

Except for qualifying senior housing, refusing families with children is generally illegal.

***"Kids always damage rentals."***

Normal wear happens with every resident. Simple habits keep homes in great shape.

***"Window screens keep kids from falling."***

Screens keep bugs out, not children in. Window stops and guards help.

***"Neighbors can complain about any child noise."***

Everyday family sounds are part of life. Reasonable quiet hours help everyone.

### BATH TIME

**Never leave a young child alone in the bath, even for a moment. Keep water heater temperatures at a safe setting.**

**Window screens don't stop falls. Use window stops.**

## SAFETY, HEALTH AND THE LAW

Little ones are curious, so please lock away medicines, cleaners, button batteries and detergent pods, and watch children around water at all times. Homes built before 1978 may have lead-based paint, so report peeling paint right away. If a child is hurt or swallows something harmful, call 911 or Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222.

The federal Fair Housing Act protects families with children under 18, including pregnant people, from discrimination in renting, with limited exceptions such as qualifying senior housing. Occupancy rules, lead paint disclosures and window safety rules differ from place to place. We would gently encourage a quick look at the rules where your home is, and if you are ever unsure, a fair housing organization or an attorney in your area will be glad to help.

### WALK THE HOME WITH KIDS IN MIND

**Your move-in walk is the perfect time to look at the home through your children's eyes: windows, stairs, outlets, railings and the yard. Please give every single item a comment, in any condition, with photos. Bunklow Walk and our free move-in condition report were made for exactly this.**

## A FEW MORE HELPFUL HABITS

### MOVING WITH KIDS

**Let children pack a special box of favorite things and unpack it first. It helps the new place feel like home.**

### SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

**Many schools ask for proof of address. A signed lease usually works, so keep a copy handy.**

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

- U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission: Anchor It!
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Fair Housing Rights

**We hope this guide helps your family feel safe, welcome and right at home. Thank you so much for taking the time to read it. If there is anything we can do to help, we would truly love to hear from you.**

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