

Staying safe with Sam:

Safety around laundry
and cleaning products



Teacher's handbook

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Why we have developed this resource

Cleaning and laundry products make our lives much easier but, if they get into the hands of unsuspecting young children, they can cause serious harm.

Parents and carers have the key role to play in keeping young children safe at home. But there is evidence that, from around the age of 3½ to 4, children start to understand some of the concepts around keeping themselves safe and behave safely with greater consistency.

Also, when you teach children safety messages from a young age, with repetition the safe behaviour can become automatic. When children carry safety messages back into their family homes, there is an opportunity for the learned behaviour to be reinforced.

That's why the Child Accident Prevention Trust, with the generous support of the UK Cleaning Products Industry Association, has developed this educational resource, to help teach reception age children how to stay safe around cleaning and laundry products, and to support parents to keep their children safe at home.

About the resource

The resource has four parts:

The ***Staying safe with Sam* story book**, featuring four different scenarios where children may encounter laundry and cleaning products – washing clothes, looking in a shopping bag, cleaning the bath and looking under the sink.

A **poster** to display in your classroom.

This **teacher's handbook**, which includes:

- The curriculum links covered by the resource (page 2).
- Background information to support you in delivering the lessons, including advice on risk management (page 2) and a fact sheet (pages 4 to 5).

- An introductory session on laundry and cleaning products (pages 6 to 7).
- A lesson plan for each of the four scenarios in the story book, to help you teach the children about safety around cleaning and laundry products (pages 8 to 11).
- Ideas for extension activities with the children (pages 12 to 13) and for a session with parents (page 13) plus a colouring-in activity sheet to use in the classroom (page 14).

Home-link materials to reinforce children's learning and support parents in keeping their children safe: a cover letter, a mini story book for parents to read with their children, a homework sheet, a copy of the chant and a fact sheet.

Downloads

You can download a PDF of the story book for your classroom whiteboard plus copies of all the other resources here: www.capt.org.uk/staying-safe-with-sam



Curriculum links

Early Years Foundation Stage

The *Staying Safe with Sam* pack has been designed to support:

- The reception curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly communication and language, personal, social and emotional development and understanding the world.
- The recommendations of Ofsted's 2017 report *Bold Beginnings*. This found: "Reading was at the heart of the curriculum in the most successful classes. Listening to stories, poems and rhymes fed children's imagination, enhanced their vocabulary and developed their comprehension."

85% of teachers involved in the pilot agreed that the pack supported vocabulary, while 92% agreed it supported comprehension. Teachers reported:

"For a foundation stage resource, it picked up a lot of speaking and listening. We shared the story book and asked the questions in the handbook. The discussions were amazing."

"It fitted in well because we were talking about ourselves, how we grow, how we keep safe."

"It covered an important part of our curriculum when the children are talking about different things in their environment. We used it as an entire week's planning."

Risk management

Given the topic, it is important to make sure that the lessons promote safe behaviours through example. For example:

- Ensure that any props you use are clean and free of chemicals – but handle them with care as if they contained cleaning products. Explain why you are being careful to the children – because cleaners are so strong, they can make your skin and eyes hurt/sore if you get the liquid on you.
- If you have any concerns about using props, you may wish to use A4 size photos of laundry and cleaning products instead.
- Make sure that any discussion does not inadvertently promote an unsafe interest in the products among the children, by plenty of repetition of the message that these things can hurt your tummy, eyes and skin.
- Children like to help adults with tasks around the home and are likely to give examples. Praise them for helping, but ensure that the safety message 'Ask a grown up!' comes across strongly.



Background material and general guidance

Subject knowledge	<p>We have included a fact sheet to enable you to talk with confidence about the subject.</p>
The lesson plan	<p>We have aimed to provide you with all the guidance you may need. Because teaching this topic carries some risks (see risk management above) we have given more detail than you might come across for other topics.</p> <p>At the same time, given your experience of working with children this age, we have not been overly prescriptive. There is flexibility for you to bring the material to life in your own style.</p> <p>In terms of teaching the different scenarios, you may wish to split them over a week, a month or a half term.</p>
Pitching the lesson at the right level	<p>This resource has been designed for children aged 4 to 5, but some pupils, including those with special needs or English as an additional language, may need more help to understand concepts in the lesson.</p> <p>You can adapt the phrases we have suggested in the lesson plan to suit your children, switching words to suit their age, learning ability or the region of the country.</p>
Thinking about younger brothers and sisters	<p>The peak age for hospital admissions from accidental poisoning from cleaning and laundry products is one to three. So one of the aims of this resource is to encourage the children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look out for younger brothers and sisters.• Alert a grown-up, if they spot a danger with a cleaning or laundry product. <p>The children do not need to take on responsibility for younger siblings, but they can play a role in watching out for dangers in the home.</p> <p>Emphasise that younger family members 'are too young/small to understand'.</p> <p>Look out for opportunities in discussion to raise or explore this point. You may also want to do a role play involving a younger brother or sister as an extension activity.</p>

Staying safe with Sam: Fact sheet for teachers

From around 3½ to 4 years of age, children can start to learn safety concepts that help them to engage with the world around them in a safer way. They can also gain a sense of responsibility from looking out for dangers for younger siblings.

This fact sheet is here to support you with background information before you deliver a safety session with your class.

Risks from laundry and cleaning products

Accidental poisoning is the third most common reason for children under five to be admitted to hospital. Household chemicals, including laundry and cleaning products, cause one in five of these hospital admissions.

However, laundry and cleaning products don't just pose a poisoning risk, as they can also hurt children if they get them in their eyes or on their skin.

Young children are at most risk because they explore by putting things in their mouths. Older children are at risk if they try to copy adults around them or 'help' with cleaning tasks without supervision.

It's not always obvious which products can be dangerous. Washing up liquid is relatively harmless for example, but oven cleaner can cause caustic burns if swallowed. You wouldn't expect small children to be able to tell products apart, which is why the message to children is to ask a grown-up.

Why are children so at risk?

- Little children investigate the world around them by putting things in their mouths. This is a natural part of development, but dangerous if cleaning products are left within their reach
- Older children like to copy or help the adults around them. This, combined with their growing abilities to open things and climb up to reach things that look interesting, means they may get into products they shouldn't.
- Laundry and cleaning products can be brightly coloured and child appealing – washing capsules are a good example. But they can cause damage to eyes if bitten into and further harm if swallowed.

Safety features

Some cleaning products have **child-resistant tops**. These are designed to make it harder for young children to open a bottle containing a potentially harmful product. But child-resistant does not mean child-proof. With increased dexterity, some 3 and 4 year-olds can open child-resistant tops in seconds!

Some laundry products, for example washing capsules and tablets ('liquid tabs'), come in boxes with **child-frustrating closures**. Again, these make it harder for young children to open them, though remember they are not child-proof.

All washing capsules and tablets now have their film coated with a **bitter safety ingredient** designed to make the child spit the product out rather than swallow it. Some cleaning and household products have a bittering agent in the liquid.



Labels

Product labels have helpful indicators to show how hazardous the product is and advice on safe use and safe storage. These include safety symbols and icons.



This symbol indicates health hazards like skin irritation or sensitisation, serious eye irritation, or that a product could be harmful if swallowed.



This symbol indicates more severe health hazards.

Prevention advice

- Keep laundry and cleaning things on a high shelf or in a cupboard with a safety lock.
- Put laundry and cleaning products away as soon as they've been used.
- Watch out for children taking the washing capsule or tablet out of the washing machine. Close the door straight away.
- Don't pour cleaning products into other bottles like drinks bottles. Children can get confused.
- Be careful round at friends' and relatives' homes, where children may find dangerous products under the sink or by the toilet.

First aid advice

- If the product gets into a child's eyes, wash carefully with water. If the eye irritation carries on, get medical advice.
- If a child swallows a laundry or cleaning product, get medical advice. Don't make them sick or give them anything to eat or drink.
- Get medical help straight away if a child's mouth is burning or if they are being sick, blacking out, having fits or feeling very sleepy.
- Remember to have the product container with you when you get medical advice, as this will make it easier to provide the right treatment for the child.

Before reading the first story:

Introducing laundry and cleaning products

What to do

1. Ask the children the following questions and explore their answers.
 - Who does the cleaning at home? Who washes the clothes? (acknowledge that children might help)
 - Where does this happen in the house? (kitchen/bathroom/ toilet/washing machine etc)
 - Why do we do cleaning? (safe and hygienic home, removing dirt etc)
 - What helps? (water/bucket/mop/cleaning products/cloths etc)
2. Bring out the tray with the laundry and cleaning product containers / the photos of the products, ask the questions below and explore the children's answers:
 - What have we got here?
 - Does mum/dad/grandma/grandad use these?
3. Select some of the containers/photos and very briefly mention what they are for (toilet/floor/ clothes etc)
4. Explain: 'They make things clean and shiny. They remove dirt and germs (tiny bugs that can make you sick). They can do this because they are very strong.'

Resources and tips

Selection of empty (washed) laundry and cleaning product containers on a tray, including an empty box of washing capsules, initially out of sight and reach of the children.

OR, if you prefer, photos of laundry and cleaning products.

This is to illustrate the range of jobs these products do rather than to teach about specific products.

Some children may not recognise all the products, perhaps because their parents don't use them or have other names for them. This isn't a problem as we are talking in general terms about washing and cleaning.

What to do

5. Explain how the products can be harmful and discuss some of their experiences:

'All of these cleaning things are great. They can make your home clean and safe from germs (tiny bugs). But because the cleaners are so strong, they can make your skin and eyes hurt/ sore if you get the liquid on you. That's why only grown-ups should use them.'

'Has anyone ever had sore skin?
What was it like? (sunburn/any cause)'

'They can also make you feel sick if you drink them – has anyone ever been sick?'

6. Stress the need to be careful around the products:

'That's why cleaning things always have to be put away when they are not being used.'

'You must never touch cleaning things unless a grown-up says it's ok.'

'If you see a cleaner that has not been put away, don't touch it – tell a grown up.'

'If you see a cleaning bottle and are thinking what to do – ask a grown up.'

7. Explain that you have a chant to help the children remember what to do.

'Here's a chant that reminds us what to do –
ASK A GROWN UP!

'It's always best to ask a grown-up up if you're not sure or something is wrong'

'Can I eat this? **ASK A GROWN UP!**

'Can I drink that? **ASK A GROWN UP!**

'Can I touch that? **ASK A GROWN UP!**

'Always remember: **ASK A GROWN UP!**

Resources and tips

The chant works well as a question and response.

You may want to encourage the children to copy Sam's thumbs up action, when they call out **ASK A GROWN UP!**



Scenario 1: Washing the clothes

1. Show the **front cover of the book**, introduce Sam and Lily, and see if the children can guess they are lions: *'I'd like you to meet Sam and his sister Lily. What kind of animals do you think they are?'*
2. **Page 1:** Check with the children that they have remembered the names.
3. Tell them: *'Here's Sam. Sam is going to tell you a story about washing clothes with his dad.'* Then start reading the story.
4. Show **page 2** (sorting the washing and dad making the tea) and read the story.
5. Show **page 3** (Lily reaching for the washing capsule/tablet) and read the first paragraph. **Pause** after: *'Oh no what should I do?'* Ask:
'What is Sam worried about? What is he thinking? Do you know why?'
6. Encourage the children to identify what is happening. Then explain:
'Lily has picked up the little washing tab that grown-ups use for washing the clothes. They have lovely colours, which is why little children like Lily may want to play with them. But it's not a toy. If she bites it, it will taste nasty and make her feel sick. It needs to be locked away or put up somewhere high so she can't reach it. She is too young/little to know what to do.'
7. Ask the children if they have younger brothers or sisters. Or do they have older brothers and sisters who help them?
8. Carry on with the story. Read the last paragraph on page 3: *'Daddy, I shout ... "Good work! Well done, little man."*
9. Show **page 4** and read the first paragraph. Ask: *Why is daddy pleased with Sam?* Confirm it's because Sam did the right thing and asked a grown-up.
Use this as an opportunity to discuss:
 - Looking out for younger brothers and sisters, who are too young/little to keep themselves safe.
 - The importance of asking for help from a grown-up, if they think a younger brother/sister may be in danger.
10. Finish by doing the chant as a question and response. Reinforce the learning by getting the children to do Sam's thumbs up action when they respond to the question.
End by asking: *'What should we always remember? ASK A GROWN-UP!'*

Note: You may find it helpful to have a photo of a washing machine and a washing capsule/tablet, to help the children understand this scenario.

Scenario 2: Looking in Gran's bag

1. IF you are treating each scenario as a separate lesson, show the **front cover of the book** and reintroduce Sam the lion and his little sister Lily. Explain that today you are telling a story about Sam and Lily's Gran coming to their house to visit them.
2. Show **page 5** and read the story. Ask:
'Do you have visitors who bring special treats when they visit?'
Explain that sweets are a special treat for Sam, he doesn't eat sweets very often. This is why Sam is so excited that there might be sweets in Gran's bag.
3. Show **page 6** and continue the story. Ask:
'What do you think that Sam is thinking about the bottle? Is he thinking it might be something he can drink, like juice/squash/pop?'
4. Show **page 7** and continue the story. **Pause** after Sam says, *"Gran, what's in that bottle? It's all white, green and blue!"*
Ask: *'Did Sam do the right thing? Why?'*
5. Confirm that he did the right thing. He asked a grown-up.
6. Carry on reading Gran's explanation and advice.
7. Continue to **page 8** and read the first paragraph. Ask: *Why is Gran so pleased with Sam?*
Confirm that Sam did the right thing. He asked a grown up.
'Gran was right. You should never just drink things that you find without asking a grown-up. Toilet cleaner can make the toilet really clean. But it can make you sick if you drink it.'
8. Finish by doing the chant as a question and response. Reinforce the learning by getting the children to do Sam's thumbs up action when they respond to the question.
End by asking: *'What should we always remember? ASK A GROWN-UP!'*

Scenario 3: Cleaning the bath

1. IF you are treating each scenario as a separate lesson, show the **front cover of the book** and reintroduce Sam the lion. Explain that today you are telling a story about Sam's mum cleaning the bath.
2. Show **page 9** and say, *'Here is Sam's mummy. She is having a busy day.'* Read the first paragraph, then **pause** and say:
'Mummy is thinking that she must put the bath cleaner away somewhere safe when she stops using it, so that Sam and Lily can't reach it. That's because it can hurt your eyes or skin.'
3. Continue the story – the bell rings and mummy goes downstairs to the door.
4. Show **page 10** and read the first paragraph – Sam goes in the bathroom. Ask:
'What do you think Sam is thinking?'
5. Continue the story. Read the second paragraph only and confirm what Sam is thinking – *"Should I finish cleaning the bath?..."* Ask the children:
'What should Sam do? Should he finish cleaning the bath? Or should he ask a grown-up? Why?'
6. Carry on with the story – Sam asks his mummy.
7. Show **page 11** and continue reading the story, with mum's explanation that cleaning things can be dangerous.
8. Continue to **page 12** and read the first paragraph. Ask: *Why is mummy pleased with Sam?* Confirm that Sam did the right thing. He asked a grown up.
'Mummy was right. Bath cleaner can make the bath really clean and shiny, but it can hurt your eyes or skin. That's why only grown-ups should use it'
9. Finish by doing the chant as a question and response. Reinforce the learning by getting the children to do Sam's thumbs up action when they respond to the question.
End by asking: *'What should we always remember? ASK A GROWN-UP!'*

Note: It is possible that, during the discussion, the children may ask why Sam's mum left the bottle of bath cleaner out, when she knew it was dangerous. Explain that mummy was distracted by the doorbell and, in her rush to get downstairs to answer the door, forgot to put it away out of reach.

The children may also ask what Sam's mum is wearing on her hands. Explain that these are rubber gloves, as she doesn't want the cleaner to hurt her hands.



Scenario 4: Under the sink

1. If you are treating each scenario as a separate lesson, show the **front cover of the book** and reintroduce Sam. Explain that today you are telling a story about Sam being thirsty and looking for something to drink.
2. Show **page 13** and introduce the scenario by saying: *'Sam's having another busy day! He's hot and thirsty'*. Start to read the story.
3. Show **page 14** and continue reading to the end of the second paragraph. **Pause** after Sam says, *"I don't know what to do!"*. Ask the children:
'What should Sam do? Should he get himself a drink? Or should he ask a grown-up?'
4. Carry on with the story – Sam asks his mummy.
5. Show **page 15** and continue reading the story, with mum's explanation that cleaning things can make you very sick if you drink them.
6. After you read out mummy saying: *"If you're thirsty, ask a grown-up to get a drink for you"* point out to the children how, in the picture, mummy has now made drinks for Sam and Lily.
7. Continue to **page 16** and read the first paragraph. Ask: *Why is Mummy pleased with Sam?* Confirm that Sam did the right thing. He asked a grown up.
'Mummy was right. You should never just drink things that you find. If you're thirsty, you should ask a grown-up to get a drink for you. The cleaning things that Sam found under the sink aren't good to drink, they can make you sick.'
8. Finish by doing the chant as a question and response. Reinforce the learning by getting the children to do Sam's thumbs up action when they respond to the question.
End by asking: *'What should we always remember? ASK A GROWN-UP!'*

Note: It is possible that, in the discussion of this scenario, some of the children may say that, at their house, there is a lock on the cupboard under the sink. Confirm this is a good thing. Sam's mum is so busy that she forgot she had cleaning things under the sink.

Ask the children what Sam's mum should do? Should she put a lock on her cupboard, so that Sam and Lily can't look in it? If she doesn't have a lock, should she move the cleaning things to the high cupboard in the kitchen where Sam and Lily can't reach them? Reinforce that it's a good idea to keep cleaning things somewhere safe.

Activity bank of extension activities

- **Cut out pictures from magazines** and make a collage of a kitchen, showing laundry and cleaning things stored safely where babies and small children can't reach them. This can be on a high shelf or in a cupboard with a safety lock.
- **Have a large picture/photo of a high kitchen cupboard.** Have smaller pictures/photos of things that the children will recognise as safe plus pictures/photos of cleaning things that might hurt them. Children as individuals or in groups to put the things that might hurt them on the picture of the cupboard. Encourage the children to ask if they are unsure about anything, to reinforce the message of asking a grown-up.
- **Using photos or pictures of safe and potentially harmful products,** develop some simple games/activities around matching/difference e.g. pairs, snap, spot the difference. Again, encourage the children to ask if they are unsure about anything.
- **Linked to Gran's bag in scenario 2** make an activity sheet similar to the one below:

Help Gran unpack her bag	
Things that are safe	Things that are not safe

The children are given pictures of items from gran's bag (apples, oranges, coffee, tea etc.) plus pictures of cleaning products. Discuss the items with the children, then ask the children to put the items in the correct box. Again, encourage the children to ask if they are unsure about anything.

- **Role play being Sam and his little sister Lily in scenario 1.** Lily thinks that the washing tab is a toy and reaches for it, so she can play with it. She is too little to understand that it's not a toy and it might hurt her. What do you do?
- **Role play being Sam's mummy in scenario 4.** You had forgotten that there are cleaning things in the cupboard under the sink in the kitchen. You want to put the cleaning things somewhere safe, where Sam and Lily can't reach them. Where will you put them? In the high cupboard in the kitchen? Or can you put a lock on the cupboard under the sink?

Activity bank of extension activities

- **Print out pictures of different laundry and cleaning products** and encourage children to make safety posters using them.
- **Role play hanging up clothes in scenario 1**, with empty packs of products that you need to wash clothes lying around. Talk about what you can and cannot touch. Then come back to the carpet and feed back to each other about what you learnt.
- **Put pictures of different cleaning products on the smart board** and some empty packs or bottles on the creative table. Encourage children to write notes like 'do not touch' and put them on cleaning things that might hurt them. Encourage the children to ask if they are unsure about anything.
- **Role play mum cleaning the bath in scenario 3**. In the home corner, set up empty cleaning containers by a toy bath. Then do a role play activity around mummy being called to the door and discuss what to do. Should Sam help his mummy and finish cleaning the bath? Or should he ask a grown-up? Why?

A session with parents

Parents and carers can play a helpful role in reinforcing classroom learning and keeping children safe at home.

You may find it helpful to invite parents in at the end of the day to find out more. You could:

- Encourage the children to show parents their posters and explain what they have been learning.
- Get them to take their parent around the classroom to show them the signs on the creation table and any other displays or props that are set up.
- Explain to parents about the homework and hand out the home-link pack.

If many parents have English as an additional language, one option might be inviting them to participate in a 'stay and play session' with the following format:

- A brief session sharing information with parents about the dangers of laundry and cleaning products, using empty product containers to demonstrate what you mean.
- Parents then join the teacher and children to run through the first scenario on washing clothes. This enables parents to understand how brightly coloured products can be attractive to small children and exposes them to the 'Ask a grown-up' message.
- If there is time, parents can stay on to help to manage break-out sessions or 'circles' where further discussion can occur.

Colour me in!



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