

Garden Safety

This leaflet provides advice on how you can help keep your child with challenging behaviour safe in the garden. The Children's Occupational Therapy Service offers a range of leaflets with advice on how to keep your child safe - call 020 8274 6854 for further information.

If children with challenging behaviour have a reduced awareness of danger, they may be at risk of absconding from home garden areas. Your child may need additional or altered fencing and secure gates to enable them to play safely in your garden. The garden can be a useful outlet for extra energy.

General considerations:

- **Your child may still require a high level of supervision in the garden despite suitable safety measures being in place.**
- Trampolines and punch bags can be a useful outlet for extra energy.
- Suitable door locks to external doors may resolve difficulties in order to ensure that your child is only in the garden when closely supervised.
- Consider maintaining security of your property when making any alterations.

Examples of possible solutions

Fencing:

- Consider having large plants along the fence to deter your child from climbing the fence.
- Large wooden boards could be fixed to the inside of the fencing to cover up arris rails (horizontal fencing support rails) to reduce climbing risks.
- Fencing that generally helps to prevent children from leaving a garden needs to be around 2 meters or 6 feet high with the arris rails on the outside. This reduces the chance of your child using the arris rail to climb over the fence.
- Please note that planning permission may be required for rear garden fencing higher than 2 meters or 6 feet. There are also limitations on the height allowed for front garden fencing.
- Be aware that trellises on top of fencing may increase the height of the fence but are often not very secure, and could fall should your child try to climb over it.
- Sensors or alarm systems along the top of the garden fence or on external door openings may be useful. A pager could be used to alert you to your child attempting to climb over the fence or opening an external door.

Garden Gates:

- Where there is a risk your child will leave through the garden gate, ensure that the gate has a lockable form of security that your child cannot access. A sliding bolt with a padlock could be used.
- Spring loaded gates may help ensure that the gate is not left open.
- You may be able to secure a large wooden board across the gate to cover arris rails (horizontal support rails) where your child may be using them to climb over the gate.

Manhole Covers:

- Where your child is lifting the manhole cover, put a large pot plant on top of the cover to deter them.
- Weighted and lockable manhole covers are commercially available from builders' merchants.

Examples of Suppliers:

- Contractors for carpentry works, such as fencing.
- Building merchants for lockable manhole covers.
- Sensors and Alerts:
 - WM Douglas Telford, Access Audio Ltd. www.accessaudio.co.uk 0131 663 0777 or 07876 443 361
 - Frequency Precision www.frequencyprecision.com 01837 810 590
 - Tunstall Group Ltd. www.tunstallgroup.com 01977 661 234
 - Sensorium www.sensorium.co.uk 0800 056 5454
 - Easy Link UK www.easylinkuk.co.uk 01536 264 968

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Your questions and comments:

PALS offers assistance, advice and support for patients and their families. The PALS office is open to callers from 9am to 3.30pm, Monday to Friday. Telephone number 020 8401 3210.