



# Housekeeping

by Kimberly Winsch

## Childproofing kit can be a differentiating amenity item for hotel rooms

Another great article from *The Rooms Chronicle*®, the #1 journal for hotel rooms management! \*\*\*Important notice: This article may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher or the author.\*\*\* College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Niagara University, P.O. Box 2036, Niagara University, NY 14109-2036. Phone: 866-Read TRC. E-mail: editor@roomschronicle.com

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The face of travel is changing. Lodging providers that have traditionally catered primarily to business travelers are finding families flocking to their doors with increasing frequency. There has been a marked increase in family travel over the past ten years. YPartnership's 2009 report shows that the percentage of families who report plans to travel with children this year has increased 17% since 2000. Furthermore, according to TripAdvisor's 2010 annual family travel survey, the percentage of travelers with children who plan to take at least one family vacation this year is up 4% from just last year.

As family travel continues to increase in popularity, many lodging providers are looking for ways to capture that demographic.

While many hotels now have child-gear amenities (coordinated activities, in-room video game consoles, children's television and on-demand movies, swimming pools, etc.), most hotel guestrooms are still designed and engineered primarily for adult use and comfort, yet are still unable to address basic childproofing needs and safety for young children. This can create an environment where accidents are more likely to befall children, potentially resulting in serious injury.

Pictured below: The Travel-Tot Travel Childproofing Kit includes more than 20 reusable items so parents can quickly childproof their guestroom when traveling.



### Why the kit was created

As even the most patient parent can attest, traveling with young children is stressful. While supervision goes a long way toward preventing injuries, even the most vigilant parents can't keep kids completely out of harm's way every second of the day. Yet, redesigning rooms specifically to accommodate the needs of travelers with young children would be extremely costly and time consuming. The juxtaposition of these two points was the inspiration for the birth of Travel-Tot, a company whose vision was to reduce the stress associated with traveling with children by creating a safer space for curious young travelers.

The brainchild of Wendy and Tom Bergstrand, Travel-Tot started out after many stressful hotel stays with their two young daughters, as well as finding that many of their friends and neighbors were looking for the same protection and peace of mind when they traveled with their families. With the idea of keeping young children "safe as home, wherever they roam," the Bergstrands' drew from their own experiences, as well as those of other parents. They pulled together a small team of

dedicated, safety-conscious parents and have thrown their energy into developing a product that both helps prevent unnecessary injury to children and offers parents the peace of mind they so crave while on vacation.

### **What the kit contains**

Unique to the Lodging Industry in portable, travel child-proofing innovations, the Travel-Tot Travel Childproofing Kit is designed with an eye toward offering guests an additional layer of protection between their young children and the hazards found away from home. The compact Travel-Tot Childproofing Kit contains a variety of safeguards to offer protection from the most common hazards, including pinches, strangulation, electrocution, burns, and falls. The most unique innovation of Travel-Tot's Childproofing Kit is that all the kit components are secured using temporary, non-damaging adhesive strips from 3M that create a strong temporary bond, yet can be removed cleanly, without damage to surfaces, fixtures, or furniture. Clear instructions on proper application and removal are provided in the kit and also available on their website.

Technologically, the kit components are all products that already existed; tried and true pieces that were proven to limit access and help prevent injury to children. However, the Travel-Tot Childproofing Kit brings these multiple pieces together in a single container that is easy to travel with and utilizes 3M's non-damaging adhesive technology. The unique innovations of the kit's childproofing pieces include:

- electrical outlet covers (to protect against accidental electrocution);
- foam pinch-guards that fit around the edge of the door and prevent the door from being able to close (to protect against pinched or crushed fingers);
- a knob cover to prevent a child from being able to open a closed door (to protect against accidental escape and pinches);
- multi-purpose safety straps;
- a sliding door guard (limiting access to closets, cabinets and drawers);
- a tub thermometer to register the water temperature (preventing scalds);
- padded corner guards for use on furniture or counters (offering a softer and safer landing in the event of a fall or collision); and
- a cord keeper (to protect against accidental strangulation).

Add-ons that are not regularly packed, but provide increased peace of mind and convenience include bandages, a forehead thermometer, and a door hanger to alert hotel staff (and anyone else who passes by) when a child is napping.

### **Package it, sell it, or give it away?**

Making the Travel-Tot Childproofing Kit available to guests as a complimentary amenity available upon request through the Housekeeping department is an ideal way to show traveling families that they are valued customers, while projecting the perception that the safety of even their smallest visitors (not to mention the sanity of their parents) is important to the hotel. Alternatively, hotels can offer the Travel-Tot Childproofing Kit for purchase at a nominal price through their hotel gift shops to create an ancillary revenue stream for the hotel. Yet another option is to bundle the Travel-Tot Childproofing Kit as part of room/dining/recreation package marketed to families with small children. Regardless of which approach adopted, offering the Travel-Tot Childproofing Kit can help differentiate your hotel's brand in a crowded marketplace.

Born of necessity and experience *by* families who travel with young children, *for* families who travel with young children, Travel-Tot's Childproofing Kit is the "2010 Editor's Choice Award for Best New Amenity" awarded at the recent International Hotel, Motel & Restaurant Show. It offers lodging providers a way to simultaneously defend the integrity of their rental property, and demonstrate that they have anticipated and met the needs of their changing client demographic. ✧

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