

## Preventing Falls in the Home

### Child safe furniture

- Make sure all furniture is secured so that heavy objects can not fall on your child. Bracing furniture to the wall may prevent the child from moving the item or from pulling the item onto themselves. If you can move or shake the furniture easily then chances are so can your child.
- Avoid placing objects on top of furniture that may tempt your child to climb the furniture.
- Once your baby starts crawling install a **SAFETY GATE** at both the top and bottom of stairs. Be sure to open the gate yourself when using the stairs, rather than stepping over it.
- Be wary of furniture with sharp corners. If dangerous furniture can not be moved away from children most hardware and baby shops sell corner protectors.
- Keep in mind that kids don't always use products the way they were meant to be used, including household furniture.<sup>2</sup> Look at your house from the eyes of a child. For example, a child may see a dresser and think of it as a ladder to climb on.



#### Did you know..?

That toddlers fall because their heads are heavy in proportion to the rest of their body. They are still learning how to balance!

### Falls from Windows

Children can fall out of windows resulting in a serious injury or death. By preventing windows from opening more than 100mm these accidents can be avoided. Fly screens will not prevent a child from falling out of a window.

### Safety Glass

Fitting safety glass that meets the Australian and New Zealand standard AS/NZS 2208:1996. or covering glass with protective film will also reduce risk of injury.

### Child friendly back yard

- Put ladders and other objects that can be climbed away straight after use. Children can fall off them or reach other hazards such as windows and the roof.
- Trampolines should comply with Australian Standards and mats should cover bars and springs. For more information please see the *Kidsafe NSW Fact Sheet titled Trampolines*.
- If you own your own backyard play gym, make sure it is placed on a soft surface that is level.
- Supervise children whenever they are playing in the back yard

**Falls are the most common cause of injury requiring hospitalisation for Australian children.**

## THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT FALLS IS ADULT SUPERVISION!

Teach children safe habits to make sure they don't come up with any creative and perhaps unsafe ways to use furniture!

### Windows and Balconies:

Make sure your balcony guard rails are not able to be climbed. Vertical bars or flat solid walls are best. For balconies over 3 metres above ground level, it is recommended that horizontal rails are 1050—1200mm apart. For lower balconies it is recommended that horizontal rails are a minimum of 1000mm apart. Ensure that furniture and pot plants etc. do not allow children to gain access to the barrier.

Ensure that there is nothing a child can climb on near windows, such as beds, chairs and tables.



#### KIDSAFE NEW SOUTH WALES Inc.

Kidsafe House  
Hainsworth Street  
Locked Bag 4001  
WESTMEAD NSW 2145  
Ph: 02 9845 0890 Fax: 02 9845 0895  
[kidsafe@chw.edu.au](mailto:kidsafe@chw.edu.au)  
[kidsafensw.org](http://kidsafensw.org)

## Safety Tips

- Keep a hand on your baby or use a harness on high surfaces such as change tables and beds –*Children can learn to roll when you least expect it!*
- Collect everything you need to use **BEFORE** placing the baby on a high surface. Never leave children unattended.
- A child standing up in the bath is dangerous, even when safety mats are in place.
- To prevent slips and falls- Lay anti-skid mats under your rugs.
- Clean up spills as soon as they happen.
- Ensure that children get in the habit of putting toys away after playing with them. Injuries can occur from people tripping on toys.
- Put anti-slip socks on toddlers who are learning to walk—particularly if you have polished floors.
- *Kidsafe NSW* recommends against the use of baby walkers, especially near changes in floor surfaces or levels.
- Use a full body, 5 point harness with prams, strollers and high chairs.
- Make sure bunk beds have guard rails and a **FIXED ladder**. Children under the age of 9 should not sleep in top bunks. Trundle beds are recommended.
- Make swinging chairs stationary and remove rocking chairs.
- Use chairs with arms, and if purchasing new pieces of furniture, make sure they have rounded corners.