

Protecting Kids From Furniture And TV Tip-Overs

(StatePoint) It doesn't take long for a curious toddler to climb onto a dresser drawer or a bookcase -- sometimes with tragic consequences.

Forty children are taken to the emergency room daily in the U.S. with injuries due to a heavy piece of furniture falling on them. Nearly half of these incidents are caused by televisions. And one child is killed every two weeks from being crushed under a television set, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Many of these injuries and deaths occur when children fall against an unstable piece of furniture or try to climb or pull themselves up onto furniture or TVs.

"We see these injuries most often in children who are age 5 and younger. The most devastating injuries can be injuries to the brain or when a child becomes pinned beneath a heavy piece of furniture and suffocates," says Gary Smith, MD, DrPH, FAAP, a pediatrician and spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). "The most important thing for parents to know is that these injuries are totally preventable," says Dr. Smith, who is also President of the Child Injury Prevention Alliance.

Some parents simply don't realize these heavy objects can be major hazards in their homes. Parents can help prevent these injuries by anchoring televisions and heavy furniture like dressers and bookcases firmly to walls.

It's important to realize that even though they are heavy, televisions aren't stable, stress the experts at the AAP. Older, boxy TVs have most of their weight in front, which makes them easy to topple. New flat-screen TVs have their weight more evenly distributed but are often much larger, and can easily tip if not secured.

The AAP is offering these tips for parents to help keep kids safe from furniture and TV tip-overs:

- All dressers, bookcases, entertainment units, TV stands and TVs need to be securely anchored, usually into a wall stud. You can secure heavy furniture, TVs



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and appliances to a wall stud with braces, brackets, anchors or wall straps.

- Televisions should be placed on low, sturdy furniture appropriate for the size of the TV.

- Do not place televisions on top of furniture that is not designed for such use -- such as on dressers -- as they can tip over more easily.

- Push the TV as far back as possible from the front of its stand. Carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions to anchor it.

- Remove items such as toys and remote controls from the top of televisions and furniture. These items may tempt children to climb the furniture or TV, which may cause a tip-over.

- Place electrical cords out of a child's reach, and teach kids not to play with the cords.

For more information on keeping kids safe at home and at school visit www.healthychildren.org.

A few simple safety measures can go a long way in making sure your little explorer doesn't climb his or her way to an accident in your home.