

## **Thousands Injured in Furniture Accidents**

*Safe Kids Columbus offers guidelines to prevent tip-overs and entrapment*

**Columbus, GA** — The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that between 2000 and 2006 there were at least 180 deaths related to tip-overs of furniture, televisions or appliances. Most of these deaths, 80 percent of them, involved children younger than 10. In 2007, the CPSC identified this issue as one of the top five hidden home hazards. “Kids can be seriously injured or killed as a result of climbing onto, falling against or pulling themselves up on shelves, bookcases, dressers, TV tables and other furniture,” says Christy Hubbard, Safe Kids Columbus coordinator.

CPSC data also shows that in 2006 there were 19,300 injuries associated with product instability or tip-overs involving children younger than 10. That number is almost half of all estimated instability and tip-over injuries during 2006. “If a piece of furniture is unstable or top-heavy, fasten it to a wall using brackets, screws or wall straps,” says Hubbard. “Keep heavier items on lower shelves or in lower drawers. Don’t keep remote controls, candy or other tempting items on unstable stands or tables. A child might be enticed to reach for the top and pull down the object, the stand or both,” says Hubbard.

“Tie up loose cords, too — a child pulling on an electrical cord, or tripping on one, could pull an appliance off a stand,” says Christy Hubbard. Other steps everyone can take to protect children at home include teaching children not to climb or jump on furniture and pushing the TV as far back as possible from the front of its stand.

Kids are also in danger of suffocation if they become accidentally trapped in a cabinet, toy chest or laundry machine; in 2007 alone there were 3,270 injuries to children ages 2 to 14 involving toy chests. Always supervise children around any confined space and keep the doors closed and locked.

Toy chests that meet voluntary standards set by the CPSC are equipped with lid supports that hold the lid open in any position. The standards also call for ventilation holes to prevent suffocation. “If you have a toy chest with a lid that doesn’t stay open, the CPSC recommends you remove the lid or install a spring-loaded lid support,” says Hubbard.

“These are not hazards that kill thousands of children every year, like vehicle crashes or drowning, but they are so easy to prevent and the consequences can be so severe,” says Hubbard. “Don’t underestimate the possibility of a small child being crushed by unsteady furniture.”

For more information about home safety, call (706) 321-6183 or visit [www.safekidscolumbusga.com](http://www.safekidscolumbusga.com).

Safe Kids Columbus works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children 14 and under. Its members include public safety agencies, teachers, EMTs, county commissioners, health educators, nurses, civic groups, faith-based organizations, public health organizations, local government, and many others concerned about the well being of our children. Safe Kids Columbus is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing accidental injury. Safe Kids Columbus was founded in 1998 and is led by the Columbus Health Department.

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