



Jeb Bush
Governor

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Secretary, Department of Health

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Prevent Furniture Tip-Overs and Entrapment

Kids can be seriously injured or killed as a result of climbing on shelves, bookcases, dressers, TV tables and other furniture. The [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) (CPSC) estimates that 8,000 to 10,000 people - mostly children - each year go to the emergency room with injuries from furniture tipping over, and about six are killed. These injuries and deaths frequently occur when children climb onto, fall against, or pull themselves up on such items as shelves, bookcases, dressers, bureaus, desks, chests, and television stands. In some cases, televisions on furniture tip over.

Here, from your Pinellas County Health Department and SafeKids USA, are some tips to make furniture and equipment safer in your home:

Children often climb up the open drawers of furniture. If a piece of furniture is top-heavy or unstable, fasten it to a wall using angle braces or anchors. Keep heavier items on lower shelves or in lower drawers. Televisions, stereos or favorite toys sitting on a table or stand might entice a child to reach for the top and pull down the object, the stand or both. Place TVs on lower furniture, as far back as possible.

Kids are also in danger of suffocation if they become accidentally trapped in a cabinet, toy chest or laundry machine. There are also at least 45 known cases since 1975 in which a child has been trapped and strangled under the lid of a toy chest. 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.

Tie up loose cords, too — a child pulling on an electrical cord, or tripping on one, could pull an appliance off a stand. The same is true with cords to curtains, mini-blinds and other window treatment. Tie these cords safely out of children's reach.

While these are not hazards that kill thousands of children every year, like vehicle crashes or drowning, they can result in just as much devastation to a family. These injuries and deaths are easy to prevent. Don't underestimate the possibility of a small child being crushed by unsteady furniture. Take steps now to make sure your home is safe.



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*The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and
improve the health and safety of residents and visitors through public and private community efforts.*
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