

Fall Prevention for Young Children

- More than one million infants, toddlers, and preschoolers were treated in an emergency room for a fall-related injury in 2011.
- In 2010, 134 Oklahoma children age 0 to 5 were hospitalized for a fall-related injury.
- The most common types of falls for infants and young children were from furniture and other falls from one level to another.
- Young children are independent, curious, and like to climb. They should be supervised at all times and kept off high surfaces to prevent fall injuries.

Prevention

- *Infants (Less than one year old)*
 - Never leave an infant alone on a counter, bed, table, couch, or other high place.
 - Always keep at least one hand on the infant when changing diapers or dressing.
 - An infant carrier should be stable and placed where the child and carrier can't fall.
 - Lower the crib mattress as the child grows. If the child is climbing out of the crib, consider if it is time to move to a toddler bed.
 - Keep safety straps securely fastened when using a stroller, high chair, swing, carrier, or shopping cart.
 - Use of baby walkers are not recommended. They may tip over or fall down stairs. Walkers are involved in more injuries than any other piece of baby equipment.
 - Don't let other children hold or carry an infant unless closely watched.
- *Young Children (1-5 years old)*
 - Install safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs and keep stairs free of clutter.
 - Install window guards - screens keep bugs out, not children in.
 - Keep windows locked when closed.
 - Keep doors to balconies and fire escapes locked.
 - Playground surfaces must be soft material such as wood chips or chipped rubber.
 - Playground equipment should be in good repair and age appropriate.
 - Watch children closely when they are playing on slides, swings, and seesaws.
 - Hold the child's hand while climbing stairs or riding escalators; teach the child to hold onto handrails to avoid falling.
 - Bicycles should be in good repair and the correct size for the child.
 - Never let your children ride a bicycle without a helmet.
 - If the child is riding on a bicycle with an adult, the child should be in a rear-mounted seat and wearing a helmet.
 - A child with a disability needs more attention and supervision to avoid falls.
 - The safety precautions used at home should also be used at day care.

Children are twice as likely to be injured from a fall at home compared to at day care.

*Many injuries happen in **predictable, preventable** ways.*

Young children are curious and like to climb. They should be supervised at all times and kept off high surfaces.

Internet Resources

- <http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/babies/>
- <http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/little-kids/>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/children.html>

Live Injury-Free!