



Newsletter

MARCH 2008

Childhood Fun vs. Childhood Safety: Keeping the Balance

How many of us can find a scar on our knee, elbow or chin left over from a childhood fall? Did you fall off your bike, miss a step on the playground or did your brother push you off the top bunk?

Chances are, you or some child you know has fallen and required medical treatment, as falls are the leading cause of injury-related emergency department visits as well as hospitalizations for children under age 15.

Children in this age group have a lot of energy and

spend a lot of time running, jumping and climbing. This, combined with developmental risk factors associated with childhood (disproportionate sized head, impulsiveness, poor hand-eye coordination, etc.) increases this group's likelihood of a fall.

We may not be able to change the size of our child's head but there are ways we can protect them from falls.

Active adult supervision is the first and best line of defense. Ensuring a safe play environment that is

developmentally appropriate, whether in the home, on the playground, or in the backyard, is a parent or caregiver's next most important step. To help you ensure a safe play environment please refer to the fact sheet on page two and also visit:

www.homesafetycouncil.org
and
www.cpsc.gov

Falls in Maryland, 2005

	0-14 years
ED Visits	36,539
Hospitalizations	627

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Partnership Updates and Upcoming Events

EVENTS

-- **May 16, 2008**

Partnership quarterly meeting at Sheppard Pratt Conference Center. Please check the website for additional information.

-- **June 8-12, 2008**

17th Annual Summer Institute on Injury Prevention and Control. Principals and Practice of Injury

Prevention. Johns Hopkins Center for Injury Research and Policy. For more information visit:

<http://www.jhsph.edu/injurycenter>

UPDATES

On March 3, 2008 members of the Partnership Steering Committee met with 15 members of a Chinese delegation representing Worker Safety organizations within the Chinese government.

The meeting was held at the MVA where we discussed the Partnership, the process by which it began and the structure that brings governmental and non governmental agencies together at the same table. We were honored that the delegates chose to meet with us and hope they benefited from this experience.

Preventing Fall-Related Injuries in Young Children

On the Playground

- Ensure the area under and around play equipment is covered in at least 12 inches of a shock-absorbing surface like wood chips, mulch or sand or uses mats made of safety-tested rubber.
- Ensure that protective surfaces extend at least 6 feet in all directions around the playground.
- Remove tripping hazards like tree roots and rocks.
- Check for spaces that could trap children, like ladder rungs. To be safe, these spaces should be less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches.
- Check play equipment for deterioration such as rust, cracked plastic, protruding screws or sharp points or edges.
- Always actively supervise children on playground equipment.



Around the Stairs



- Use safety gates at both the top and bottom of stairs.
- Remove all toys and clutter from stairs.
- Ensure stairs are well lit and have hand rails.
- Do not leave children alone near stairs.

Near the Windows

- Window screens will not stop a child from falling from a window.
- Window guards with a quick-release mechanism should be installed on upstairs windows. This will keep children in but allow an easy escape for an adult in a fire emergency.
- Furniture should be moved away from windows in children's rooms so they cannot reach the window.
- Children should never be alone near an open window.

