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## Over 90% of Furniture Poses a Tipping Hazard to Young Children

Over 90% of all furnishings in a child's home are unsafe. The overwhelming majority of homes have overlooked ensuring that furniture will not fall onto a child. This not only includes dressers, but things like bookcases, armoires, hanging pictures, free-standing cooking ranges and televisions. As today's furniture is not as heavy as it was in the past, it is easier to tip.

The unfortunate thing is that people are unaware of the possibility, oftentimes with very tragic consequences. The same parent that diligently childproofs all the kitchen cabinets will ignore the possibility of the oven tipping over and landing on the child. Falling furniture can affect toddlers as well as a much older child.

What commonly happens is that a child will pull out a dresser drawer and use it like a ladder to get to something higher, or do the same with a free-standing range or other items. Then the piece starts to fall over on to the child. Sometimes the contents on these pieces of furniture can be more dangerous than the furniture itself, especially if they are heavy, fragile or sharp.

If you have children, it is recommended to the following:

- ◆ **Check to see if any and all furniture is prone to possibly being pulled over.** You can do this by carefully pulling at the top of the back of the item (make certain it or its contents won't fall on you when doing this) and if feels that it is prone to falling over, it should be tethered to the wall. This can either be done by using tethers available at many baby-oriented retail or online stores, or by physically screwing the unit to a stud in the wall (never do this into just the drywall or a drywall insert – going this way is just not strong enough). For wider pieces of furniture (over 20"), you should install these tethering devices in pairs. If you are not comfortable doing this, you can locate a professional childproofers at the International Association for Child Safety at [www.IAFCS.org](http://www.IAFCS.org).
- ◆ **Check same thing for free-standing ranges.** There are brackets available from the manufacturer of the range that will be mounted to the floor or wall to prevent tipping. You will need to know the make and model of the range to order one. If you are not comfortable doing this, you can either call a professional childproofers or an appliance repair company to install this bracket.
- ◆ **TVs, computer monitors and printers are hazards as well.** When these items are on top of a piece of furniture, these can be pulled or pushed off. For example, many new TVs do not have rubber feet that may minimize their sliding on the furniture. These items can be very large and weigh a considerable amount, possibly crushing a child. There are a wide variety of self-adhesive tethers available that will keep these items from moving. For a flat screen TV, the best alternative is to mount it on a wall.

As with many child injuries, over 90% of them are preventable. A little bit of proactive work can go a long way to keeping your family safe.

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