

Window Safety for Children

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Window Falls Are a Frightening Reality: How to Protect Your Child

To a young child, a window is another play toy just waiting to be explored — which can lead to tragic consequences. Accidental falls from windows occur at an alarming frequency, with at least 5,000 children in the U.S. having to be rushed to the emergency room each year, reports the journal [Pediatrics](#).

Here are five considerations for safeguarding your home — and preventing your child from suffering a window fall.

Understand the Risks

A window that's cracked open several inches may seem safe, until you consider that young children have soft skulls, which can be pushed through a tight space. Therefore, it's recommended to leave windows open no more than 4 inches. Furniture should be kept away from windows to avoid enticing a child to climb onto a chair or bed and then falling through a window.

Oftentimes, insect screens are considered to be a safe barrier between an open window and the concrete pavement below. However, ***window screens can't support a child's weight and should never be counted on to prevent a window fall.***

Protective Measures

You can easily buy window stops at your local hardware store or online. As an alternative to window stops, you can install window guards, which are essentially bars that keep children

from passing through a window opening. Safety screens are another secure option and can be customized to fit any size window.

The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission(CPSC) **recommends using both window guards and safety netting in all areas of the home where children could fall from an unsafe height, including windows, balconies and decks.** The CPSC also suggests using window guards with bars spaced no more than four inches.

Keep Windows Locked

Locking windows is a simple solution to prevent children from falling out of windows. But you may need to keep windows open for ventilation. If you have a double-hung window, keep the top sash open to allow fresh air into your home, and keep the bottom sash shut. The National Safety Council (NSC) recommends keeping windows closed and locked, even when an adult is supervising children.

Ensure Safe Egress

The CPSC recommends that **at least one window without window guards should be designated as an escape route in the event of a fire.** If you have window guards, make sure at least one window in each room can be easily used for escape in a fire.

Some parents fear that their child could become trapped inside the home in the event of a fire. But it's important to note that your child falling from a window is a much more likely occurrence than the threat of being injured by a house fire.

Awareness and Prevention

In 1997, the NSC created the Window Safety Task Force with a mission to help caregivers learn about window safety. Children continue to fall from windows, causing serious injuries, and more effort is needed to bring awareness to this ongoing issue.

According to Safekids.org, New York City and Boston have seen a reduction rate of window falls of 96 percent over 10 years, which is attributed to education and window guard distribution programs. To find out more about the specific types of windows, hardware and guards to install in your home and how you can protect your child from falls, visit the National Safety Council