

TITLE: CLIMB, TUMBLE, FALL: Steps to furniture safety

Dr Ruth Barker: For young children, home can be a dangerous place.

In Queensland, one child every three days is injured when an item of furniture tips over and lands on top of them.

From a toddler's perspective, their home looks like one, big playground. But they don't recognise the dangers.

The trouble is, most parents don't recognise the dangers either.

OPENER PLUS TITLE: CLIMB, TUMBLE, FALL: Steps to furniture safety

Mum: Hi, how are you? Yeah good. Yeah, really good. Yeah, yep, I've just got to go out at three. I've got to get the kids from school, so...

Mum: Emily!

Recreation of tv toppling over:

Dr Ruth Barker: This, is every parent's nightmare. It can happen so quickly, and without any warning.

PTC: If you could see what I could see every day in emergency, you would view your home very differently. LOWER THIRD TO READ HERE:

Dr Ruth Barker, Mater Children's Hospital emergency paediatrician, Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit director, and mum to a six-year-old.

For toddlers, most injuries occur in their own home.

Most tipover injuries occur when a child climbs on the furniture.

By far the greatest hazard in your home is the TV and the cabinet that it stands on.

No-one can keep an eye on their child every minute of the day. There are always jobs to do, distractions and maybe even other children to care for.

Constant vigilance isn't possible but it is possible to make your home safer.

So how would you go about this?

Well, you could: select furniture with broad and stable bases.

- test the furniture in the shop to make sure it's stable

- secure potentially unstable items such as bookcases and TV cabinets to the wall, using appropriate anchors
- keep power cords out of reach
- place any heavy appliances particularly televisions, as far back as possible on the furniture
- choose tables that won't tip if a child climbs onto them
- use child resistant locks on drawers to prevent your child opening them and using them as steps
- place an open play pen around your TV, as a temporary barrier
- stop your child from climbing on the furniture
- and please don't place any tempting items such as toys on top of the furniture because it will only encourage your child to climb up for them
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PTC Ruth: your life can change in an instant, a few simple steps can make all the difference. Your child may not get a second chance.

MUM: Emily!

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