



National Kidsafe Day Blog – ‘A Split Second’

October 24th, 2017

Losing a child. It's every parent's worst nightmare. Many people are surprised when they hear that unintentional injuries are one of the leading causes of death and hospitalisation for Australian children. Every year in Australia, approximately 150 children die, and more than 60,000 are admitted to hospital due to a serious injury.

When we talk about unintentional injuries, we are talking about incidents that are commonly referred to as accidents. However, when they happen at the rate they currently are, they can no longer be categorised as accidents. We are not talking about cuts and bruises from normal rough and tumble that all children partake in. We are talking about the serious injuries that can impact upon a child's lifelong development. And these incidents can occur in just a split second.

The leading causes of injury related death for children include drowning, transport related incidents and choking and suffocation. The major causes of injury requiring hospital treatment include falls, being hit/struck or crushed, transport related injuries, burns and scalds and poisoning.

While the statistics are frightening, they are an important reminder as to how critical injury prevention really is. Kidsafe Australia has been providing parents and carers with injury prevention information, advice and support since their establishment in 1979 by a concerned group of paediatricians who wanted to make a difference.

At this time, statistics showed that approximately **750 children died every year in Australia from unintentional injury**. This has since been reduced to 150 and Kidsafe is proud to have played a leading role in making this impact. While this reduction is a great achievement, there is still work to be done - Kidsafe are continuously working to further reduce this figure and create a safer world for children.

Kidsafe strongly believe that all children need to grow up in a stimulating and challenging environment that enables them to develop to their full potential. It is important for parents and carers to remember that cuts and bruises from exploration and active play are a normal part of development. However, it is also important to remember that children are unable to make accurate risk assessments at such a young age, highlighting the significance of providing a safe environment for them to live, grow and play.

The reality is that life threatening incidents can happen in the blink of an eye, and Australia has seen its share of tragedies. Last financial year, there were 29 toddler drowning incidents; every year approximately seven toddlers are fatally run over in driveways – and these don't take into account those children who survive yet experience serious lifelong implications.

Many common household items can also pose a significant hazard to children – looped curtain and blind cords (strangulation hazard), TV's and bookcases (crush injuries) and electronic devices containing button batteries. The good news is that there are steps that can be taken to help keep kids safe.

Kidsafe aims to work with government, industry and the community to empower parents and carers to provide children with an environment that not only stimulates their development, but also reduces their risk of serious injury.

Because at the end of the day, child safety is no accident.

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