

Keep children away from open windows

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" With the summer weather finally here, the issue of children falling from screened or open windows and sustaining serious and even life-threatening injuries is again of great concern to the Montreal Children's Hospital Trauma Centre. Last week, a 2-year-old girl fell out of a living-room window from a height of 40 feet.

Over the past 10 years, our trauma centre has treated more than 50 children who have sustained serious, and in several cases, fatal injuries after falling from a window. At least 50 per cent of the cases occurred with children age 18 months to 4 years - an age when children are curious, exploring their environment, impulsive and not aware of the consequences of their actions.

Parents and caregivers need to be aware of the risks. Screens are quite flimsy and are weak barriers, giving a false sense of security. Open windows present an opportunity for adventure.

To keep children safe, do not place a bed, chair, table or dresser in front of the window, since it is an invitation to climb for young children.

The use of window guards, stops or partial bars on windows, especially in households with young children, is strongly recommended. These devices can be purchased at hardware stores or stores that sell kids' safety products.

Falling from windows can cause children serious and sometimes fatal injuries. We don't need to see hundreds of cases to do something about it. One case is already one too many!

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