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## Window falls prompt safety reminder for parents

Trauma experts from The Children's Hospital at Westmead and Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick are urging families to recognise the dangers of open windows and to watch for children in play areas with windows following a spate of recent admissions.

This month, three children were rushed to The Children's Hospital at Westmead following a fall from a window or balcony. So far this year, 33 children have already been treated across Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick and The Children's Hospital at Westmead compared to 26 children last year, with summer yet to begin.

Professor Danny Cass, Head of Trauma at The Children's Hospital at Westmead, said it is concerning to see so many of these incidences occurring in such a short timeframe but it is an important reminder for parents as the weather heats up.

"We unfortunately see a lot of these injuries, many serious, during the warmer months when windows and balcony doors are left open. These falls often occur in the child's own home and can result in serious injury and death," Professor Cass said.

"Parents need to be vigilant when it comes to window and balcony safety, particularly in the warmer months, and take necessary precautions, including purchasing window guards and locks, to make windows safe before tragedy strikes."

"Windows should not be able to be opened more than 12.5cm and furniture should be located away from windows and balcony edges to prevent climbing."

The most common injuries sustained by children who fall from a window or balcony are skull fractures, internal head bleeds, other fractures and bruising and abrasions but in some severe instances, the fall can result in death.

Sarah Adams, Trauma Clinical Nurse Consultant at Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick said children between one and six years old were most at risk.

"It is children who are mobile but young, and who lack judgement and fear, and who are curious that pose the greatest risk to sustaining injuries as the result of falls from windows and balconies."

"This means that the responsibility for preventing injuries in this age groups lies with parents in safeguarding the environment and through appropriate supervision."

Under NSW Government regulations, all bedroom windows two metres or more above the ground in new homes and units must be fitted with a barrier or locking device that prevents them from opening more than 12.5cm. Home owners are strongly encouraged to install safeguard features in pre-existing homes.

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