

Kids Can't Fly

Window and Balcony Safety for Children

An increasing number of children are admitted to hospital each year as a result of falling from windows and balconies. These falls are often in their own home and can result in death or serious injury.

Children aged from one to five years are most at risk as they are naturally curious but lack the ability to recognise danger. Falls occur more often in the warmer months when families leave windows and doors to balconies open both during the day and at night.

The current Building Code of Australia permits a maximum opening of 12.5cm for windows and balustrades (where regulated). The Children's Hospital at Westmead recommends for enhanced safety, a maximum opening of 10cm for windows and balustrades. Please note that there are no laws that require window and balustrade openings in older buildings to meet current building standards. There are however things you can do to improve safety.



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Window safety

Children can fall out of a window which is open more than 10cm, even if a flyscreen is fitted.

To prevent children falling from your windows, The Children's Hospital at Westmead recommends:

- that all windows, especially bedroom windows, where possible:
 - not be opened more than 10cm when located above the ground floor.
 - have window latches/locks fitted to stop windows opening more than 10cm or guards to protect the opening (see Kids Can't Fly Window Safety Product Guide).
 - open from the top.
- beds and other furniture are kept away from windows, so that children cannot use them to climb up to the windows.
- that you do not rely on flyscreens to prevent a child falling out of a window.
- children are taught to play away from windows.
- children are always supervised.

Balcony safety

To prevent children falling from your balcony, The Children's Hospital at Westmead recommends:

- that balustrades (railings), where possible:
 - be at least 1 metre high.
 - vertical bars must be no more than 10cm apart (use a ruler to measure the gaps between your vertical balustrade posts).
 - have no horizontal or near horizontal parts that would allow children to climb.
- all furniture, pot plants and other climbable objects are kept away from the edge of balconies.
- that you be aware of furniture that is light enough for children to drag to the balcony edge.
- children are always supervised.
- keeping doors leading to balconies closed to prevent child access to them.

**kids
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