



CAPT NEWS, February 2010

Welcome to the Child Accident Prevention Trust's email news bulletin

Welcome to the latest edition of CAPT News, the newsletter from the Child Accident Prevention Trust which aims to equip you with the knowledge, resources and tools to make a significant contribution to preventing childhood accidents in your community.

In this issue:

1. One week to go to register for your free Child Safety Week toolkit
2. Tell us your story, and help promote child safety
3. Focus on... Blind cord strangulation
4. In the know:
Parents of injured children suffer post-traumatic stress
5. Safety signposts – news in brief:
Chip pan fires – how to prevent them
Child safety comes out top in NHS Baby LifeCheck website
DfT publish latest child road accident factsheet
Scotland dedicates 2010 as *Year of Home Safety*

One week to go to register for your free Child Safety Week toolkit

Don't miss out on yours - make sure you confirm your interest and update your details – the deadline is Friday 5 March.

Check and update your details to ensure that you receive your Child Safety Week toolkit, totally free of charge, including an even bigger and better Ideas Booklet. The toolkits will be sent out by our mailing house at the end of April – make sure yours doesn't go astray!

You will have received your CAPT database registration form by email. Please check your details, let us know if they've changed, confirm your interest or ask to be deleted from the database.

If you have colleagues or potential partners who would like to receive a free Child Safety Week toolkit they can sign up to the CAPT database by visiting the 'join our mailing list' page of our website www.childsafetyweek.org.uk. Remember to bookmark this site for all your Child Safety Week needs.

Tell us your story, and help promote child safety

At CAPT, we are constantly looking for ways to spread the child safety message to as many parents and carers as possible, and press coverage is invaluable.

Obviously a great deal of attention is focused on Child Safety Week, but we're always on the lookout for opportunities for keeping child accident prevention in the news all year round. To do this, we need your help.

Firstly, we're looking for people who have a story to tell related to their work around children and accidents for a **job profile**.

- Do you have an unusual job?
- Have you come up with a novel solution to a problem around preventing or treating accidents
- Have you overcome something in your personal life, career or redundancy which has inspired you to change track?
- Maybe you've developed relationships with other agencies that are unusual or have been surprising helpful in reducing accidents?

We would like to interview you to find out more and with your agreement 'sell' your story in to the relevant newspaper job sections.

Secondly, we are always looking out for **case studies**. Do you know of a carer or parent whose child has been involved in a serious accident such as a fall down the stairs, scald from a hot drink or bath, poisoning from medicine or cleaning products etc? Do you think they would like to help stop other children being injured in the same way? Case studies are an extremely powerful tool in our campaign to prevent children being killed or injured by preventable accidents.

Families will be treated with sensitivity and be given support throughout. We will also help ensure that you are not transgressing data protection rules.

If you, or someone you know would be interested in being interviewed either for a job profile or case study, and are happy for it to be published in the national or local media, please contact Pam Prentice at CAPT by email pam.prentice@capt.org.uk

FOCUS ON...Blind cord strangulation

Two young children have been strangled to death by window blind cords within the space of five days. The unrelated accidents both took place in Staffordshire.

The first death was that of a three-year-old boy from Lichfield. It was followed by the death of a 16-month-old baby girl from Stafford.

It had been thought that one or two young children died each year in the UK from blind cord strangulation – though this number could be higher, as not every death is reported in the press. However, two deaths in the same week and in the same county is unheard of.

What can parents and carers do?

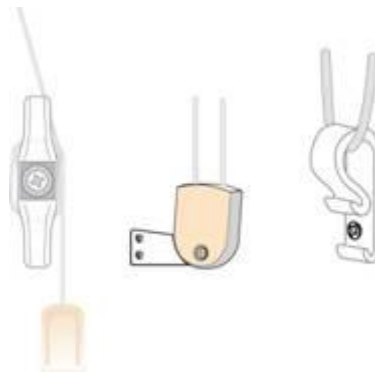
Children under four are at greatest risk. They're full of energy and love to climb up – on a toy chest, chair, bookcase, chest of drawers or even a radiator thermostat – to see out of the window or reach a favourite toy. But if they lose their balance and the blind cord gets tangled round their neck, strangulation can take place in seconds, as they struggle to get free.

It's even been known for crawling babies to get tangled in long blind cords hanging down onto the floor or for babies to get caught in blind cords hanging into their cots.

Taking a few simple precautions can significantly reduce the risk of strangulation:

- Make sure all looped blind cords and chains are safely out of children's reach.
- Move your child's cot, bed, highchair or playpen away from a window blind.
- If you can, move other furniture away from a window blind too.

There are lots of safety devices on the market that you can use to secure blind cords safely out of harm's way – including simple cleat hooks that you can wrap the blind cord around.



Examples of blind cord cleats

If you're buying new blinds, look for ones with inbuilt safety features like chains that break apart when excessive force is applied, pulleys/devices that hold the blind cord tightly in place or blinds that don't use looped cords at all, for example, those that use wands to operate the blind mechanism.

All members of the British Blind and Shutter Association sell blinds that meet new European safety standards. To find a member in your area go to their website <http://www.bbsa.org.uk/>.

If you work with parents

Think about how you can alert the parents and carers of young children to the dangers of looped blind cords and the practical solutions.

Why not download an article on the two deaths from the BBC News website and use it as a talking point? See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/1/hi/england/staffordshire/8516450.stm>.

You could also download a copy of the British Blind and Shutter Association's leaflet on blind cord safety, 'make it safe', which shows parents how to reduce the risk:

<http://www.bbsa.org.uk/>.

You could even buy a cheap safety device, such as a cleat hook, so that you can show parents and carers how they work. Remind parents that they will need to fix the hook so that it's out of reach of a climbing youngster.

Our new picture-based booklet for parents of toddlers graphically illustrates both the danger of blind cord strangulation and a practical solution. You can view a sample copy of *Now I'm a toddler I can...* here: <http://www.capt.org.uk/pdfs/niat.pdf>.

A pack of 50 booklets costs £35 plus P&P. Why not give a copy to parents after your discussion session, to act as a reminder?

And remember to check your own home and your childcare setting too, and take steps to secure any blind cords safely out of harm's way.

Should safety regulations change?

The parents of the little boy who died have set up a campaign called Harrison's Law, which aims to ban the manufacture of looped blind cords.

In fact, new European safety standards for blinds came into force just last year. While these don't ban looped blind cords outright, manufacturers should now:

- Attach a warning notice to the blind in a conspicuous position.
- Provide within the packaging a safety device to keep the blind cord or chain out of reach of children.
- Keep blind cords and chains as short as practicable.
- Or change the blind's design so as to either incorporate the safety device within the product or to replace the cord or chain altogether.

Manufacturers, supported by the Government, are already pushing for the safety standards to apply to Roman blinds too. But changing European standards can be a long and slow process. And Britain is in a minority – most other countries in Europe use external shutters not internal blinds. So changes to the standard could take some time.

In the meantime, millions of homes around the UK already have blinds with looped blind cords, which is why it's so important to raise awareness of the risk and how to reduce it. Do help us to spread the word.

Finally, while the European standard only covers blinds, don't forget to consider curtain operating cords too – they can pose similar risks to young children.

IN THE KNOW

Parents of injured children suffer post-traumatic stress

Over a third of parents whose child has been injured in an accident have suffered post-traumatic stress as long as one month later, according to a study published last month by the Center for Injury Research and Prevention at the Children's Hospital in Philadelphia. And 15% of parents were still suffering six months after the accident.

Symptoms of post-traumatic stress include: thinking a lot about the incident, even when you don't want to; nightmares and 'flashbacks'; having trouble sleeping or concentrating; increased anxiety and jumpiness; being on the alert and always expecting danger.

The study looked at 334 parents whose children had been hospitalised after a road accident. It found the severity of post-traumatic stress experienced by the parent was influenced by previous trauma; the severity of their child's symptoms; and their experience of the accident.

Doctors at the Center concluded that, while the focus is on the physical and emotional recovery of the child, parents' needs are often overlooked, and this should be addressed if they are to support their children in their recovery.

The Center has now prepared a tips sheet for parents, which you can download from its website for parents of children who have been injured: www.aftertheinjury.org

SAFETY SIGNPOSTS – NEWS IN BRIEF

Chip pan fires - how to prevent them

Here at CAPT, we were pleased to do our bit for National Chip Week last week with a fish and chip supper or two. We also couldn't miss the opportunity to promote the use of thermostatically-controlled deep fat fryers as a safer way of cooking one of the UK's favourite dishes.

In their recent review of deep fat fryers, the consumers' association, *Which?* reported an increase of 13% in the number of fryers sold over the last three years, and a whopping 1.1m have been sold in the UK in the last 12 months – evidence, it suggests, of a resurgence in home-cooked comfort food.

However, the majority of fires in the home start in the kitchen. The London Fire Brigade (LFB) estimates that 70% of fire injuries in the home are from fires that start in the kitchen. In turn, chip pans are the biggest cause of kitchen fires.

During National Chip Week last week, the LFB reiterated its advice: eat takeaway chips, cook them in the oven, or buy an electric deep fat fryer which has a thermostat to stop oil from overheating. Finally, if you do one thing and one thing only, fit a smoke alarm.

Why not speak to your local fire service or check out their website to find out how they can support your work on fire safety in the home? You can find them in the phone book, ask for the community safety team.

The LFB's advice in full: <http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/SafetyInTheKitchen.asp#chip>

The LFB has also broadcast a video diary on YouTube by Ben, one of their firefighters,

promoting chip pan safety: <http://www.youtube.com/lfbchampions>

Which? safety advice for using deep fat fryers: www.which.co.uk/reviews/fryers/page/fryer-safety-tips/

Child safety comes out top in NHS Baby LifeCheck website

The *Keeping your baby safe* section of the new online tool, to which CAPT contributed, has attracted the highest number of unique users since its launch, proving that parents and carers see safety as a priority and actively seek up-to-date safety advice.

NHS Baby LifeCheck – www.nhs.uk/babylifecheck – is a free, easy to use and confidential online service from the NHS. It helps parents and carers with babies aged 5-8 months answer important questions about their baby's development.

The website guides users through a set of simple multiple choice questions, then offers tailored advice and reassurance on making the best decisions for their child. Along with safety, it covers development, talking and playing, feeding, healthy teeth, sleep routine, immunisations and being a parent.

NHS Baby LifeCheck has been developed as part of the Healthy Child Programme, and aims to support parents and carers at a time when their baby's development is rapid but there are fewer scheduled contacts with healthcare professionals.

Find out more about the whole series of lifecheck websites: www.nhs.uk/lifecheckers

DfT publish latest child road accident factsheet

The latest road accident statistic factsheet relating to child casualties has been published this month by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Using data from 2008 on reported road accidents, it shows that the number of children (aged 0 – 15) killed or seriously injured in 2008 was 59% lower than the average for 1994-98 (the baseline used for reduction targets). Data shows that children currently account for 19% of the population, but only 10% of the reported road accident casualties.

Of the 21,996 child casualties:

- 124 were killed
- 2,683 were seriously injured
- 19,189 were slightly injured

The data also shows that:

- Almost two thirds of children killed or seriously injured were male
- Pedestrians made up 64% of all children killed or seriously injured
- The number of child casualties increases with age, with the 15 year-old age group

having more casualties than any other age group

- There is a noticeable increase in casualties between the ages of 10 and 11, when children start secondary school
- The number of killed and seriously injured casualties peaks at 3pm onwards when children go home from school.

The factsheet also includes analysis of data over time, by severity over time, by road user type, by gender and road user type, by age and road user type, by road user and road type, by time of day, by month of year, and contributory factors.

Download the full factsheet (factsheet no. 5) from the DfT website free of charge here:

www.bit.ly/aVkTOi

Further resources: www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/ and www.dft.gov.uk/think/

Scotland dedicates 2010 as *Year of Home Safety*

Launched on 3 February and co-ordinated by Home Safety Scotland (HSS), the initiative aims to raise awareness of the major causes of accidents in the home, and promote the fact that small changes in behaviour and the home environment can have a significant impact on the risk of accidental death and injury.

HSS, whose members include local authority home safety, community safety, health promotion, trading standards and environmental health officers, members of health boards, and representatives of private companies and charities, including RoSPA Scotland and the Electrical Safety Council have established a calendar of topics to act as a focus for its safety promotion:

- February – Falls
- March/April – Electrical equipment
- May/June – Burns and scalds
- July/August – Garden safety
- September/October – Carbon monoxide and other poisonings
- November/December - Christmas electrical safety

Nicola Butters, RoSPA Scotland's home safety development officer, said: "In recent years, tremendous progress has been made in reducing the number of lives affected, and in the most serious cases torn apart, by home accidents. But the latest figures show more still needs to be done to reduce the suffering caused by accidents such as falls, burns and scalds and poisoning."

More information: www.homesafetyscotland.org.uk

And finally...

Injury Prevention (February 2010) reports that among the new words for 2009 included in the Oxford American Dictionary is '**intexticated**', which it defines as '**distracted because texting on a cellphone while driving a vehicle**'.

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