

A Trampoline is Not a Toy

Safe Kids Columbus warns parents about trampolines used at home

Columbus, GA — If you asked a child what superpower they would like to have, one answer is often the chance to fly. Trampolines attract many kids in their ability to give them the chance to float through the air, even if just for just a second. However, a trampoline is not a toy and can be incredibly dangerous.

“While most trampoline injuries are muscle injuries or broken legs, not fatalities, we also see serious head and neck injuries,” says Christy Hubbard, Safe Kids Columbus coordinator. “A concussion or an upper spine injury can be devastating to a child.”

In 2004, approximately 93,000 children ages 14 and under were treated in U.S. emergency rooms for trampoline-related injuries — up from nearly 83,400 in 1996. More than 90 percent of these injuries happened on home trampolines, and Safe Kids Columbus joins the American Academy of Pediatrics in recommending that children do not use trampolines at home.

Based on the AAP’s guidelines, Safe Kids Columbus recommends that trampolines be used only as part of a supervised athletic training program such as competitive gymnastics, and not at home, at school or on playgrounds. In addition, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that no children under 6 years old use a full-size trampoline. Safe Kids Columbus supports both recommendations.

Safe Kids Columbus cautions parents and caregivers to look for these features in a supervised trampoline program:

- Make sure there is only one person on the trampoline at a time.
- The frame, springs and floor around the trampoline are appropriately padded and the equipment is inspected frequently.
- Trained spotters are always used and a safety harness or spotting belt is available. Ideally, the trampoline is in a pit so its surface is closer to the ground.
- There is no ladder near the trampoline, where it could be used by unsupervised children to gain access. The trampoline should not be accessible to children when not in use and there is no active adult supervision.
- Jumpers do not attempt stunts or skills beyond their training and demonstrated ability.

“Remember, these guidelines are for organized training programs led by qualified trainers with proper safety measures. A trampoline is not a toy and kids should not have access to one at home,” says Hubbard.

Although many trampoline injuries involve aerial stunts, falling onto the ground or floor, or landing on the springs or frame, more than half of trampoline injuries involve colliding with another jumper. “As you add more jumpers on a trampoline, the risk of injury to the participants increases,” says Christy Hubbard. “Even trampoline manufacturers say there shouldn’t be more than one person on the trampoline at a time.”

For more information about your local coalition activities, visit www.safekidscolumbusga.com. Safe Kids Columbus works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children 14 and under. Its members include public safety agencies, teachers, EMTs, county commissioners, health educators, nurses, civic groups, faith-based organizations, public health organizations, local government, and many others concerned about the well being of our children. Safe Kids Columbus is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing accidental injury. Safe Kids Columbus was founded in 1998 and is led by the Columbus Health Department.