



IMPROVING
CHILDREN'S
PRODUCT
SAFETY

Statement of Linda Ginzel, co-founder and President of Kids In Danger

It is bittersweet to be here with such strong advocates for safety in US Representative Jan Schakowsky and CPSC Chairman Inez Tenenbaum on this historic day. The energy and action on safer children's products at CPSC is so encouraging to us. We are also indebted to the work of other advocates we see here today such as Rachel Weintraub of Consumer Federation of America, who has made a real difference in the lives of families with her efforts.

Fourteen years ago, on May 12, 1998, my 16 1/2 month-old son Danny was strangled at his licensed childcare facility in our Chicago neighborhood. My little boy was killed by a defective children's product -- a mesh portable crib -- the Playskool Travel-Lite--where he napped in the afternoons at his childcare home.

This crib has hinges in the top rails that allow it to collapse and fold flat for storage. This type of crib is defective because it can collapse unexpectedly while the product is in use.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), Danny was not the first baby to die in the Playskool Travel-Lite, he was not the second, he was not the third, and he was not even the fourth child to die. My son, Daniel, was the fifth baby whose neck was caught between the top rails of this crib when it collapsed and strangled him to death. On August 19, 1998 --three months after Danny died- 10-month old William Curran of Fair Haven, New Jersey became this crib's sixth victim.

After we buried our son, my husband and I learned that 1.5 million portable cribs of similar collapsing, top-rail design by five manufacturers were sold and then recalled, but most remain unaccounted for today and may still be in use. As of today, the official count from these play yards stands at 19 dead babies. The most recent victim was killed in 2007 in Canada.

Since Danny's death we have worked tirelessly to address the flaws in the children's product safety system. No one at the child care home was aware of the recall – not the owner, the family who had donated the crib or the state inspector who visited just days before.

But more important is the fact that that deadly crib would never have been on the market at all, if it had been independently tested to strong mandatory standards. In 2008, Congress passed the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, which included the Danny Keysar Child Safety Notification Act – Danny's Law. Strong mandatory standards are now required by law and this is Danny's real legacy -- that products must be tested for safety before they are sold. Today's action to put in place a mandatory standard for mesh cribs and play yards, even coming 14 years after our son's death, means so much to us.

As Commissioner Adler has said, regulations and strong mandatory standards don't cost more – they just make sure our children aren't paying the price for safety with their precious lives.

Had Congress only seen fit to pass Danny's Law when Congresswoman Schakowsky first introduced it in 2001, imagine how many lives might have been saved. Had companies taken it on themselves to make sure they sell safe products, Danny might still be alive.