



For Immediate Release
March 20, 2019

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KID Identifies Troubling Trend of Fewer Recalls in Annual Recall Report Joins Parents, Consumer Groups and U.S. Rep. Schakowsky in calling for Legislation to End Deaths and Injuries from Furniture Tip-Overs

(CHICAGO) Today at a press conference in Chicago, Kids In Danger (KID) released its [annual report](#) on children's product recalls and joined with U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky, parents and consumer groups to announce new legislation to combat the continuing deaths and injuries from furniture tip-overs.

KID released [A KID Report: 2018 Children's Product Recalls](#). According to the report, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recalled fewer children's products and fewer units of children's products in the year 2018 than any other year in the last decade.

The report reviews 2018 recall data from the CPSC and outlines trends that show a slow-down of activity at the agency. Fifty-two children's products were recalled in 2018, down 44% from 2017 (93 recalls).

“It is tricky to say whether low recall numbers are a good thing – pointing to safer products – or a sign of lax enforcement, leaving dangerous products on store shelves and in our homes,” stated Nancy Cowles, Executive Director of Kids In Danger. “Indicators this year, such as less effective actions in lieu of recalls and fewer findings of design defects in the recalls that were announced, make us worry it is the latter.”

KID's report points to at least two instances of CPSC taking less effective action than a recall – a May 2018 warning to consumers about infant inclined sleep products associated with infant deaths and a November 2018 announcement of a limited information campaign as part of a settlement with Britax over the BOB jogging strollers with a front wheel that comes loose, causing almost 100 injuries.

“KID’s new report highlights the need for a stronger watchdog warning parents about potential hazards in their homes,” said Hannah Kim of Illinois PIRG. “Many recalls are the tree that falls in the forest with no one around--consumers rarely hear about them. There is one big difference: when the furniture falls over, kids can be seriously injured. Parents deserve a stronger watchdog that aggressively acts to ensure everyone hears about these dangers.”

In addition, most children’s product recalls (62%) this year were for clear violations of mandatory rules – flammability, lead paint, violation of a standard – rather than a finding that a product had a design flaw that led or might lead to injuries. Products with design hazards that do not violate a mandatory rule take more time and effort to recall but are equally important to remove from the market. In 2018, 90% of the incidents reported prior to a recall and 100% of the injuries were due to unsafe designs, not violations of a standard or rule.

Additional findings of the report include:

- **Nursery products accounted for the highest number of children's product recalls** in 2018. Thirteen out of the 52 children's products recalled (25%) were nursery products. The high number of nursery product recalls is alarming because caregivers specifically purchase nursery products to keep children safe while sleeping, playing and eating.
- **Lead recalls are back on the rise.** In 2017, there was one recall for a lead hazard. In 2018, despite fewer recalls, there were five recalls for lead hazards – comprising nearly 10% of children's product recalls.
- There were **2,312,750 total units of children’s products recalled**, down from 11,854,605 in 2017, the lowest reported recalled units since KID began tracking them in 2001.
- **Both the CPSC and manufacturers posted recalls on Facebook at lower rates in 2018 compared to 2017.** CPSC posted only 45% of 2018 children's product recalls on its Facebook page. This was a sharp decrease from 75% in 2017, the first year CPSC used Facebook. Of the 48 companies that issued recalls in 2018, only 31% were announced on the company’s Facebook page, down from 51% in 2017.

KID urges the CPSC to do more to hold manufacturers accountable for timely and effective recalls. The report did not include recall effectiveness numbers this year due to the lack of a response from the CPSC’s Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) office, but publicly available numbers at www.CPSC.gov show a continuing low rate of recall participation. KID recommends that parents check

SaferProducts.gov for recalls and injury reports and sign up for safety updates at KidsInDanger.org. In addition, parents should report problems with a product both to the manufacturer and to CPSC at SaferProducts.gov.

The CPSC has stated that **one child dies every 10 days from a furniture or TV tip-over, yet there were no recalls for furniture instability in 2018**. In 2017, Conner DeLong died when an IKEA Hemnes 8-drawer dresser tipped over. Despite his death and a viral video showing the same dresser tipping on twin toddlers, the dresser has not been recalled. That report finding led KID to join with U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky (IL-9), parent advocates and consumer organizations to announce introduction of the STURDY Act.

The **Stop Tip-overs of Unstable, Risky Dressers on Youth Act**, or **STURDY Act**, would require the CPSC to create a mandatory rule for free-standing clothing storage units to protect children from tip-over incidents. The rule will have to:

- Cover all clothing units, even those under 30 inches
- Require testing to simulate the weights of children up to 72 months old
- Require testing measures to account for scenarios involving carpeting, loaded drawers, and the dynamic force of a climbing child
- Mandate strong warning requirements

It requires the CPSC to issue the mandatory standard within one year of the Act's enactment

“Our homes should be the safest place for our families, especially our children. I will soon be introducing the STURDY Act because we need to hold manufacturers accountable and ensure the products we bring to our homes are entirely safe,” said Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky. “Too many families have experienced the ultimate loss, the death of a child, because the Consumer Product Safety Commission has deferred to inadequate voluntary standards for too long and failed to effectively execute recalls.”

“Last week was 8 years since my son Shane died,” said Lisa Siefert of Shane’s Foundation and a founding member of Parents Against Tip-overs who joined KID in calling for the STURDY Act. “CPSC

and manufacturers have delayed too long in making effective change to the standard. These mothers here with me could be home with their children if we had a strong standard in place now. We can't wait any longer."

"I believe making a mandatory standard that takes into account real world use by a child with dynamic testing would have saved my son," added Crystal Ellis, whose Camden died when a 30" dresser tipped on him.

"My son was the eighth child that we know of to be killed by an Ikea dresser in a 27-year-period of time before the company finally recalled their unstable dressers that did not meet the current safety standard," stated Janet McGee, whose son Ted's death led to the IKEA recall of 27 million dressers –most of which remain in use.

"Unfortunately, he was not the last child to die from their deadly dressers. The STURDY Act would make it **mandatory** for manufacturers to adhere to a stronger safety standard, and it would empower the CPSC to hold companies accountable for failing to meet the safety standard."

Speaking last for Parents Against Tip-overs was Meghan DeLong whose son Conner was killed by a dresser that met the weak voluntary standard and is still for sale today. She ended with, "Had there been a stronger mandatory standard in place when this dresser was purchased maybe Conner would still be here today and I wouldn't be standing here telling you his story."

"KID's excellent report identifies that both the CPSC and product manufacturers are not doing all that they can to effectively recall products. That no furniture has been recalled for killing or injuring children is unacceptable. This is why the STURDY Act is so important. We need a strong mandatory rule to ensure the stability of our furniture and to prevent tragedies," stated Rachel Weintraub, Legislative Director and General Counsel of Consumer Federation of America.

"There's no easy way for a consumer to simply look at a dresser and tell whether it is likely to tip over. A more effective, mandatory standard would help consumers trust that dressers on the market resist tipping over onto young children. Consumer Reports strongly supports the STURDY Act and urges its swift passage to help prevent these avoidable tragedies," said Meg Bohne, organizing manager for Consumer Reports.

Visit KidsInDanger.org for more information.