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## **Tip-over incidents continue to affect children at alarming rates; safety standards in need of reform**

(CHICAGO) A new report by Kids In Danger (KID) and Shane's Foundation reveals significant risks to children from dressers and chests that tip over and finds the current safety standards dangerously inadequate. KID analyzed injury statistics and conducted independent stability tests on furniture commonly found in children's rooms. Based on their data analysis and test results, the organizations offer recommendations to improve furniture safety.

A child dies from tipping furniture, appliances or TVs every two weeks. KID analyzed incident data on tip-overs involving dressers and chests from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and commissioned laboratory testing of furniture marketed for children's rooms.

"Years of work on the voluntary industry standard have resulted in no significant improvements," said Nancy Cowles, KID executive director. "Our organizations hope this new information will provide the necessary impetus to design, test and sell safer furniture."

Findings of the data analysis include:

- Two-year-olds are the age group most affected by tip-overs, and are most likely to be killed.
- Children age two to five accounted for 77% of total incidents.
- The age range of children injured is wider than the age range of children killed by tip-overs.
- Fatalities accounted for 12% of total incidents.
- Head injuries (37%) were the most common category of injury.
- Almost all (98.7%) of head injuries are related to a television tipping over on a child.

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## Furniture Stability, Add 1

In addition to data review, KID put a sample of 19 dressers and chests through stability performance tests. The sample chosen for testing were representative of dressers and chests used in children's bedrooms. Testing was conducted at the UL Furniture Center for Excellence in Holland, Michigan. UL laboratory technicians conducted testing based on the current ASTM-International furniture safety standard, followed by new testing protocols developed by KID. The new tests were designed to be more representative of real-world scenarios, including foreseeable use of furniture by children and the stability of dressers that contain clothing. The additional testing was also to see what additional margin of safety some units may possess.

The results heighten concerns already underscored by recent product recalls affecting millions of units of furniture. The testing results point to widespread non-compliance with current voluntary standards as well as to additional typical use scenarios those standards do not address.

Test results include:

- Only nine of the 19 units passed performance tests based on the current tip-over safety standard, ASTM F2057.
- Only two units passed all tests, including the additional testing protocols added by KID.
- The weight of a television or any type placed on top of the unit did not decrease the stability of furniture.
- Furniture placed on carpet is less stable than furniture placed on hard floors.
- Many units remained stable when more than 70 pounds was placed on an open drawer, while others tipped with less than half that weight.

Based on the findings of data and testing, KID recommends a two-prong approach.

- Increasing consumer awareness of the danger of furniture tip-overs and knowledge of the actions needed to keep children safe
- Improving furniture stability by strengthening standards, making those standards mandatory and enforceable, and promoting changes in furniture design

## Furniture Stability, Add 2

The CPSC's #AnchorIt campaign, which emphasizes the need to attach furniture to a wall with a tip restraint, should be expanded to reach more families. In addition, further research into easier, tool-less tip-over restraints should be encouraged to increase the likelihood that consumers will take action.

"This project is an important step forward proving the current safety standard falls short," said Lisa Siefert, founder of Shane's Foundation. "Going forward a stronger standard, in addition to manufacturers using safer designs for increased stability, is necessary for keeping children safe."

"Better designs, stronger standards and enforcement of the standards are needed. We urge furniture manufacturers to look for design solutions to unstable furniture," added Cowles. "The top performing units in our testing had innovative designs including a wider base, interlocking drawers, or heavier back panels to increase stability."

KID has also worked with engineering students at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois and University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan to develop design solutions for furniture stability.

"Parents should have peace of mind that furniture in their home is safe, but today's voluntary safety standards are insufficient, putting children at risk," commented U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky. "We need stronger rules and better compliance to prevent tragic accidents from furniture tip-overs. The furniture industry must act to improve safety, and the CPSC and Congress must hold the industry accountable."

A strong standard to prevent furniture tip-over should include the following:

- All tests should be conducted on a carpet sample to correlate more closely to real-world use and worse case use.
- Increase the weight used in testing to protect children up to and including age 5 using the most recent anthropometric data.
- Since most dressers and chests in homes will be in use and not empty, add a requirement that furniture would remain stable when all drawers are filled to capacity with clothing, as KID did in its tests.

### Furniture Stability, Add 3

- The progressive drawer-opening test should be added and units that cannot pass must include drawer interlock systems.
- Eliminate the height restriction in the standard so that it applies to all clothing storage units.

The organizations urge the ASTM subcommittee on furniture safety to review the report data carefully and to strengthen the F2057 standard in accordance with the findings detailed in this report. At the same time, given the continued rate of injury, the noncompliance with the voluntary standard by manufacturers, and the industry's resistance to making substantive changes to the standard, KID and Shane's Foundation urge the CPSC to begin a rulemaking process to make a strengthened standard mandatory and enforceable.

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