

Bunk Bed Safety

Unique identifier: P16/000578
Effective from: 26 Aug 16
Review: 26 Aug 18

Not only do kids love them, but they are also great space savers for families.

For many Australian families, bunk beds offer an alternative to the conventional bed. If choosing bunk beds, parents and carers need to be mindful that they do come with a safety warning and that the ACCC doesn't recommend their use by children under 9 years of age.

If you already have bunk beds in your home or are about to make a purchase, it is important to be aware of the associated risks. Falls from bunk beds are a common cause of serious injuries affecting young children. Approximately 3,850 children under 15 years old are treated every year in Australia for bunk bed related injuries.

Kidsafe recommends you follow these injury prevention tips to ensure your children sleep safe.

Make sure your bunk bed complies with Australian Standards

To minimise the risk to children, select a bunk bed that complies with the mandatory Australian Standard for bunk beds AS/NZ 4220. Look for a label or swing tag validating compliance. Check with the supplier if you are unsure.

Age does matter

It is recommended that only children over nine years of age use bunk beds. You may wish to consider a trundle bed which can be manoeuvred easily, is a great space saver and much safer for the under 9's! It is safer to dismantle a top bunk until children are older.

Guard against injuries

To avoid falls, the Australian Standard requires guardrails on all sides of the top bunk, with the top of the guardrails at least 160mm above the top of the mattress.

Keep heads safe... remove the gaps

Gaps around the bed can create entrapment or strangulation hazards for children. Injuries to heads, arms and legs can occur if young children become trapped in gaps such as between rails and the mattress. Check that there are no gaps between 95mm and 230mm in any part of the bed including guardrails.

Make it a safe climb

Falls are the most common source of injury and can even be fatal. Concussions and fractures can also occur if children fall from the top bunk or while trying to climb up or down. To provide safe access to the top bunk make sure ladders are properly attached. Teach children the correct way to get in and out of the bunk beds.

Location, Location, Location

If your bunk beds can't be flush up against the bedroom wall, then allow a clear space greater than 230mm right around the bed.

Also, there should be at least two metres clearance between the bunk bed and ceiling fans and lights. A good rule of thumb is, if an adult can't safely access the top bunk without risk of hitting ceiling lights or moving fan blades, then the beds aren't safely located in the room.

Keep toys in the toy box

Remember to keep the floor area around the bunk beds free from any toys or sharp objects that may cause serious injury if a child trips or falls..

The only thing raised should be the beds

Like gaps around the bed, protrusions may also cause strangulations. To avoid clothing getting snagged on parts of the bed that stick out, check that all fastenings such as screws, nails, dowels, nuts and bolts are flush and smooth. There should be no protrusions more than 8mm anywhere on the bed. Also make sure any edges or points are suitably rounded.

Light the way

For added bunk bed night-time safety, have a torch or light fixture attached to the wall handy to make getting in and out of the top bunk safer.

Finally be sure your children realises that their bunk bed isn't a substitute for a trampoline!

While the temptation is often there to substitute any style of bed for a jumping frame, be careful not to let children play on or around bunk beds. Teach children that jumping and rough play is unsafe around bunk beds. Set some ground rules and make sure they are followed.

For further information regarding bunk bed safety contact your local [Kidsafe](#) office via www.kidsafe.com.au or visit www.productsafety.gov.au.