

Furniture and House Fitting Safety

This leaflet provides advice on how you can help keep your child with challenging behaviour safe around furniture and house fittings. The Children's Occupational Therapy Service offers a range of leaflets with advice on how to keep your child safe - call 020 8274 6854 for further information.

Children with challenging behaviour may need more durable, heavy furniture. Your child may tend to mouth furniture, throw and damage items and may be at risk of hurting themselves and others. Your child may also be inclined to climb on furniture.

General considerations:

- Consider minimal furniture in the child's bedroom to reduce risk to your child and damage to your furniture.
- Use of corner protectors can reduce the risk of injury to your child on sharp corners of furniture.
- Consider the layout of your furniture to reduce your child's access to high areas, windows, etc.

Example of possible solutions

Curtains:

- If curtain rails are pulled down, curtains with Velcro tab top are available which can easily be refitted without damage to the curtain rail.
- Magnetic curtain rails pull apart under pressure and can be easily re-attached.
- Lockable wooden shutters can be used instead of curtains.

Chairs and Tables:

- Waterproof chairs with removable covers are available.
- Durable, heavy tables and chairs can reduce the risk to your child and damage to your furniture if your child tends to throw light furniture.

Wardrobes and Cupboards:

- Furniture which is fixed to the wall or floor is more secure.
- Lockable drawers can prevent your child from removing the drawers to use as a climbing frame or damaging the contents of drawers.
- Tough Furniture provides a range of furniture for challenging environments called Tough Plus.

TV and Computer Cabinets:

- Polycarbonate screen covers.
- Video locks prevent your child from hurting themselves or damaging the video or DVD machine.
- TVs can be wall-mounted out of reach of your child.
- Solid lockable cabinets with unbreakable front panels to hold your TV, video and DVD units are available. The unit keeps the buttons, wires and electrics safely away from inquisitive children.

- Secure lockable computer workstation with polycarbonate protection screen are available.
- Some furniture is made with sloping tops to prevent climbing on the furniture.

Wooden surfaces and flooring:

- To stop your child from biting on wooden surfaces, such as window sills and furniture, strong plastic edging strip from DIY stores can protect the wooden surfaces.
- Vinyl flooring is easier to clean and maintain than carpeted flooring.

Walls and Mirrors:

- Painted walls are easy to clean and eliminate the potential for your child to strip and shred wallpaper.
- Washable paints with a protective washable finish are recommended.
- Posters, pictures and photos can be covered by a protective sheet of polycarbonate which should not crack or shatter.
- Polycarbonate picture frames are available.
- Polycarbonate/safety mirrors are safer for children who tend to break mirrors.
- Padded walls may be necessary in extreme circumstances. Padded gym mats attached to the walls with Velcro may be a successful solution.

Windows:

- Some children with challenging behaviour enjoy the sound of hitting glass. To reduce the possibility of your child from being injured by broken glass, ordinary glass can be covered with a protective window film that sticks onto the windows.
- If the window protective film is not successful, interior window protection frames with lockable polycarbonate doors are available.
- If necessary, windows could be replaced with strengthened safety glass.

Example of Suppliers:

- **Colourways:** robust furniture, www.colourwaysltd.com 01489 580 979
- **Primera:** fittings, www.primeralife.co.uk 0870 3001810
- **Tough Furniture** www.toughfurniture.com 01588 674 340
- **Intrad:** surface protection, walls www.intrad-direct.com 01707 266 726
- **Fledglings** www.fledglings.org.uk 09454 581 124
- A range of gym mats are available through companies such as www.amazon.co.uk

The lists of companies provided in these information leaflets are not approved lists. Croydon Council and Croydon Health Services accept no liability with regard to any purchases from the companies listed. The list of companies provided is not exhaustive.

Your questions and comments:

PALS offers assistance, advice and support for patients and their families.

The PALS office is open to callers from 9am to 3.30pm, Monday to Friday. Telephone number 020 8401 3210.