

Kidsafe WA

Kidsafe WA is the leading independent not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting safety and preventing childhood injuries and accidents in Western Australia. Injuries are the leading cause of death in Australian children aged one to fourteen, accounting for nearly half of all deaths in this age group. More children die of injury than die of cancer, asthma and infectious diseases combined. Many of these deaths and injuries can be prevented. Kidsafe WA works in the community to educate and inform parents and children on staying safe at home, at play and on the road.

Princess Margaret Hospital Injury Surveillance System

Princess Margaret Hospital for Children (PMH) is the only paediatric hospital in Western Australia and is the referral centre for paediatric illness and injury for the state. Every year approximately 70,000 children present to the PMH Emergency Department (ED). The PMH ED Injury Surveillance System is designed to capture data related to all children presenting with an injury. This bulletin provides a summary of the Injury Surveillance System data collected at PMH between 2010 and 2015 relating to children between 0 and 4 years of age.

Injuries to Babies, Toddlers and Pre-schoolers

A snapshot of Injuries to Babies, Toddlers and Pre-schoolers

- Between 2010 and 2015, there was a total of **38,855** injury presentations to the PMH ED for children between 0 and 4 years of age.
- **Children between 0 and 4 years of age** represent over one third (40.3%, n=38,855) of total injury presentations.
- **Toddlers** aged 1 and 2 years recorded the greatest number of injuries of the babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers age groups, accounting for 26.0% (n=10,107) and 24.8% (n=9,638) of presentations respectively.
- **Males** are at greater risk of injury amongst 0 to 4 year olds, accounting for 55.9% (n=21,728) of presentations.
- Almost all injuries (99.0%, n=38,457) were due to **unintentional** circumstances.
- **Falls** account for the highest number of injuries to babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers, accounting for 43.9% (n=17,069) of injuries.
- Very few injuries are related to a **sporting activity** (5.0%, n=1,939).
- **Trampoline** related injuries are the most common sporting activity associated with injury, accounting for 47.9% (n=928) of sports related injuries.
- A total of 16.1% (n=6,237) of injuries required **admission to hospital** for further treatment.

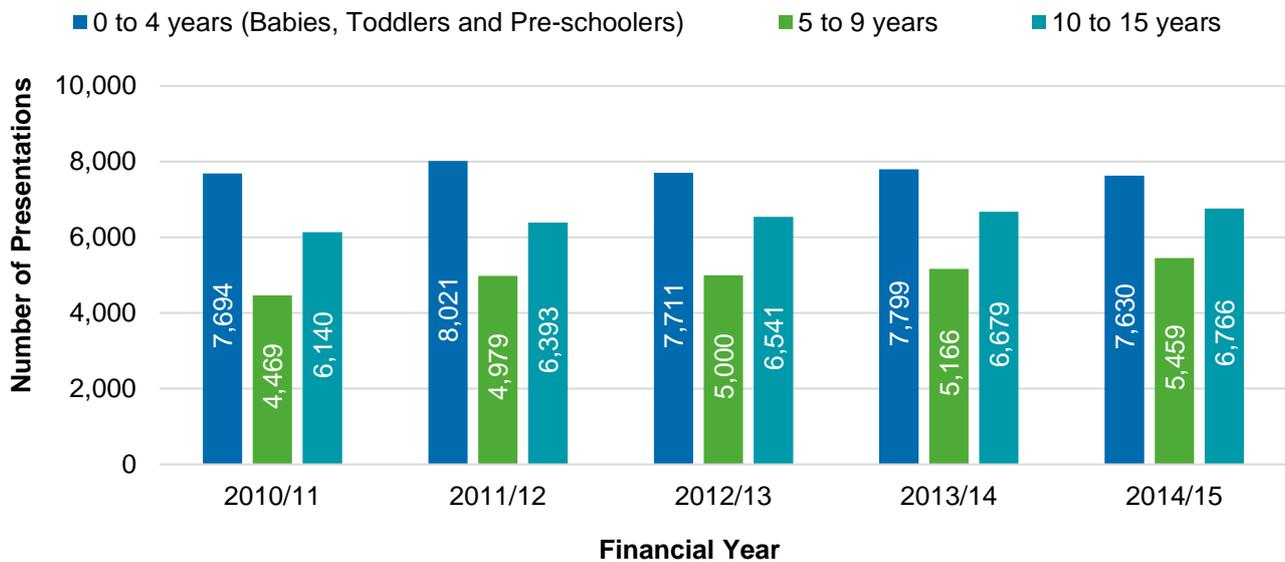


Introduction

Children aged between 0 and 4 are becoming mobile and starting to explore the world, however often their physical abilities are not matched by their cognitive abilities.¹ Children at these young ages may lack the knowledge, skill and concentration to navigate their world safely and therefore rely on adults to look out for their wellbeing. In addition, there are also physical characteristics that make young children more vulnerable to injury which can include their small stature, increased skin sensitivity and size of their airway.¹

Babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers account for the highest number of injuries to the PMH ED, which over the past five years has remained fairly consistent (Figure 1). The proportion of injuries to this age group however has decreased from 42.0 percent in 2010/11 to 38.4 percent in 2014/15.

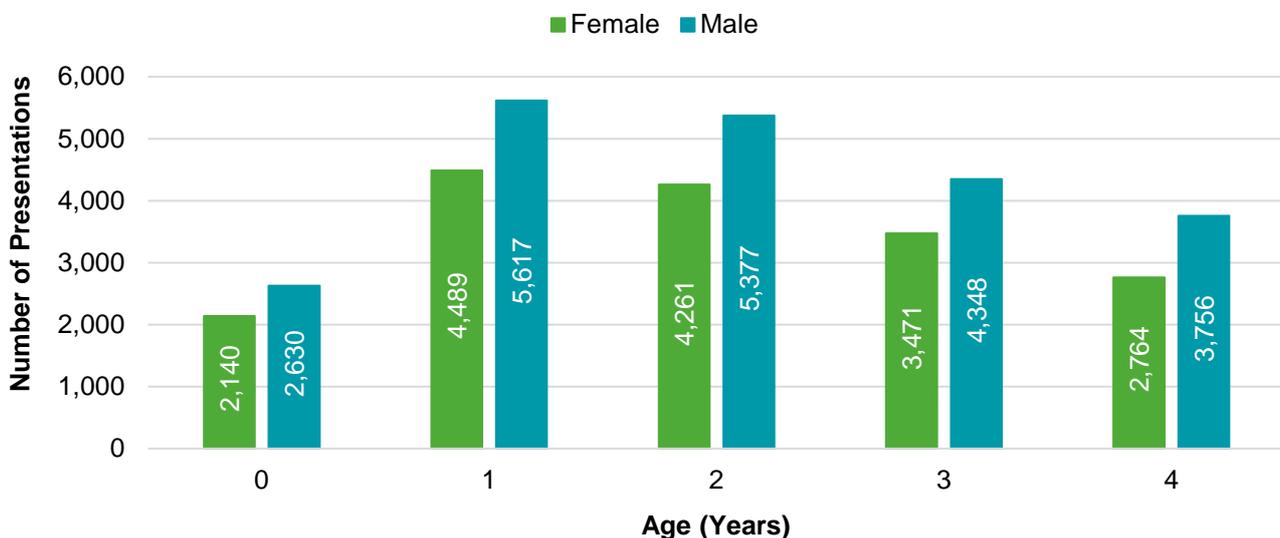
Figure 1: Injury by Age Group and Financial Year



Demographics

Males account for 55.9 percent (n=21,728) of injuries to children aged between 0 and 4 years and record consistently higher numbers in comparison to females across all ages (Figure 2). This is particularly evident in males aged 4 years where they account for 57.6 percent (n=3,756) of injuries. Toddlers aged 1 and 2 years recorded the highest number of injuries within this age group, accounting for 26.0% (n=10,107) and 24.8% (n=9,638) of presentations respectively.

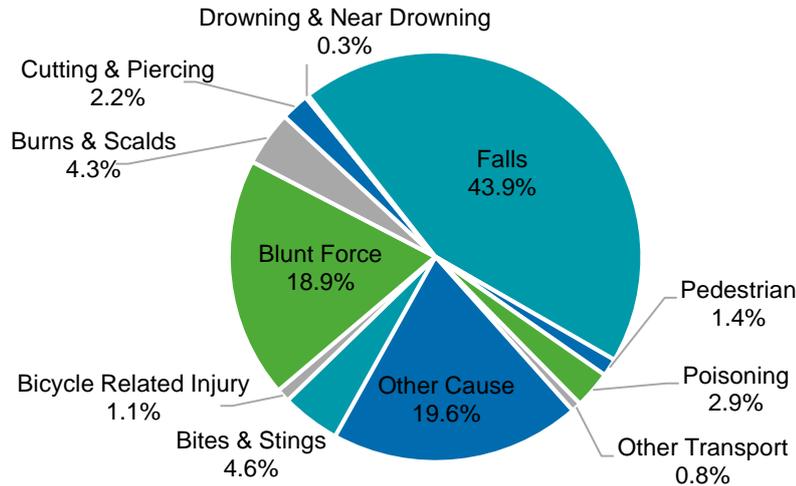
Figure 2: Injury by Age and Gender



Injury

Almost all recorded injuries to babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers are unintentional (99.0%, n=38,457). A small proportion of injuries are due to alleged assault (0.5%, n=193), and the remainder are unknown (0.5%, n=205). The number one cause of injuries to babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers is falls (43.9%, n=17,069) (Figure 3). In comparison to older children, they are also at greater risk of sustaining a burn or scald injury, poisoning or bite or sting.

Figure 3: Injury by Cause



Half of all injuries to babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers have an associated injury factor that contributes to the injury (50.4%, n=19,601). Injury factors include furniture (26.9%, n=5,277) such as tables, chairs, couches and cupboards, building components (24.0%, n=4,712) such as doors, windows and walls, and bedding (11.4%, n=2,232) such as cots, mattresses and bunk beds.

For many injuries to babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers the location of injury is recorded as other place (52.0%, n=20,206) referring to an unspecified location or one that does not fit an existing category. Of the known locations, the home is the most common (36.0%, n=13,973) (Figure 4a). Within the home, the most commonly specified location for an injury to occur are the living and dining areas (14.8%, n=2,065), and the bedroom (14.3%, n=2,002) (Figure 4b).

Figure 4a: Injury by Location

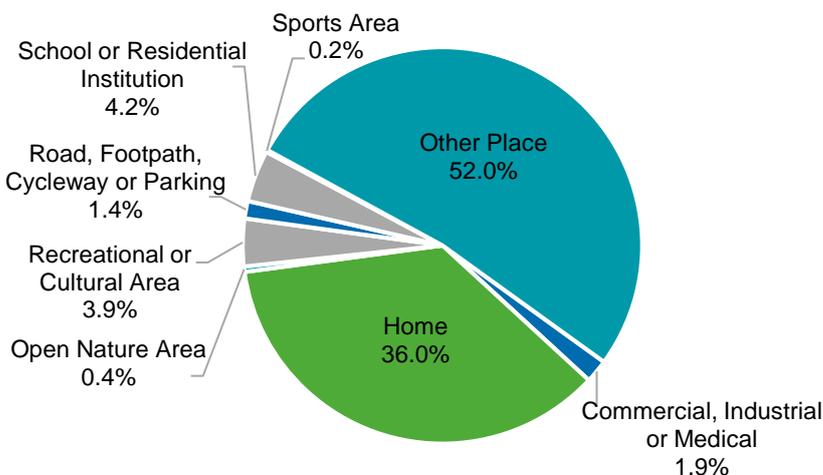
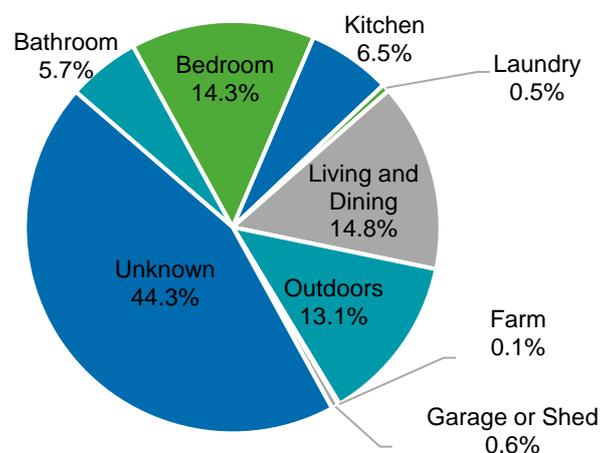


Figure 4b: Injury within the Home



The majority of babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers who present to the PMH ED with an injury are able to depart with their treatment complete (81.5%, n=31,657). A further 16.1 percent (n=6,237) are admitted to hospital for further treatment. The remaining are either referred to another hospital, clinic or department of PMH or do not wait for treatment.

Prevention

Babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers are constantly learning new skills including rolling over, crawling and walking. This combined with their often curious nature can put them at risk of injury. The following preventative measures can help reduce the risk of injury:

Falls

- Do not leave your baby unattended on nursery equipment or other raised surfaces.
- During nappy changes, always keep one hand on your baby and keep nappies and clothing within reach.
- Make sure the sides of cots or playpens are properly secured.
- Keep large toys and pillows out of the cot or playpen. Your baby could use them to climb over the side.
- Do not place furniture near windows or balcony rails.
- Avoid using baby walkers with wheels. Use a stationary activity centre instead.
- Always use the harness in high chairs and prams to keep your baby from falling out.
- Use safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs to restrict access.
- Use playground and play equipment that is suitable for your child's age and stage of development.
- Choose a tricycle or bicycle that is the right size for your child and ensure they always wears a helmet.

Burns and Scalds

- Have a licenced plumber install a hot water tempering valve to control the delivery temperature of your tap water to a maximum of 50°C.
- Ensure you have working smoke alarms and test them regularly. Batteries should be replaced on the 1st of April every year.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.
- Keep young children out of the kitchen while cooking.
- Never hold a child while preparing or consuming hot food and drink.
- Always use the rear hot plates first and turn pot handles towards the back of the bench.
- Use non-slip place mats instead of table cloths and ensure hot food and drinks are out of reach.
- Install guards around fires, heaters and ovens and always closely supervise children.
- Keep iron and other appliance cords out of reach.

Poisoning

- Ensure poisons are kept in a high lockable cupboard or cabinet.
- Store all poisons in their original containers and in a different area to where food and drink are kept.
- Medicines should be stored separately from chemicals and cleaners but ensure both are locked away.
- Some medicines need to be kept in the refrigerator – use a small portable lockable container to store these medicines safely.
- Do not refer to medications as 'lollies' – this can be very confusing for a child.
- Always read the label carefully before giving medicines.
- Keep your guests handbags out of reach of children, these may contain medications or other poisons.
- Return all poisons to their safe storage area immediately after you use or buy them.
- Use products with child resistant containers, however remember child resistant is not child proof.
- Dispose of unwanted and out of date medicines. Contact your local pharmacy for advice.
- Always keep the Poisons Information Centre phone number **13 11 26** near your phone.

Learn more at: www.kidsafewa.com.au

References

¹ Peden M, et al. World Report on Child Injury Prevention. Geneva: World Health Organisation; 2008.

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For further information please contact Kidsafe WA