

The Redwoods Group Insurance Program for Jewish Community Organizations

RISK MANAGEMENT ALERT

TOPIC: Protecting Children's Fingers from Door Injuries

Did You Know? A closing door can exert up to 40 tons per square inch of pressure along the gap between its hinges.

Did you know? The National Safety Council estimates that 300,000 injuries are caused by doors every year. Consumer Product Safety Commission statistics for the last available year cite 44,676 injuries to fingers, hands, and wrists of children under the age of 14.

Did You Know? Door injuries result in an estimated 15,000 amputations every year. Individual incident costs can be astronomical...two cases where the finger actually was reattached had respective price tags of \$725,000 and \$600,000.

A frequent injury in a JCO involves a child whose hand or fingers are caught in a closing door. Some times it is a minor pinch...often it is much more. Fortunately, this is a loss that a proactive JCO can prevent.

Closing doors frequently inflict bruised, cut, or smashed fingers, torn or cracked fingernails, broken bones, and even amputations on unwary children...injuries that happen very quickly, often before staff can react to prevent them. Basic supervision and monitoring, especially in the proximity of doors, may prevent many of these injuries. Specific areas of focus for proper supervision include the following:

- Children should be seated away from doors during activities. The opening between the door and the doorframe is an inviting place for little fingers.

- Children should line up and wait on the latch side of the door so that their hands cannot be pinched as the door opens and closes.
- Proper staff to child ratios should always be maintained and staff should be thoroughly educated concerning the facts and prevention methods for this type of injury.

Utilization of appropriate pinch protection hardware may also significantly reduce the potential for injury. For a relatively small cost a JCO may protect the children it serves from a potential life-altering event by installing such hardware on all doors that are in childcare areas or are frequently used by children.

Fingershield Safety (USA) (www.fingershieldsafety.com), Fingersafe USA, Inc. (www.fingersafe.com), and Mountain View Enterprise (www.fingerguard.com) are some of the manufacturers of such equipment. Extent and method of protection, durability, and costs vary significantly. The different products may not be equally suitable for your specific needs so you should carefully compare their attributes. Whatever hardware you select should prevent (not just discourage) the entry of a finger into the danger zone from both sides of the door. It should protect the door through the full extent of its swing (i.e., it should be capable of protecting doors that open 180 degrees). Attachment should use screws rather than glue for a stronger, more durable connection.

The cost of a few hundred dollars to install this hardware is negligible when compared to the reduction in exposure to the hundreds of little fingers that come in contact with these doors each and every day.

Please call us at 800-463-8546 to discuss this or any other risk management safety tip, or visit our web site at <http://www.redwoodsgroup.com> to learn more about JCO risk management issues.