

## Guarding against doorway finger injuries



Guild Insurance continues to receive reports of serious injuries to children's fingers due to them being caught in doorways at early learning services. It may surprise you to learn that these injuries are often quite severe and require long term medical treatment.

### Case example 1

A staff member closed a door behind her. On hearing a scream, she noticed a child next to the door who was bleeding from the hand. The door had been closed on the child's finger resulting in the amputation of the fingertip.

### Case example 2

A child's finger was caught in a closing bathroom door; the child was alone at the time. The child's finger was fractured and required surgery.

### Case example 3

A staff member heard crying and noticed a child was bleeding heavily. Another child said her finger was caught in a door they

had closed. There was a large gash on the child's finger and stitches were required.

The Education and Care Services National Law states that all staff have a responsibility to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause an injury. Whilst unfortunately we can't guarantee incidents causing injury won't occur, early learning centres must ensure their service is safe.

### Tips for making doorways safer in your early learning centre:

- > Inspect all doors in your centre and assess the risk to children with each door. This should be done regularly as risks can change over time.
- When doing so consider the appropriateness of each door. Are they heavy and therefore close with great force? Are they fast closing? This should be looked at in conjunction with the location of each door. Are there high-risk doors in areas that children regularly use?
- > Install door guards or protectors as these are a very effective and relatively

inexpensive method of reducing injuries to fingers. There are a range of options available to suit different door types, all aimed at preventing fingers being caught in either hinge or handle sides of doors. These are also designed to fit both hinged and sliding doors.

- > Educate all staff about the risk of fingers being caught in doors and the need to always be aware of children nearby when opening and closing doors.
- > Communicate with the families who use your service about the risks posed by doors. Some incidents have occurred when a family member, such as a parent, has closed a door not realising there were children nearby.
- > Place signs around the centre, particularly near doors, reminding staff and any visitors to the centre to be mindful of children when opening or closing doors.



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