**April, 2016**

**Child Safety News! – Another toddler sadly dies as a result of getting trapped in a Window Blind.**

Following the tragic news of another child who sadly died as a result of getting trapped in a **window blind**, ‘**The Childminding Cafe**’ would like to highlight the dangers that can occur. This can happen in any child friendly environment including childminder settings.

On Saturday 2nd April, it was announced that a 16-month-old toddler had died at her grandparents’ home in Stoke-on-Trent after becoming trapped in a window blind cord. The toddler had been left alone only moments before she was found tangled in the blinds. She was taken to hospital in Staffordshire but was pronounced dead shortly afterwards on Saturday.

**‘The Childminding Cafe’** feel it is appropriate to come together in raising awareness and address the dangers of blinds and the cord attached when caring for small children. “Everybody with small children needs to check and make sure they have safety blinds.”

**Why do blind cords pose such a risk?**

Research indicates that most accidental deaths involving blind cords happen in the bedroom and occur in children between 16 months and 36 months old, with the majority (more than half) happening at around 23 months.

These toddlers are mobile, but their heads still weigh proportionately more than their bodies compared to adults and their muscular control is not yet fully developed, which makes them more prone to be unable to free themselves if they become entangled.

In addition, toddlers' windpipes have not yet fully developed and are smaller and less rigid than those of adults and older children. This means that they suffocate far more quickly if their necks are constricted.

As with drowning, toddlers can be strangled quickly and quietly by looped cords with carers in close proximity, potentially unaware of what is happening.

To reduce the risk posed by looped cords, including blind cords, cords should be kept out of the reach of children.

**What can Childminders do to make it a safer place?**

* Install a blind that does not have a cord, particularly in a child's bedroom
* Keep a child's cot, bed, playpen or highchair away from any windows with looped cords
* Keep Pull cords on curtains and blinds short and ensure they are kept out of reach
* Move children’s beds, cots, highchairs
* Tie up the cords or use one of the many cleats, cord tidies, clips or ties that are available
* Do not hang toys or objects that could be a hazard on the cot or bed
* Don't hang drawstring bags where a small child could get their head through the loop of the drawstring.
* If possible, replace your old blinds with blinds that are considered ‘safe by design’ These are cordless or have concealed or tensioned cords
* Share this information with parents and carers to help raise a better understanding of the dangers and how best you can work together to safeguard children in your care

**Additional Safety Advice from ‘The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents’** (**RoSPA)**

**RoSPA**  does not recommend cords to be cut, even as a short-term solution. It is suggested that any action taken on the blind cord is a permanent one which will take the cord out of reach of children. It is not an expensive task and a limited number of cleats are available to those who need them via the RoSPA website.

Cutting the cord in the wrong place can make the blind inoperable; and it may also lead to one cord becoming a lot longer which increases the risk of entanglement. Cut cords can also become tangled up resulting in the reformation of a loop.

**Are you a childminder or parent/carer?** If you know friends, families and other people who have young babies and toddlers, please share this safety advice Blog on your Facebook and on Twitter to help prevent further tragedies happening.

*Source used:*

<http://www.rospa.com/campaigns-fundraising/current/blind-cord>

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/apr/06/toddler-dies-after-becoming-trapped-in-window-blind-cord>

<http://www.capt.org.uk/who-we-are/news/baby-girl-dies-window-blind-cord-accident>