

## Furniture Anchors Not an Easy Fix, as Child Tip-Over Deaths Persist

A CR investigation shows obstacles to using lifesaving anchors; secret shoppers had a hard time finding them at major retailers

By Rachel Rabkin Peachman  
November 05, 2018

After her 2-year-old son, Shane, died from a furniture tip-over in 2011, Lisa Siefert started attending health fairs and other events to hand out furniture wall anchor kits—delicate-looking hardware packaged like picture hooks that are meant to secure furniture to walls.

She was tormented by the idea that families with small children didn't know about this hidden tip-over danger in their homes. So spreading the word became her life's work.

Now, six years after starting a foundation in her son's name, she isn't sure what difference she has made, if any.

### MORE ON TIP-OVERS

[Furniture Tip-Overs: A Hidden Hazard in Your Home](#)

[Dressers Exempt From Industry Safety Standard Fail Consumer Reports' Tests](#)

[\\$69 Ikea Dresser Passes CR's Toughest Furniture Tip-Over Test](#)

[How to Anchor Furniture to Help Prevent Tip-Overs](#)

In her typical pitch, Siefert explains the statistics of children dying or becoming injured from furniture tip-overs and how wall anchors can help prevent tragedy. "Those numbers are children. My children. Our children," she says.

Some parents are receptive, taking the anchor kits and promising to use them. Others make excuses, sometimes pushing Siefert to tears.

"In the beginning, I would often get the response, 'I watch my child' or 'It's too hard' or 'I don't want to drill holes in the wall,' and I used to take it so personally," she told Consumer Reports. "I would actually cry on my way home knowing that these families just didn't care. It actually hurts when they say, 'Well, I watch my child.' We all watch our children, and we all love our children."

Shane had just finished a nap and gotten out of bed when the dresser in his bedroom tipped over onto him and he suffocated. Siefert wasn't in the room at the time. A wall anchor might have prevented the tip-over, but she didn't know about anchors or the tip-over risk.

After so many years, Siefert realizes she's performing triage in the face of a child safety epidemic. Each year furniture tip-overs cause thousands of injuries serious enough to send children to the emergency room. Tip-overs of dressers and other clothing storage units are particular deadly. Since 2000, they've been linked with at least 206 deaths. Most of the victims were children younger than 6.

Anchoring dressers to the wall is widely touted as the best preventive measure, short of the furniture industry consistently producing more stable dressers. But as Consumer Reports has uncovered during our ongoing investigation into dresser stability, furniture anchors are not a well-known or easy fix for the majority of consumers. And experts tell CR that public health education and outreach programs are frequently ineffective if not coupled with other actions, such as legislation.

Nancy Cowles, executive director of Kids in Danger, a child safety organization, says that anchoring furniture is a "complicated procedure." And while she hopes anchors have helped to prevent tip-over incidents, "I don't think it's a panacea," she says. Having spent decades leading organizations that focus on public interest research, education, and the prevention of childhood injuries, Cowles knows that getting parents to install anchors is a tough sell. "Frankly, I rarely talk to someone who anchors their furniture. People say, 'No, my child is never alone.' Everyone thinks their dresser is not going to tip over . . . until it happens."

Elliot Kaye, a commissioner at the Consumer Product Safety Commission, says that asking consumers to modify their behavior in the name of safety, particularly when it involves time, money, and skill, is "the least effective way to address the hazard. . . . There is a role for anchoring," he says, "but it would be great if the burden were not on consumers to take action."

As the government and others push wall anchors as critical to preventing more tragedies, CR's evidence suggests that telling parents to anchor furniture to the walls in their homes is an inadequate solution for a devastating yet preventable problem.

"While we recognize that anchoring is the only action consumers can take today to ensure their furniture is secure, we don't believe it is a sustainable long-term solution to a systemic issue," says Don Huber, CR's director of product safety. "The furniture should be designed to be more stable in the first place in order to more effectively reduce the number of deaths and injuries associated with furniture tip-overs."

Podcast: Hear Moms Tell Their Stories



## What We Found

Because anchoring is key to preventing tip-overs, CR decided to assess its availability and adoption among Americans. We did this through a nationally representative survey and also sent secret shoppers to retail outlets to look for anchors.

Our survey of 1,502 U.S. adults revealed that only about a quarter of Americans have anchored furniture in their homes.

Why? The specialized anchoring hardware, which goes by several names (wall anchors, furniture straps, and anti-tip kits, to name a few) and takes many forms (steel cables, metal L brackets, nylon webbing, and zip ties), is hard to explain and requires some skill to attach to a stud in the wall, so many people don't do it.

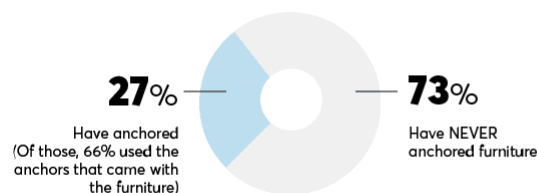
Consumers are reliant on anchors because currently, the industry operates under a voluntary stability standard, which means furniture makers don't have to follow it. The standard states that a dresser or other clothing storage unit taller than 30 inches should stay upright with 50 pounds of weight hanging from an open drawer while all other drawers are closed and the dresser is empty. This standard exempts dressers measuring 30 inches and shorter (video). The American Home Furnishings Alliance (AHFA), the main trade group for the industry, urges full compliance with the voluntary standard and says it relies on anchoring as an additional safety measure.

Another reason many Americans may not anchor: Only dressers taller than 30 inches are covered by the voluntary standard, so only those that comply with it are required to come with anchors. So if you purchase a dresser that does not comply with the standard (such as one that is 30 inches or shorter) or you buy or borrow a used dresser, you might need to buy anchoring hardware separately. This is particularly relevant because only 35 percent of Americans with young children in their homes buy dressers new, according to our survey.

To see how easy these anchors were to find, we deployed secret shoppers to check on the availability of wall anchors at five major retailers around the country—Ace Hardware, Home Depot, Lowe's, Target, and Walmart. In many cases, the shoppers had difficulty locating the anchors in the stores and found that the sales associates were unaware of the lifesaving devices. Only one of the 13 secret shoppers who went to Target locations around the country found a wall anchor in a store. When CR asked Target about these secret shopper findings, the retailer did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

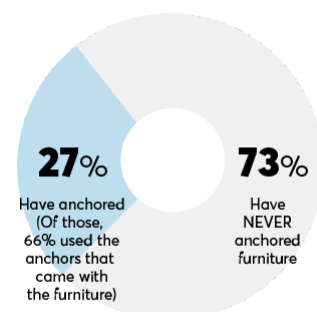
"If parents drive to Target and then they go to Walmart, and the anchors aren't there," Siefert says. "then how hard are they going to try to get this product?"

### Only about one quarter of Americans are anchoring any furniture.



Source: 2018 Consumer Reports Nationally Representative Survey of 1,502 U.S. Adults.

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As part of an ongoing investigation that we launched two years ago, CR also bought 42 dressers for evaluation. We put them through a series of three progressively tougher stability tests to see how they would perform. While 13 failed all but one of the tests, 20 dressers passed all the testing, underscoring that some manufacturers can successfully design more stable dressers.

Dressers are particularly prone to tipping because their center of gravity can shift rapidly when a drawer is opened or when weight, such as the weight of a child, is placed on one or more open drawers, says James Dickerson, CR's chief scientific officer.

This hazard is especially dangerous when children are involved. "Unfortunately, young children are the perfect targets for tip-over injuries," says Laura Jana, M.D., author of "The Toddler Brain" and associate research professor at the Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center at Pennsylvania State University. "Between the ages of 3 and 5, children are only beginning to develop the executive function skills necessary to anticipate consequences or to stop and change their course of action if and when they realize something is wrong—when a dresser is unsteady, for example. This, combined with their small physical size, makes young children and unsecured dressers a set-up for potential disaster."

CR supports a strong, mandatory furniture stability standard for the industry. It would include dressers 30 inches and shorter and a test weight of 60 pounds hanging from an open drawer. Sixty pounds represents the upper weight range for children affected by tip-overs. And by making the stability testing mandatory, regulators would more easily be able to enforce the standard and gain industry cooperation for recalls.

"Strong stability standards that are mandatory would mitigate the hazard whether or not the furniture is anchored," says CR's Huber.

## Anchor Unawareness

Like many parents we interviewed, Siefert did not know about the furniture tip-over issue, let alone furniture anchors, before the unthinkable happened. When she bought her babyproofing gear at a large retail store, "furniture straps were not on display," she says, adding that she "made the mistake of trusting that [the items in the baby-proofing section] were all I needed."

She remembers that she "purchased most every safety device on display—drawer locks and outlet covers and that [type of] thing—and I babyproofed the house to the best of my knowledge."

Parents Erica and Aaron Fried also did not think about furniture tip-overs as a hazard in their home. They worked hard to babyproof their home, but in 2016, their 3-year-old daughter, Harper, died after a furniture tip-over.

"My house is annoying for visitors—all of the kitchen cabinets have locks on them," Erica Fried says. "The stairs have gates. Even my daughter's bedroom on the day of her accident had a gate on the door."

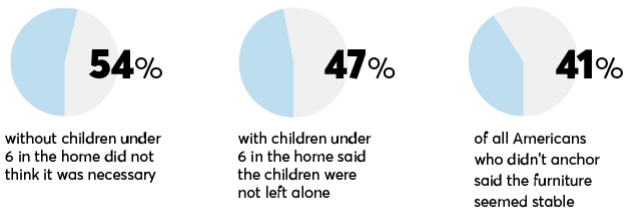
In 2015, in response to tip-over incidents, the Consumer Product Safety Commission launched the Anchor It! campaign, which was soon backed by organizations such as Safe Kids Worldwide, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the AHFA. But when CR asked Commissioner Kaye whether the Anchor It! campaign has led to a decrease in tip-over injuries or deaths, he said, "we have absolutely zero way of knowing. . . . It's a total guess, and anyone who is telling you that it's working has no basis in fact." And yet, because there has been no other reliable safety message to deliver, the CPSC and others continue to put their resources into spreading the word about anchoring.

In 2015, Ikea launched an anchoring campaign, called Secure it!, in the wake of several highly publicized deaths connected to Ikea dressers. In the stores, in catalogs, and online, there are now signs about furniture straps and videos about anchoring. According to a spokesperson, the company has "invested millions of dollars in the effort to educate consumers."

"We just keep spending money year after year without having any clue whether it's the right amount of money, whether it's the right message, and whether we're reaching the audience that needs to be reached," Kaye says.

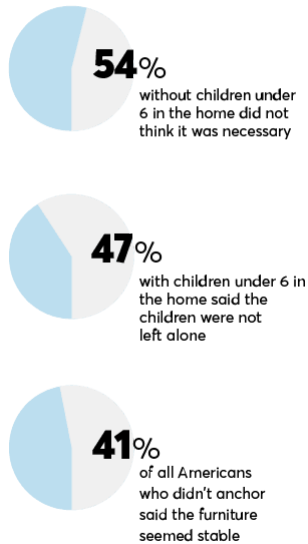
Robert Adler, another CPSC commissioner, says that few health and education campaigns are effective in changing consumer behavior. "The big problem with a lot of education campaigns is that they don't run long enough, they don't spend enough money, they don't use multimedia approaches, and they mainly work with the educated elite," he says.

**Most common reasons  
Americans gave for NOT anchoring were:**



Source: 2018 Consumer Reports Nationally Representative Survey of 1,502 U.S. Adults.

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anchoring were:**



Source: 2018 Consumer Reports Nationally Representative Survey of 1,502 U.S. Adults.

Consumer Reports' nationally representative survey was designed to examine the broad question of whether anchoring is a viable solution to furniture tip-over incidents and to gather data on attitudes and behaviors around furniture anchors. According to our survey:

Only 27 percent of Americans have anchored furniture in their home.

Among Americans with kids under 6 at home, 40 percent anchor their furniture.

Nearly half of adults with children in their home say they don't anchor furniture because their children are not left unattended around furniture. Incident data, however, show that many dresser tip-overs happen shortly after children wake up from a night's sleep or a nap, when they're often alone in their rooms.

Other reasons Americans don't anchor vary: Forty-one percent thought the furniture was stable enough; 25 percent didn't want to put holes in their walls; 16 percent didn't want to put holes in their furniture; 7 percent aren't sure what hardware to buy; and 7 percent have never heard of anchoring furniture.

The primary reason people anchor furniture: They bought the piece new, and it came with anchoring hardware.

Only 35 percent of Americans who have a young child living in their home or frequently visiting bought their child's dresser new. Twenty-nine percent got their child's dresser used, while more than a third had the dresser already.

**35% of Americans with children under 6 in the home bought their child's dresser new.**



This means that the majority of Americans would likely have to buy their own anchors.

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## Secret Shoppers Seek Out Anchors

With so much emphasis placed on the importance of anchoring furniture and so much variability among dressers, CR decided to spot-check major retailers that sell hardware and babyproofing items to gauge the accessibility of furniture anchors in stores. Specifically, we deployed secret shoppers in different regions of the country to the following stores: Ace Hardware, Home Depot, Lowe's, Target, and Walmart. The secret shoppers searched store aisles, asked employees for guidance, and took pictures of wall displays.

For some, the first obstacle to locating the devices was finding store employees who knew what they were. Secret shoppers used the term "furniture anti-tip kit" as a backup. Our results show that the sales associates at Ace Hardware and Lowe's were familiar with the anchoring devices, but many employees at Target and Walmart had not heard of them.

"At Walmart they had no idea what I was looking for even after explaining the product," says one secret shopper in Florida. "I was taken to fasteners." The same shopper had a similar experience at a Home Depot, reporting that the sales associate still did not know what furniture anchors were even after hearing an explanation. This shopper didn't find the furniture anchors at either store.

At a Target in New York, "two separate associates didn't know where to direct me," says a secret shopper. Similarly, a different shopper at a Target in Missouri asked two associates for help. Neither one knew what furniture anchors were or whether Target sold them. (The stores did not carry the anchors.)

Several of the Home Depot locations our secret shoppers went to in Arizona, California, Michigan, and Texas had furniture anchors in stock, but the sales associates in some instances did not know what the item was or where to locate them in the stores.

At the Ace Hardware and Lowe's stores that were visited, more often than not the secret shoppers were able to locate wall anchors—and the majority of the time, the sales associates had heard of wall anchors for furniture.

CR's secret shopper in Oregon was unable to find furniture anchors in any of the five different stores checked.

Consumer Reports reached out to all five retail outlets to ask them whether they sold anchors at their stores.

A Target spokesperson said, "Target does sell these items and they are located in the baby section in store."

A Home Depot representative said the company sells furniture anti-tip kits in stores and online. But it's "always good to check online first to make sure they are in stock at your local store." (There were 14 secret shoppers who went to Home Depot locations, and 11 of the stores had anchors in stock.)

A Walmart spokesperson said that the retailer sells furniture anchors in the store and that they are available in the "baby department." (Six of the 12 secret shoppers who went to Walmart stores around the U.S. were unable to locate furniture anchors.)

A Lowe's spokesperson said that the retailer sells "hinged furniture straps" in stores and online. (Of the 13 Lowe's locations that CR's secret shoppers checked, 11 stores had the devices in stock.)

Ace Hardware did not return multiple requests for comment. (Eight of the 12 Ace Hardware locations checked by secret shoppers had furniture anchors in stock at the store.)

## The Need for Hardware Help

Buying furniture anchors is only part of the equation. Parents need the proper tools and know-how to install the devices correctly, or they must find a professional or a friend who can do it for them. The process can be confusing and time-consuming, and many people get tripped up by these hurdles.

"The most difficult part is getting people to install anchors themselves or getting someone else to do it," says Brett Horn, who lost his son, Charlie, to a dresser tip-over in 2007 and co-founded [Charlie's House](#), a nonprofit home safety organization, with his wife, Jenny Horn. "How do we get people to act? My organization provides a lot of straps, and I don't think I want to know the percentage that are truly installed."

CR's survey found that of the 73 percent of Americans who have not anchored furniture in their home, 9 percent say they haven't done so because they don't feel confident in their ability to install the anchors correctly, and another 9 percent say they don't know how to locate a stud on the wall.

"The challenge is a lot of parents aren't real comfortable screwing into the walls. They don't necessarily have the tools to do it correctly," says Peter Kerin, founder and owner of Foresight Childproofing, a company that creates child-safe environments and installs gear, and is based in Minneapolis.

To be sure, installing anchors is not an immediately intuitive or simple task—and the type of tools and anchors needed can vary depending on the walls of the home. For instance, Kerin says: "If you live in a home built before the 1960s that has plaster walls, you have an additional challenge because it's harder to find a stud."

All these hardware challenges reduce the likelihood that consumers will follow through on the anchoring message that has been promoted. Cowles, of Kids in Danger, notes that there are not many examples of successful education campaigns that rely primarily on the public to take action. "There are very few that you can point to over the history of children's issues where you can show a concrete level of improvement based solely on education or telling parents what they need to do," Cowles says.

An example of the rare education campaign that safety proponents believe has been successful, Cowles says, is Safe to Sleep (formerly known as the Back to Sleep campaign), which promotes safe sleep practices for infants. The reasons for its success are varied, but it has one important feature: The suggested behavior doesn't require many steps from the public.

When it comes to more complex educational campaigns that seem to have had an impact, they are "almost always accompanied by legislation," says Cowles, who points to the Stop Medicine Abuse campaign, which discouraged teenagers from using over-the-counter cough medicines to get high. "There was a lot of education that went into it, but in fact what went along with it was [legal] requirements that [cough medications] be placed behind the counter so that children under a certain age couldn't buy them."

"I'm perfectly fine in supporting the Anchor It! campaign. I think under the current circumstances, it is one of the best things we've got," says Commissioner Adler. But in addition, he says, "the need for redesigning furniture is something I think is incredibly important."

## What You Can Do

In the meantime, anchors remain consumers' most reliable defense against furniture tip-overs. Whether you've just bought a new dresser or you're using one you've had for years, it needs to be secured to the wall. "Even if we put a mandatory standard [for dresser stability] into effect tomorrow, there are a lot of dressers out there that don't comply," says Ann Marie Buerkle, acting chairman of the CPSC.

And while anchoring furniture may not be a skill you've acquired yet, it's possible to learn. If you have the proper tools and the inclination, follow [CR's anchoring tips](#); if you don't feel equipped to anchor on your own, hire a professional who can.

## Keeping Kids Safe From Furniture Tip-Overs

A danger might be lurking right in your home. On the 'Consumer 101' TV show, Consumer Reports' expert Peter Anzalone explains to show host Jack Rico what consumers need to know about furniture tip-overs.



## **FURNITURE WALL ANCHORS**

2018 Nationally Representative Multi-Mode Survey

**Prepared by Survey Research Department**

**September 13, 2018**

## INTRODUCTION

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*Furniture can be anchored to the wall to prevent it from tipping over and causing injuries using special hardware, sometimes called an anti-tip kit or furniture wall safety strap. The anchor is attached to the wall and to the back of the piece of furniture using screws or other mounting hardware.*

In July 2018, Consumer Reports conducted a *nationally representative survey of 1,502 U.S. adults* on furniture wall anchors to assess the degree to which people use these products, and reasons why or why not people choose to anchor their furniture.

To examine populations vulnerable to furniture tip-over, the survey sample includes 32% with children under age six in the home, 12% living in earthquake-prone areas, and 11% of those aged 70 and up.

## REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

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**27%**

HAVE ANCHORED  
FURNITURE

*Only about a quarter of Americans have anchored any furniture in their home.* Among those who haven't, 36% have considered it, and 7% have never heard of it.

**40%**

WITH KIDS IN THE HOME  
HAVE ANCHORED FURNITURE

*Anchoring is significantly more common in homes with children under age six.* Those who tend to do more babyproofing in their homes (like baby gates and outlet covers) are also more likely to anchor furniture.

**66%**

USE ANTI-TIP KIT THAT CAME  
INCLUDED WITH FURNITURE

Two-thirds of those who have anchored furniture in their home say they used a tip-kit that came with the furniture. And, *buying a piece of furniture that came with anchoring hardware is the most common reason* people say they considered anchoring their furniture.

**50%**

WHO BOUGHT A NEW DRESSER  
FOR A CHILD'S ROOM  
HAVE ANCHORED FURNITURE

Those Americans who have purchased a brand new dresser for a child in their home are more likely to anchor furniture. However, *only 35% say they bought their child's dresser new, and 38% say they've had it for more than 5 years.*

**41%**

DON'T ANCHOR BECAUSE  
FURNITURE SEEMS STABLE

Among the most common reasons that Americans don't anchor their furniture is that they think it seems stable. *A quarter say they don't anchor because they don't want to put holes in their walls.*

**36%**

IN EARTHQUAKE AREAS  
HAVE ANCHORED FURNITURE

Those Americans living in earthquake-prone areas *tend to anchor their furniture to the wall more* than those in non-earthquake areas.

**21%**

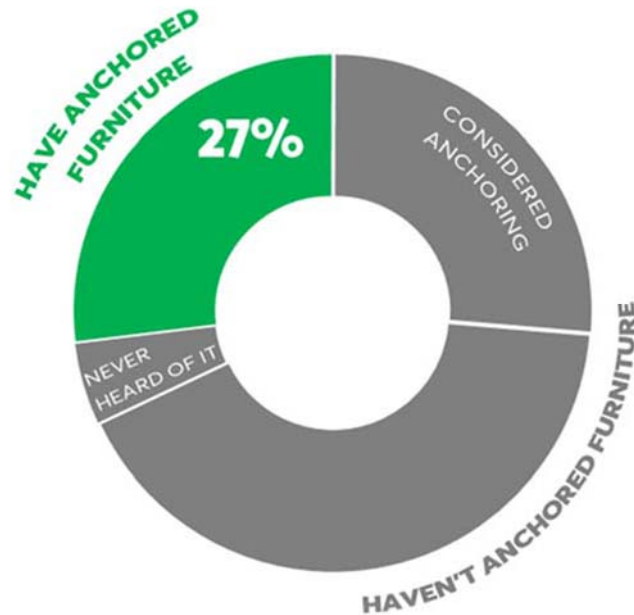
OF OLDER ADULTS  
WITH NO KIDS IN THE HOME  
HAVE ANCHORED FURNITURE

When looking just among groups of people without children in their homes, adults aged 55 and up or 70 and up are *no more likely than younger adults to anchor their furniture to the wall.* And, older adults are less likely to consider anchoring than younger adults.



## FINDINGS

We asked Americans if *any of the furniture in their home is anchored to the wall* to prevent it from tipping over. And, of those who have not anchored any furniture, we also wanted to know if they have *ever considered it*, or even heard of it before.



### ONLY ABOUT A QUARTER OF AMERICANS HAVE ANCHORED ANY FURNITURE IN THEIR HOME

- The majority of Americans haven't anchored any furniture (73%)
- Among those who haven't anchored:
  - 36% have considered it
  - 7% have never heard of it

Of those who have anchored furniture in their home:

**66%**

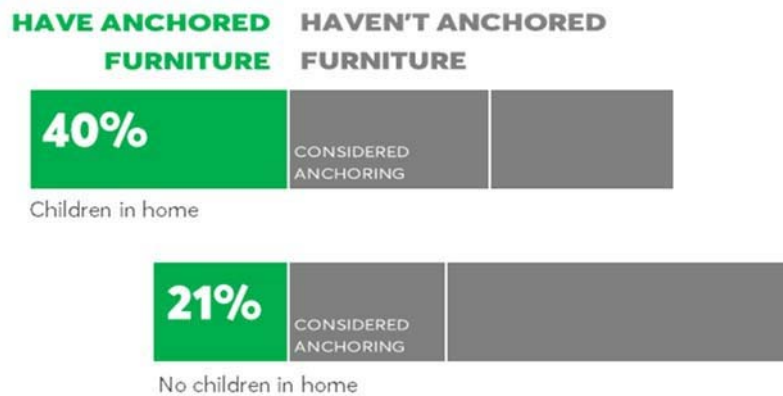
USE ANTI-TIP KIT THAT CAME  
INCLUDED WITH FURNITURE

**84%**

INSTALL ANCHORING  
HARDWARE THEMSELVES

- Only about a third use hardware they purchased separately from the furniture
- Less than two in 10 hire a handyman or installation service to anchor their furniture

## ANCHORING IN HOMES WITH CHILDREN UNDER SIX



Base: All respondents; "Children in home" includes children under 6 years old who live in or spend time in home

### CHILDREN UNDER 6 YEARS OLD ARE AT THE MOST RISK FOR INJURY FROM A FURNITURE TIP-OVER

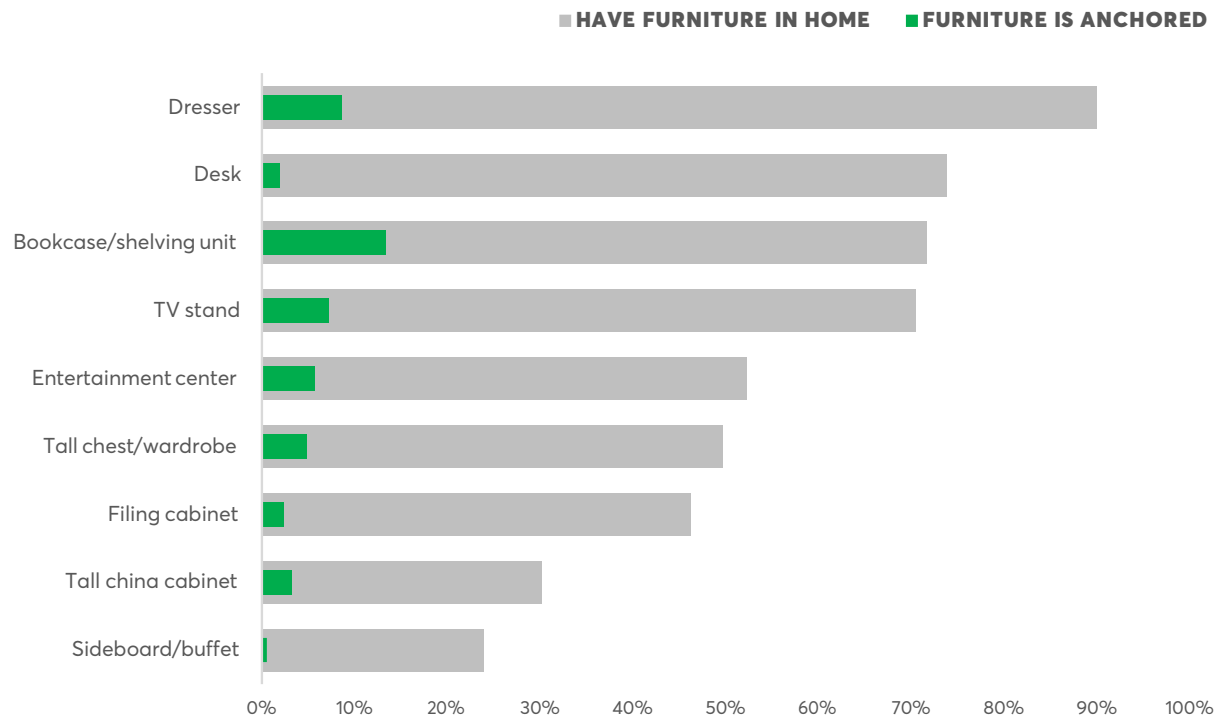
So, those households with young children, either who live in the home or spend time in the home regularly, were of particular interest

As can be seen in the graph above, *anchoring is significantly more common* in homes with young children.

Among those who do not anchor:

Those with young children in their home are more likely to consider anchoring (*about half say they've thought about it*) compared to those without children in their home (less than a third of whom have considered anchoring).

## TYPES OF FURNITURE IN HOMES AND LIKELIHOOD OF BEING ANCHORED



Base: All respondents

The graph above shows the types of furniture that Americans have anywhere in their home. And, among those who have each type of furniture, the percentage of which who have anchored it to the wall.

**Nearly all** Americans have **DRESSERS**

About **two in 10** of those with a **BOOKCASE** have it anchored

About **one in 10** of those with a **DRESSER** have it anchored

➤ Among those with children under six in their home:

- About **three in 10** of those with a bookcase have it anchored
- About **two in 10** of those with a dresser have it anchored

## Reasons to Anchor Furniture

We were interested in not only how people first heard about anchoring their furniture to the wall, but in what ways did they learn about it that *made them think it might be a good idea to do in their own home*. We asked those respondents who have either anchored furniture or considered anchoring furniture to pick from a list of options we provided.

### THE MOST COMMON REASON THAT LED AMERICANS TO CONSIDER ANCHORING THEIR FURNITURE:

They bought a piece of furniture that came with the anchoring hardware

## WHAT MADE YOU CONSIDER ANCHORING FURNITURE?



\*Items only asked of those with children under six living in the home

Respondents were able to select all that apply

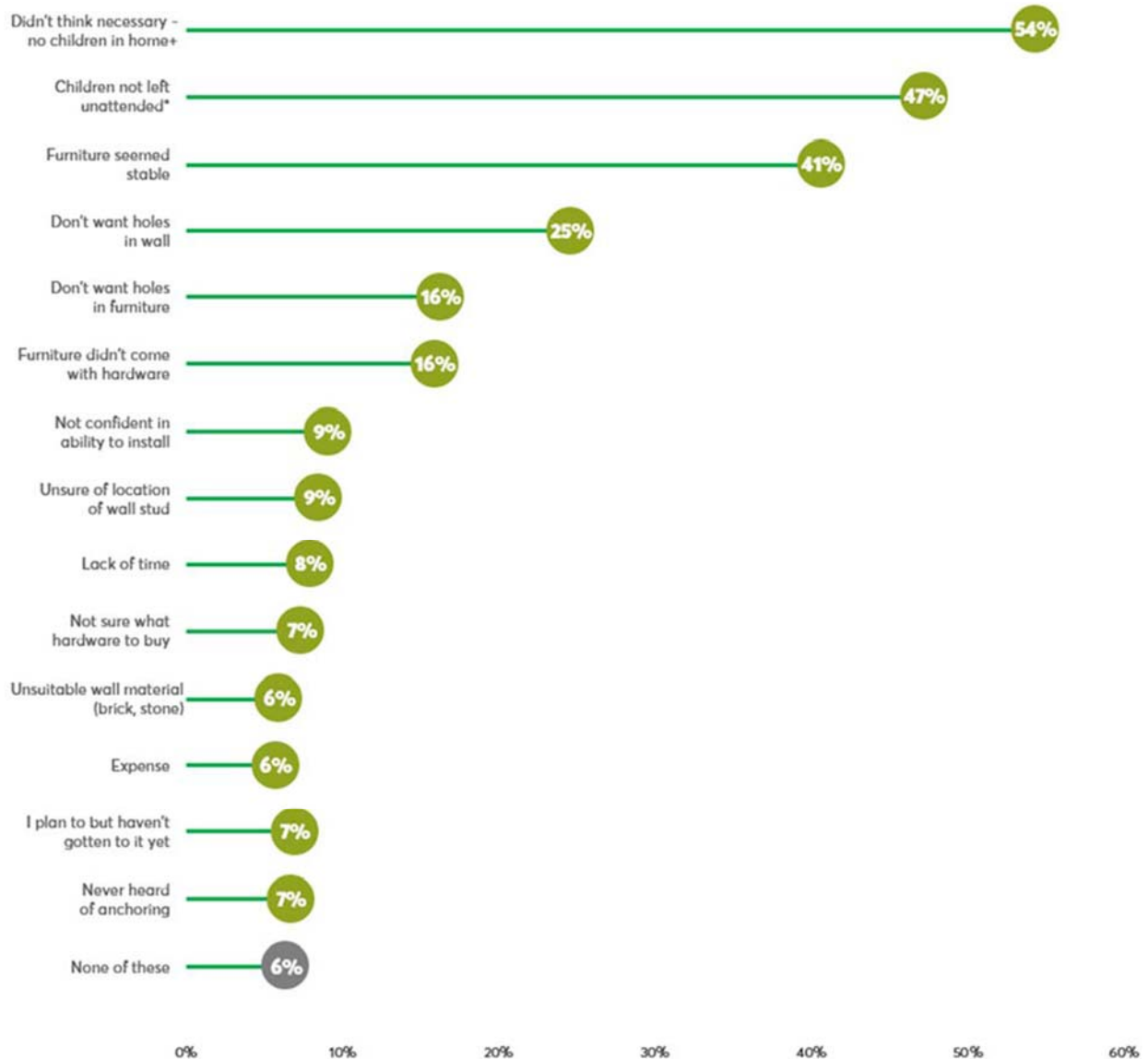
(If 'None of these' was chosen, respondents were not able to select additional options)

Base: Respondents who have anchored or considered anchoring furniture

## Reasons Not to Anchor Furniture

Similarly, we wanted to know *why some people have chosen NOT to anchor furniture to the wall in their home*. We asked those respondents who have not anchored furniture to pick from a list of options we provided.

### WHY NOT ANCHOR FURNITURE?



\*Item only asked of those with no children under 6 living in or regularly visiting home

\*Item only asked of those with children under 6 living in or visiting home regularly

Respondents were able to select all that apply

(If 'None of these' or 'Never heard of anchoring' were chosen, respondents were not able to select additional options)

Base: Respondents who have not anchored furniture

**More than half** of those without children under six in their home...

**DIDN'T THINK THEY NEEDED TO ANCHOR  
BECAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE KIDS**

**Nearly half** of those with children under six in their home say they don't anchor because...

**CHILDREN AREN'T LEFT UNATTENDED  
AROUND FURNITURE**

**AMONG THE MOST COMMON REASONS THAT AMERICANS DON'T  
ANCHOR THEIR FURNITURE:**

They thought the furniture seemed stable

A *quarter* of those who have not anchored say it is because they *do not want to put holes in their walls*. We were interested in whether or not renters would be less likely to anchor their furniture than those who own their home, due to concern about putting holes in the walls.

- Overall, **28%** of those who rent have anchored furniture; **27%** of those who own have done so
- Among those with children in the home:
  - **36%** of those who rent have anchored furniture; **44%** of those who own have done so

### **Children's Furniture and Babyproofing Habits**

In general, dressers are the most common type of furniture for Americans to own—and this is no different when it comes to the pieces located in areas of the house where children under age six sleep or play. Of those respondents with children in the home, **76% have a dresser in a kid's bedroom or playroom**.

Of those with children in the home who have a dresser in a child's room:

**35%**  
PURCHASED  
THE DRESSER NEW

**38%**  
OWNED THE DRESSER  
FOR MORE THAN 5 YEARS

- Of those who bought the dresser new, about half got it from a baby/children's store or department

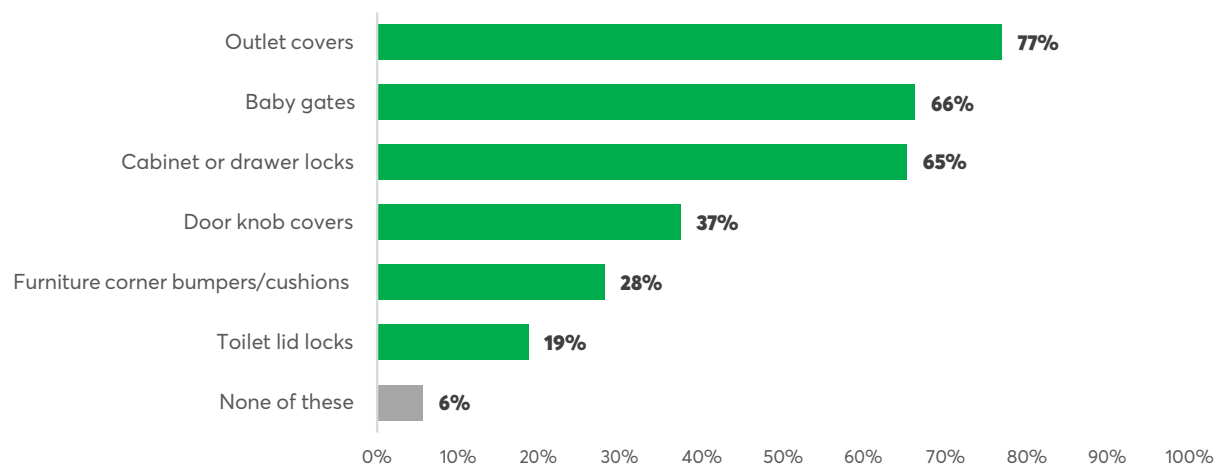
- Twenty-nine percent say they got the dresser used, and more than a third had the dresser already

### THOSE AMERICANS WHO PURCHASE A BRAND NEW DRESSER FOR A CHILD IN THEIR HOME ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO ANCHOR

- *Half of those who bought a new dresser* to put in a child's room have anchored furniture in their home, compared to *38%* of those who had the dresser already or got it used
- This suggests that some consumers are making use of the *tip-kit that often comes included* when buying new furniture
- *Among those with children who have anchored in their home:*
  - *75%* say they anchor throughout the home
  - *25%* say they anchor in children's bedrooms or playrooms only

We asked those respondents with children about the *types of childproofing items they have ever used in their home*. The graph below shows the six items we asked about.

### TYPES OF CHILDPROOFING ITEMS USED IN THE HOME



\*Respondents were able to select all that apply  
(If 'None of these' was chosen, respondents were not able to select additional options)

Base: Respondents with children under 6 living or spending time in home

**Over 90%** of those with children under six in their home...

**HAVE USED AT LEAST ONE BABYPROOFING ITEM**

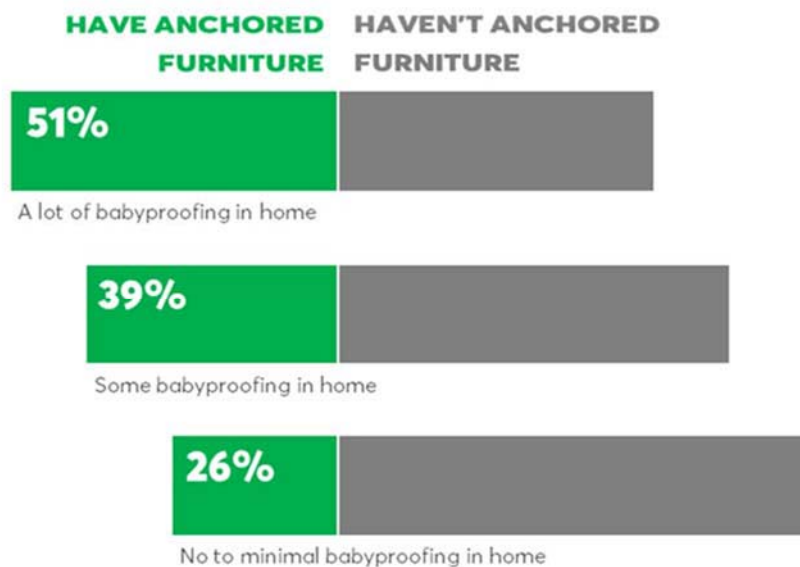
Among the **most common** are...

**CABINET OR DRAWER LOCKS, BABY GATES, AND OUTLET COVERS**

Those with kids who **live with them** rather than just spend time in their home...

**TEND TO USE MORE BABYPROOFING STRATEGIES**

## ANCHORING AMONG THOSE WHO BABYPROOF



\*Those in the 'No to minimal babyproofing' group report use of less than two of the six individual childproofing items we asked about; those in the 'A lot of babyproofing' group report use of four or more.

Base: Respondents with children under six living or spending time in home

We were interested in the relationship between widely known babyproofing strategies and the use of furniture wall anchoring, which can be seen in the graph above.

### ANCHORING IS SIGNIFICANTLY MORE COMMON AMONG THOSE WHO DO MORE BABYPROOFING IN THEIR HOMES

However, even among the group that use many of the babyproofing strategies we asked about, only about half of them also anchor



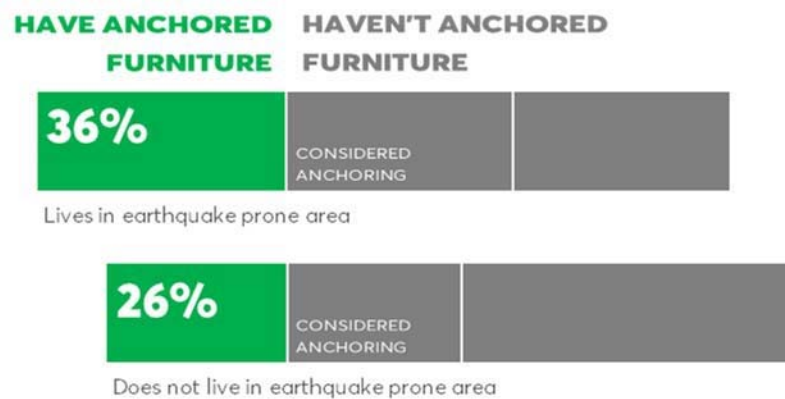
## Earthquake Prone Areas

Those people who live in areas prone to earthquakes are encouraged to anchor their furniture to the wall due to the potential for tip-overs.

Of those Americans living in earthquake-prone areas:

- They *tend to anchor their furniture* to the wall more than those in non-earthquake areas
- Those who don't anchor are *more likely to consider it*

### ANCHORING IN EARTHQUAKE-PRONE AREAS



## Older Adults

Another population that is vulnerable to furniture tip-over hazards is older adults. We would hope to see these individuals anchoring at a higher rate than younger adults without children.

**21%**  
OF OLDER ADULTS  
WITH NO KIDS IN THE  
HOME ANCHOR

When looking just among a group of people without children in their homes, adults aged 55 and up or 70 and up are *no more likely than younger adults to anchor* their furniture to the wall.

### OLDER ADULTS ARE LESS LIKELY TO CONSIDER ANCHORING THAN YOUNGER ADULTS

- Among those who have not anchored and have no children in their home:
  - *About a third* of those aged 18 to 69 have considered anchoring
  - *Less than two in 10* of those aged 70 and up have considered it

## SUMMARY

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Injuries caused by furniture tipping over can be fatal, especially among certain at-risk groups. Children under the age of six, older adults, and those who live in earthquake prone areas are all vulnerable to tip-over accidents. Manufacturers have taken steps to inform consumers that they should anchor furniture to the wall that is likely to tip, such as bookcases and dressers, to prevent these types of incidents.

A majority of people still do not anchor any furniture in their homes, despite most having heard of anchoring. Those most likely to anchor furniture are those with young children living with them, especially those who are knowledgeable about other babyproofing strategies. But, even among those child proofers who have installed outlet covers, baby gates, cabinet locks, and door knob covers, only about half also use furniture anchors in their homes.

Also more likely to use furniture anchors in their homes are those who bought a brand new dresser for use in a child's room. New furniture is likely to come with a tip-kit, and most people who choose to anchor use the included hardware. In fact, the most common reason people say they decide to anchor in their home is because they bought something that came with the hardware to do so. But, over a third say they've had their kid's dresser for more than 5 years, and a notable percentage say they got it used.

Other than buying furniture that came with a tip-kit, or at least with instructions or a warning about anchoring, some of the more common ways people learn about anchoring is from a story on the news, or through friends or family members. Very few people say they considered anchoring because they heard about a furniture recall. Many people choose not to anchor their furniture because they think it seems stable. More than half of those *without* kids say they just don't think they need to because there are no children in their house—and close to half of those *with* kids say they don't think they need to because they don't leave their children unattended.

A quarter say they don't anchor because they don't want to put holes in their walls. However, this doesn't keep those who rent their home from anchoring at similar rates as those who own their home.

When it comes to other at-risk groups, some have gotten the message and others have not. Older adults, who should anchor pieces of furniture because they could tip if they lean on them for support, are actually less likely to consider anchoring than younger adults. But, those in earthquake areas are more likely to anchor their furniture than those in non-earthquake areas, although it is still a relatively low percentage.

More needs to be done, either by furniture manufacturers or through public awareness campaigns, to get the word out about the need for anchoring furniture to the wall to prevent tip-over incidents. Many of those at risk for these accidents do not anchor.

## METHODOLOGY

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This multi-mode survey was fielded by NORC at the University of Chicago using a nationally representative sample. The survey was conducted from July 6-25, 2018.

A general population sample of U.S. adults age 18 and over was selected from NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel for this study, using sampling strata based on age, race/ethnicity, education, and gender. In total, NORC collected 1,502 interviews, 1,423 (95%) by web mode and 79 (5%) by phone mode. The margin of error for the sample of 1,502 is +/- 3.44% at the 95% confidence level. Smaller subgroups will have larger error margins.

To encourage study cooperation, NORC sent email reminders to sampled web-mode panelists, and sampled phone-mode panelists were dialed throughout the field period. Panelists were offered the cash equivalent of \$2 after successfully completing the survey. Where appropriate, response answer choices were randomized. Final data is weighted by age, gender, region, race/ethnicity, housing tenure, telephone status, income and education to be proportionally representative of the U.S. adult population.

Key demographic characteristics (after weighting is applied) are presented below:

- 52% female
- Median age of 47
- 63% White, non-Hispanic
- 33% 4-year college graduates
- 52% have a household income of \$50,000 or more

Respondents with children in their home were put into a "babyproofing group" based on their answer to Q1a (which asks about six individual childproofing items they have ever used in their home, such as outlet covers, baby gates, or drawer locks). Those who report using 0 or 1 of the items we asked about were put into the *Low group*, 2 or 3 items into the *Medium group*, and 4, 5, or 6 items into the *High group*.

Percentage of the sample in each of the three babyproofing groups are presented below:

- 21% Low
- 44% Medium
- 35% High