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SAVE PRINT LICENSE ARTICLE

Consumer group Choice calling for mandatory safety standards for trampolines

Stephanie Gardiner

A five-year-old boy had his finger amputated after it was trapped in a trampoline, a 10-year-old girl hurt her back on a rail while playing a jumping game called "crack the egg", and a three-year-old boy fell to the ground and fractured his leg.

Those are among the thousands of backyard trampoline accidents NSW Ambulance paramedics have responded to since 2014.

Dimity Statheos watches her children, Silas and Karis with neighbour Lydia, on their new trampoline with their old trampoline in the background. Photo: Wolter Peeters

Now consumer group Choice is calling for the Australian safety standard for trampolines to be mandatory, after seven out of eight popular models failed to meet their safety checks, which identify entrapment risks, and use weight and force to test the structure and padding.

Choice tested the Jumpflex Classic 100, Kmart's 10 foot with enclosure, the Plum Space Zone 10 foot, the Vuly Thunder Medium, the Lifespan Hyperjump Plus, the Action 10 foot, the Kahuna Classic 10 foot Orange, and the Springfree Trampoline Medium Round R79 model.

Only the Springfree trampoline, which costs about $1700, passed all tests, while others had inadequate padding to protect a child's head, or large gaps where a child could get their head, limbs or fingers trapped.

"Parents buying trampolines in Australia at the moment cannot have confidence that the product they're purchasing meets basic safety standards," Choice spokeswoman Stefanie Menezes said.

Consumer group Choice tested popular trampoline models for safety. Photo: Choice

Dimity Statheos's family recently bought a Vuly 14-foot model, after years of using a trampoline without a net.

"We thought it was important for them to learn how to be safe without a net, but eventually the springs came loose and it was dangerous, so this time we looked for one with a net," Ms Statheos said.

She was impressed with the safety features and, being a teacher trained in OH&S, she was not concerned to find one Vuly model didn't pass the tests.

"If you put so much padding on a trampoline, kids don't actually learn to be safe, it's like riding a bike with training wheels all the time."

Vivienne Pearson's son was seven when he fell off a borrowed net-free trampoline and broke his collarbone at home in northern NSW.

So Ms Pearson researched netted trampolines and settled on the Springfree branded model.

"Both he and his older sister were both doing circus classes and getting very acrobatic," she said. "A non-netted trampoline was not going to be appropriate."

Standards Australia has guidelines relating to enclosures, gaps, and avoiding UV degradation on trampoline fabric, but those standards are voluntary.

A 2015 data review found no observable evidence of the voluntary standard having an effect on trampoline injuries.