



United States

**Consumer Product Safety Commission**

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**CPSC Staff Statement on Fors Marsh Group Report,  
“Consumers with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Review  
Investigating Safety Behaviors, Perspectives, and Attitudes”<sup>1</sup>  
September 2021**

The report titled, “Consumers with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Review Investigating Safety Behaviors, Perspectives, and Attitudes,” presents the results of a literature review and environmental scan conducted by Fors Marsh Group (FMG) to determine whether individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) are exposed to unique safety hazards from consumer products.

Somewhere between 7 and 8 million people in the United States have an IDD diagnosis, which can encompass a range of intellectual, developmental, physical, and behavioral experiences (Reynolds et al., n.d.). The most common IDDs documented in the United States are cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and Down syndrome (Mai et al., 2019; Zablotsky et al., 2017).

Findings from the literature review reveal that the IDD population experiences life expectancies that are about 20 years lower than the general population and mortality rates that are approximately 10 percent to 50 percent greater than the general population.

Those with IDDs are at greater risk of injury and death from the everyday hazards posed by consumer products, notably those found in the home, compared to those without IDDs (Finlayson et al., 2010). According to one study, about 75 percent of injuries to young individuals with IDDs occur within the home (Sherrard et al., 2002). Product hazards are prevalent within the home. Uneven or slippery surfaces, as well as miscellaneous small parts (e.g., stray pen caps, loose change, refrigerator magnets), pose a risk for falls, ingestion, and choking, even in the most vigilant homes. For individuals with IDDs who have greater personal independence, burns from water or kitchen appliances are a regular risk as well.

Outside the home, drowning and wandering away from supervision remain worrisome risks for individuals with IDDs, who have significant mobility or greater independence. An unsupervised individual with an IDD may be unable to communicate his or her distress to others if drowning or experiencing a consumer product-related injury (e.g., a fall, laceration, ingestion, choking, or burn). Such communication disconnects make it difficult to mitigate these types of incidents.

Findings from the environmental scan highlight the importance of caregivers as primary safety providers for individuals with IDDs. Caregivers are often the ones who produce and share important safety-related information (e.g., through online blogs) for individuals with IDDs. The majority of government and nonprofit organizations that support safety for individuals with IDDs orient their information toward caregivers.

Additionally, FMG conducted in-depth interviews with stakeholders from the IDD community (in the areas of education, health care, caregiving, play, and product manufacturing). Overall, many of those interviewed articulated some of the same product safety concerns revealed in the literature

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<sup>1</sup> This statement was prepared by the CPSC staff, and the attached report was produced by Fors Marsh Group for CPSC staff. The statement and report have not been reviewed or approved by, and do not necessarily represent the views of, the Commission.



























































































