

CALAMITY KIDS COST PARENTS £3 BILLION

British parents could find themselves saddled with a hefty repair bill this summer as the cost of keeping the kids at home in the holidays takes its toll. New research¹ from **Lloyds TSB Insurance** shows that while school's out for summer, accidental damage claims go through the roof, rising by 25 per cent². Almost a third (30 per cent) of mothers and fathers say their children have had holiday accidents in the home, causing everything from broken windows to wrecked furniture – at a cost of more than £3 billion.

Phil Loney, managing director, Lloyds TSB Insurance, said: “Any parent knows that kids can be quite a drain on the finances! But as our research shows, it's not just the cost of food, clothes and entertainment that burns holes in our pockets. With the long summer holidays meaning many kids spend more time at home, the risk of damage to our properties also increases.”

The cost of kids' catastrophes varies from home to home. A fifth (21 per cent) of all parents say their bill has hit the £100 mark, while 17 per cent say they've had to spend up to £200. Fourteen per cent have parted with as much as £500, while seven per cent have found themselves shelling out an eye-watering £1000.

The most common domestic disasters caused by children are smashed ornaments (39 per cent), damaged carpets (39 per cent), broken furniture (33 per cent), damaged electrical items (29 per cent), soiled walls (27 per cent) and shattered windows. One in twenty (5 per cent) reported that their kids had even destroyed family heirlooms.

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Almost half (48 per cent) of the domestic catastrophes were caused by kids playing indoors, while a fifth (19 per cent) happened when they were running around. One in ten mishaps (9 per cent) took place where youngsters had been handling equipment or items that should have been out of reach, while one in twenty (6 per cent) occurred when children were left 'home alone'.

Phil Loney continued: "Having the kids at home for the summer holidays can test even the most patient parents. Our research shows that once children turn the house into their playground, they really are bulls in a china shop and the scene is set for all manner of accidents. Luckily most of the damage will be nothing more than a broken vase or stained carpet, but, in some cases the repair bill can come as a real shock.

"The real lesson here is not to leave children unsupervised for a long time, and to keep dangerous items out of reach. However, it is also important to get insured. Home insurance might not be a legal requirement but it really can come to the rescue where children cause havoc in the home. While it might not prevent a broken window or a soiled carpet, it can easily save pounds in the pocket."

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Notes to Editors:

¹Research conducted by Tickbox.net – July 2005. Sample size, 2,147.

²Lloyds TSB Home Insurance Claims Data.

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