

A Mother's Instinct and How a Fall From a Change Table Changed Lives

Brave Mum, Michelle, shares her story of how one incident changed the lives of her family forever.

We've all been there. We're exhausted, juggling a million and one things, the baby is crying for a feed and argh! There we go, another full nappy too.

This was the story for Michelle, who on Christmas night 8 years ago, had her life changed.

I was concerned at how far he had fallen

"It was around 6pm and both the children had had a bath. My 6-year-old Shayleah was left with Taral, 11 months old, on the change table while I prepared his bottle. This was something that had happened before with me being a single mum – I never seemed to have enough hands. Next thing I hear is Shayleah saying 'oh Taral!' and him crying".



Taral had fallen approximately 1 metre off the change table onto a thinly carpeted floor. As his sister picked him up, Michelle ran frantically into the room.

"He was crying but started to settle as I cuddled him in my arms. I thought I better call Nurse On Call even though he hadn't vomited or lost consciousness, I was concerned at how far he had fallen."

If I had not asked the paramedics to take him, he would not have woken up that night

The ambulance arrived and checked Taral over, but as he hadn't shown any signs of trauma, it was up to Michelle if she wanted to have him checked over in the hospital. She chose to take him in, but little did she know how the next few hours would unfold.

"About an hour after we arrived at the hospital he started to fuss. That was when I noticed the lump on the back of his head and that half of his head felt swollen. I went back to the triage nurse and was upgraded to a higher priority. At home and right up until then, Taral had not shown any signs of a head injury."

Within the next hour, Taral became less responsive and had to be intubated as they took him for a CT scan. His right pupil had blown and it was soon discovered that he had a massive bleed on the brain.

He was whisked away to The Royal Children's Hospital once stable and put in an induced coma. The result of Taral's fall was a fractured skull and a 4.8cm subdural hematoma to the right side, which shifted his brain 2cm off midline forcing it down his spinal column.

“They got me to come and see him before they left for The Royal Children’s Hospital because they weren’t sure he was going to live. All I could think of at the time was, what have I done to my son? This is my fault for leaving him.

Even the anaesthetist on duty that night said he has seen it happen, but I will always hold myself responsible.”

Incredibly, this strong little boy only spent 16 days in hospital.



8 years on and Taral has ongoing effects from his injury

Taral was left with an Acquired Brain Injury that has become more evident as he grows. As a toddler he never slept more than 3 hours at a time. He had a 4cm piece of skull missing, which meant that he had to wear a helmet until he was nearly 2, when it grew back. He had many falls because he was just starting to walk and hitting his head. This meant numerous trips to the hospital to make sure that he hadn’t done further damage.

Taral, now 8, has Autistic traits (currently awaiting formal diagnosis of Autism), ADHD, Oppositional Defiance Disorder, Sensory Processing Disorder, severe anxiety, behavioural problems, aggression and violence, right sided peripheral vision loss and has very mild weakness in his left leg and right arm. He must be medicated heavily to sleep, or he just doesn’t sleep. He also has short term memory loss.



“He needs a lot of appointments and doesn’t go to mainstream school. He used to but was only going for 2 hours a day, so that meant that he is behind kids his own age developmentally. He has no road sense, so you have to be vigilant with him. He is such a beautiful, funny, kind and caring boy however his disability means that people don’t see this – that’s often due to his inability to cope with change. As to the future, we don’t know what else will be needed for his care.”

Falls from nursery furniture and equipment are one of the leading causes of injury for children



Many of us have been in a position where we have forgotten a cream for the nappy change, the phone rings, or someone knocks at the door, and we are pulled in different directions.

Whether it’s a bed, change table or highchair, always make sure your baby is supervised by an adult at all times.



“If you do decide to use a change table to change your child, NEVER leave them alone or with another child. It just takes a second for this to happen. I think I will always hold myself responsible.”

“If you feel like something isn’t right with your child, get them to a doctor or hospital. Had I not asked the Paramedics to take him to hospital, he would not have woken up that night.”

Thank you so much Michelle for sharing your story with us.

6 tips to keep your baby safe on a change table

- Make sure all supplies are within arm’s reach for you
- Some tables come with a safety strap which can be helpful, but don’t rely on these on their own to keep your baby safe
- Always keep one hand on your baby at all times
- Once your baby becomes mobile, consider changing them on a mat on the floor