
 FEATURED PROGRAMME

SAFE KIDS Canada

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SAFE KIDS Canada is a national, charitable, organization whose mission is to increase the public's awareness that unintentional injuries are the leading threat to children under the age of 15 and to collaborate with groups and communities to reduce the incidence and severity of those injuries. SAFE KIDS Canada has affiliates in 24 cities across Canada.

Staff

The national office staff consists of an Executive Director, Dianne Merrick; Director of Communications and Development, Jane Rogers; Director of Research and Program Development, Malak Sidky; Communications and Development Coordinator, Christine Hudson; office manager, Mary Taggart; Ontario Affiliate Co-ordinator, June Barrette; and receptionist, Kevin Taggart.

This staff provides support services to 24 affiliates across the country, devises injury prevention research and program strategies, raises public awareness, and participates in advocacy activities.

Funding

SAFE KIDS Canada was launched in 1993 with Imperial Oil as the founding sponsor. Additional funding comes from a variety of corporate supporters, including a food manufacturer, an advertising agency, banks, the media, and service clubs.

Goals

SAFE KIDS Canada's long term goals include:

- Raising awareness that preventable injuries are the leading threat to the health of Canada's children
- Focusing the public's attention on the cause of specific preventable childhood injuries
- Promoting the development of community based affiliates committed to decreasing preventable childhood injuries

Local SAFE KIDS affiliates

There are currently 24 affiliates across Canada that work at the community level to raise awareness and implement program strategies devised at the national level. In addition, they work on local issues that may or may not have national programming already designed. Affiliates participate in a variety of activities reflecting local concerns. Examples include:

- Sledding safety
- Playground education and inspections
- Installation of smoke detectors
- Raising awareness on equestrian safety and the importance of helmet use
- Kids Can-Bike Festival
- Kids Car Seat Safety Checks
- Helmet Heroes Program
- Promotion of bicycle helmet use
- Gun control advocacy
- Organizing conferences
- Production of materials including safety calendars, comic books, bicycle hang tags, playground slide show, playground guides, and audit tools

The affiliates benefit from different components of the national campaign, including:

- National communications
- Corporate video
- Annual report
- National sponsorship
- Staff expertise in program development and evaluation, fundraising, and communications
- Annual affiliate workshop

In addition, SAFE KIDS Canada plans to make available by the spring of 1996, a national communications campaign including a 30 second television public service announcement (PSA), print advertisements, and radio PSAs. These communications tools will help create profile and awareness at the community level, and thereby enhance local SAFE KIDS activities.

Approach

SAFE KIDS Canada believes in a multifaceted approach to prevention — the four 'Es' of injury control:

- Education: targeting parents, children, teachers, the media, policy makers, and health professionals
- Enforcement: influencing public policy to support or change regulations or legislation
- Engineering: modifying children's environments or the products surrounding them
- Evaluation: assessing whether the strategy was successful

Information dissemination

SAFE KIDS Canada uses a variety of tools to get information to the public. For example, Imperial Oil has conducted marketing campaigns for SAFE KIDS Day, whereby they

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promoted injury prevention activities carried out by SAFE KIDS Canada. More recently, Cheerios agreed to post hockey and skating tips formulated by SAFE KIDS Canada on all their regular cereal boxes to be sold across Canada between December and March. The production of an annual report and corporate video will also go a long way towards communicating the injury prevention message.

Research

All programming starts with solid research. Where applicable, a literature search is conducted, followed by consultation with a group of expert advisors. Decisions are then made as to what type of strategy will be chosen. Each program has a different mixture of elements. For example, the Kids Car Seat Safety Checks was chosen as a major program after research showed that most people do not use or misuse car seats, and that this is a frequent reason why child injuries and fatalities occur in Canada.

Attitudinal research conducted in 1994 by Angus Reid showed that most parents are unaware of the major safety risks their children face. Of the 1500 parents polled, 97% stated that they believe they are doing everything to keep their children safe. This may be contrasted with the finding that most parents reported that they themselves do *not* wear a helmet when cycling. Therefore, parental behaviour contradicts their beliefs; this clearly indicates that parents need to start practising what they preach.

Program focus

To help reduce preventable childhood injuries, SAFE KIDS Canada, together with its partners, addresses broad safety issues mainly in the area of traffic, playground, and home safety. This year, our major programs are in the areas of car seat safety, bicycle education, and playground safety.

(1) CAR SEAT SAFETY

Kids Car Seat Safety Checks were launched last year in 11 cities across Canada. All inspectors were trained by the Canadian Automobile Association or the Infant and Toddler Safety Organization on how to inspect car seats. A duplicate form was utilized to record correct use, errors in misuse, or non-use of car seats. The original form was given to parents for educational purposes and the copy was retained by the check coordinator, and later sent to SAFE KIDS Canada for analysis. Results from the check are summarized below.

(A) *Major errors in car seat usage were defined as:*

- Car seat used despite having been in a collision
- Car seat not meeting Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (CMVSS)

- Car seat subject to a manufacturer's recall
- Car seat inappropriate for weight and height of child
- Car seat not restrained by a seat belt, routed incorrectly, or not tightened sufficiently
- Forward facing car seat not restrained by a tether strap
- Miscellaneous (child not restrained in car seat, instructions missing, car seat facing wrong direction, car seat over 10 years old)

(B) *By far the greatest problems were:*

- Improper use of tether straps for forward facing car seats (88% of forward facing car seats had no tether strap or the tether strap was not used properly)
- Insufficient seat belt tightening (32%)
- Instructions missing (33%)

Less frequent, but equally disturbing, are findings related to the following issues:

- Car seats being subject to a public notice yet still being used (9.6%)
- Car seats having been in a collision yet still being used (7.6%)
- Car seat not meeting CMVSS (6%)
- Children prematurely placed in boosters instead of forward facing car seats (5%)

Each form had an overall assessment category entitled 'No errors'. Out of 290 car seats inspected, only 11 (3.8%) had 'No errors'. This means that 96.2% of the car seats had some form of error with usage and/or installation.

(2) KIDS CAN-BIKE FESTIVAL

Last year, SAFE KIDS Canada, in conjunction with the Canadian Cycling Association, developed a program to increase the cycling safety skills of children aged 8–13. The program utilized certified cycling instructors in a playground based event that would introduce children to the basics of cycling. In addition, there was a requirement that all bicycles be checked by a mechanic who would make the necessary adjustments to seat height, brakes etc. Finally, all children needed to wear a helmet, and if they came to the festival without one, helmets were provided.

The program was piloted in several cities in Ontario and evaluated using control and intervention sites. Preliminary results indicate that many important skills were retained but some were not. Based on this and the results of other process measures, the program will be refined and expanded next year.

(3) PLAYGROUND SAFETY

This program will be launched this year. Currently, SAFE KIDS Canada is conducting research on playground safety and is gathering playground resources with the aim of standardizing playground checklist and determining which educational elements could be adapted for national use or produced from scratch.

Additional program materials

SAFE KIDS Canada produces fact sheets pertaining to areas such as:

- General injury prevention statistics
- Car seat safety
- Bicycle safety
- Burns
- Poisonings
- Suffocation
- Playground safety
- Halloween safety
- Winter safety tips
- Christmas safety

SAFE KIDS Canada Week

This year for the first time, SAFE KIDS Canada is organizing a week of safety activities.

Between 10–17 May, affiliates across the country will be conducting various programs, including Kids Car Seat Safety Checks, Kids Can-Bike Festivals, and playground checks in a united effort to raise awareness that injuries are the leading threat to children under the age of 15.

Conclusion

The purpose of the organization is to improve on the safety of Canada's children. We hope, over time, to show that there is a reduction to childhood injuries that can be attributed to increased public awareness and educational programs offered by SAFE KIDS Canada.



INTERNET COLUMN

Beginning with this issue we will try to keep you up to date with the rapidly emerging, new, and interesting Internet sites of possible value to our readers. Your feedback about the actual value of these sites is important. A reminder: when entering these addresses on your web browser you must type the uniform resource locator (URL) exactly as it is given, that is, entering lower case and capitalized letters as shown. Contrary to popular impressions, your computer is not very smart and extremely unforgiving of apparently trivial errors. Incidentally, the squiggles ~ occasionally listed are not 'accidents'; they are intentional. Each is addressed by a URL.

ICRIN (Injury Control Resource Information Network)

The Injury Control Resource Information Network (ICRIN) is a convenient and comprehensive listing of Internet resources related to injury control on the World Wide Web (or Web for short). Since last mentioned in the journal, it has expanded both its links and features and presently contains over 200 links to a variety of important, useful, and interesting resources. Using the communication capabilities of the Internet, ICRIN links national and international injury control related resources. It helps demonstrate the use and the potential of the Internet for data access and sharing, information gathering, global electronic communication, and electronic publishing. If you have Web access you should check out this valuable public resource as one of your first stops on the information highway. If you don't have Web access you should! ICRIN was developed and is maintained by the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Injury Research and Control. It can be located on the Web by its URL: <http://www.pitt.edu/~hweiss/injury/htm>

Australian injury information now on the Web

The National Injury Surveillance Unit (NISU), located in South Australia, provides national information about injuries. The unit is part of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and has academic affiliation with the Flinders University of South Australia. Many NISU projects are funded by grants, principally from the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health. NISU publishes bulletins, data reports, and special thematic reports. They work to improve the currently limited sources of information on injuries, injury risk factors, and injury control, and undertake consultancies relevant to their mission.

From November 1995 all new NISU publications, along with many earlier ones, can be found on NISU's Web site. Their URL is: <http://www.nisu.flinder.edu.au>. Other NISU contact details are: tel: +61-8-374-0970; fax: +61 8 201 7602; address: NISU, Mark Oliphant Building, Laffer Drive, Bedford Park, South Australia 5042.

ISCAIP Top of the list is the International Society of Child and Adolescent Injury Prevention: <http://weber.u.washington.edu/~hirpc/iscaip.html>

Instructions for authors wishing to submit a paper to *Injury Prevention* is available on: <http://weber.u.washington.edu/~hirpc/authors.html>

Childrens Safety Network (CSN) has a home page of great interest. The URL is <http://www.edc.org/HHD/CSN/>

Building Bridges between transport and safety is a subsidiary of CSN available at: <http://www.edc.org/HHD/CSN/buildbridges/>
Bike Helmet Safety Institute may be found at <http://www.bhsi.org/>

MMWR (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report) from the US Centers for Disease Control is now available on the Internet. The home page URL is: http://www.crawford.com/cdc/mmwr_wk.html

The *British Medical Journal* puts details of its most recent contents and a selection of abstracts of published articles and press

releases on subjects covered in the journal on the Web. Its URL is: <http://www.bmj.com/bmj/>

Press releases from the US *Consumer Product Safety Commission* are available through [gopher://cpsc.gov](http://cpsc.gov). Recent releases include bean bags, movable soccer goals, safe toys, window covering pull cords, child resistant packaging, gas water heaters, and bicycle helmets.

INFO-C is the consumer policy bulletin of the European Commission. The URL is: <http://www.cec.lu/en/comm/spc/info.html> for material in French, English, and German. For Italian speaking consumers use: <http://www.comune.bologna.it>

SANTEL WEB, located in Luxembourg, is a mixed bag of health related topics of possible interest to health professionals. The URL is: <http://www.crpht.lu/SANTEL/home.html>

The US *Dept of Transportation's* home page is: <http://www.dot.gov>

Child Safety Forum is a relative newcomer. It features monthly child safety tips for a different room of the home aimed mostly at parents. October in the bathroom. Once connected to this Web site, after reviewing the tips, a checklist can be printed.

Also at this site is the *Web Parents Safety Net* where parents are urged to warn others of safety hazards they have discovered the hard way. The URL is: <http://www.xmission.com/~gastown/safe>

Health Net Home Page is <http://debra.dgbt.doc.ca/~mike/home.html>

Global Health Home Page is <http://www.pitt.edu/HOME/GHNet.html>

Also, for epidemiologists (or wannabe epidemiologists in North America, I urge you to send e-mail to philipp@ere.umontreal.ca to find out how to sign on to List Server Epidemio-L.

There is also an Injury List Server. Their address is: Injury-L@WVVM.WVNET.EDU. CCSN Online is also of great value. Details are available from the Canadian Children's Safety Network (see article in September issue).