

# Gazette

## Road safety education and the under 3's

### FOR GENERAL ENQUIRIES

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
Transport for NSW and  
Macquarie University

## Safe travel right from the start...

Each baby's first trip home from hospital marks the beginning of a lifetime of journeys and adventures out and about. Keeping our young children safe is a huge responsibility for families and the wider community.

Travelling with babies can often be challenging. Whether it's a quick trip to the shop or a long holiday drive, negotiating the complicated array of straps and buckles on child car seats, prams and baby carriers can be overwhelming. As babies become increasingly active, mobile and inquisitive, keeping them safe and happy brings a new set of challenges for families.

Early childhood educators delight in young children's growing sense of agency and autonomy. Yet they also recognise just how quickly these same characteristics can put children at risk in and around vehicles. The challenge for educators is to help families understand why this means adults are always responsible for keeping children safe!

## In this Gazette...

We share how two children's services engage families in road safety education via their programs for babies and young children. We explore the daily challenges parents and grandparents face when out and about with young children. We also suggest ways educators can support families through creative road safety education curriculum and resources.

This *Kids and Traffic* Gazette explores road safety issues that are relevant to all the adults in children's lives – parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, early childhood educators, nannies, neighbours and friends. Try using some of the strategies suggested inside to spread the word!



## Look who's buckled up!

The enclosed *Kids and Traffic* story book has been developed to help early childhood educators and families explore simple passenger safety messages with young children. We hope everyone at your service enjoys your complimentary copy included with this Gazette!

Contact *Kids and Traffic* to purchase additional copies.

p: 02 9805 3200

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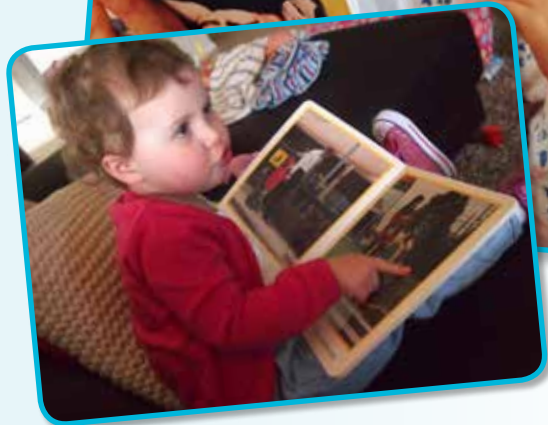


### Why include road safety education for the under 3's?

Just as children grow and develop over time so does their understanding of how to keep safe. Starting road safety education with very young children provides a sound basis on which to build their road safety learning. Enjoyable hands-on road safety learning experiences for the under 3's engage children in learning about how to be safe. Importantly, these experiences also provide educators with opportunities to discuss road safety issues with families.

### How do you develop road safety education for the under 3's?

Talking with families about road safety and listening to their concerns and issues provides a good starting point. This helps you develop road safety learning experiences for children which also support families in keeping children safe in their everyday lives. Relevant and meaningful learning experiences for the under 3's can easily be embedded in curriculum areas such as construction, dramatic play, storytelling, visual arts, music, movement and community excursions.



## Gracelands Early Education Centre – Kellyville, NSW

During a *Kids and Traffic* professional development workshop, **Out and About: Safe Journeys with Kids**, educators at Gracelands Early Education Centre reflected on their own observations and discussions with families to identify a list of road safety concerns and priorities.

Educators working with the under 3's decided to use a variety of visual and musical resources to demonstrate the Key Road Safety Message 'Always hold a grown-up's hand'. They used the *Kids and Traffic* 'Hold my Hand' board book along with pedestrian-focused road safety songs to engage children as active participants in their learning. Using real life images to illustrate the 'Hold my Hand' message helped the children relate this safety practice to the grown-ups in their lives who hold their hands.

View our online video story, "Here we go walking holding hands" at <http://www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au/for-educators/>, and share with families.

Educators extended this experience with a group painting to highlight the 'Hold my Hand' message. They displayed the painting in the foyer along with the key pedestrian safety message and the photos documenting the children's road safety learning. This visual display was a great way to engage families and to remind them of the importance of holding children's hands at arrival and departure times.



Taking time to come together to talk about these concerns and develop strategies for addressing them as a group helps to ensure a consistent approach to road safety education across their centre.



## Supporting families at arrival and departure times

### One parent's perspective ...

Jacinta is the mother of two year old Zahra and eight month old Zane who both attend Gracelands Early Education Centre. Daily arrivals and departures are often challenging for Jacinta...

*“At the end of the day, when you're juggling two kids, bags and other bits and pieces, what's the best way to do it? How do you get them from child care, through the car park, into the car safely and back home without a meltdown?”*

Make going-home time easier for families by helping gather children's belongings so they are ready to go. This makes it easier for families to leave your service safely holding hands with their children.



Develop service-specific 'Safe arrival and departure procedures'. Outlining ways educators, families and service management can work together to keep children safe at these busy times demonstrates a real commitment to child road safety.

Address common safety issues that arise at arrival and departures like the importance of holding hands when walking, buckling up safely in age/size appropriate car seats and never leaving children alone in vehicles. Contact us if you would like help to develop or revise your own 'Safe arrival and departure procedures' on 9805 3200 or email us at [kidsandtraffic@mq.edu.au](mailto:kidsandtraffic@mq.edu.au)

Include information about managing arrivals and departures safely in enrolment material for families along with safe travel and safe play advice. Visit [www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au](http://www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au) to access a comprehensive range of road safety info sheets for families.

### Just for grandparents ...

Check out the road safety information specifically designed for them in the insert. Photocopy and distribute or email the insert to all your families and encourage them to pass it on. Why not also distribute this information during Seniors Week or at any events you might have for grandparents throughout the year?



Here are some great online road safety resources to share with families. Encourage them to pass the links on to all the adults in their children's lives and to the wider community:



[www.childcarseats.com.au](http://www.childcarseats.com.au) has helpful information on how to choose and use child car seats correctly.



Transport for NSW has a new driveway safety video, 'They're counting on you', with Scott Cam that shows how to reduce driveway danger and keep kids safe from low speed vehicle run overs. [www.drivewaysafety.nsw.gov.au](http://www.drivewaysafety.nsw.gov.au)



## Out and about – road safety education in action!

Excursions provide many benefits even for babies and very young children. They provide a perfect opportunity to involve families in your program, to model and discuss Key Road Safety Messages with families and children and to share in children's wonder at the world around them. Short walking excursions are also a great way to build children's awareness of their community and to highlight safe walking practices.

Inviting parents, grandparents and other carers to join excursions helps maintain high adult-to-child ratios. This helps to ensure every child has a grown-up's hand to hold.

Why not consider the potential for short excursions or community walks with each of the different age groups in your service?

## Gumnut Cottage, Macquarie University

Educators in the Blue Room (under 2's) recently took a small group of children aged between six months and two years on a short walking excursion to see the trucks and diggers working on a construction site across the road.

Educators and parents kept children safe by holding their hands while walking together in a variety of traffic situations. Even away from the roads, holding hands and active supervision were important.

Educators used photos of the walking excursion to document and share the children's safe journey with all families. This gave them a chance to see the children's engagement in the excursion. It also gave educators an opportunity to talk with families and children about safe walking practices.



The Barwell family out walking on the bush track.

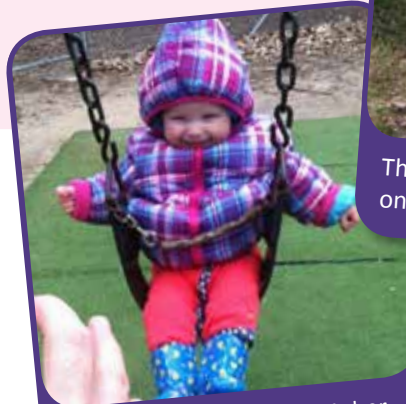
## Safe journeys and safe play – connecting with families and community

Encourage families to share their suggestions for fun and safe places for babies and young children to play in your local community.

Share these suggestions with all the families by jotting them down on a poster, listing them in a newsletter or sending a group email. This helps families learn more about each other and about the resources within their community.

Use discussions about safe play to help families prevent children playing in driveways, unfenced play areas or other unsafe places.

For more information about driveway safety and safe places to play, visit [www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au](http://www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au).



Baden takes his daughter Asher to the fenced park near home for some fun on the swings.



Katie takes Isabella and Max to explore a fully fenced community garden in their local area.