

Technology as a Tool in Early Childhood Road Safety Education

Technology surrounds us. It helps us to connect with the wider world, makes everyday tasks quicker and easier and plays an increasingly influential role in our lives.

So what does early childhood road safety education look like in an increasingly technological and digital world?

Educators can use digital resources to complement books, puzzles and other hands-on resources to engage children in play-based, child-centred road safety learning. Technology-based experiences can enhance children's learning while promoting each child's sense of inquiry and creativity.

Children are active learners. As children use technology, educators can ensure they are actively engaged rather than passive recipients. Technology can help foster children's sense of agency and involvement. It's also an ideal tool for involving families in their children's learning and for sharing information that will help keep their children safe whenever they are out and about.

FOR GENERAL ENQUIRIES

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In this Gazette...

We highlight how using technology in road safety education can help educators:

- > actively engage children with different learning styles
- > gain greater insight into children's developing understandings about safe travel practices
- > build on stories, songs, discussions and investigations
- > involve children in revisiting their own road safety learning
- > enrich communication and collaborative relationships with families
- > develop links with other early childhood services and communities

We also enclose our latest *Kids and Traffic* resource, **'Five Little Piggies: A Talking Traffic with Kids' story** and piggy cut-outs. Contact us to find out how to purchase additional copies. Let your families know how to purchase their own copies.



Our Kids and digital footprint ...

Our website, Facebook page and YouTube channel are great starting points for services looking to use digital technology to explore road safety education. Our website includes fun and educational video stories, songs and e-books to share with children and families. Visit our website and Facebook page to stay up to date with key road safety information and our latest road safety education resources

Use the 'Info sheets' page on the *Kids and Traffic* website to create service-specific road safety education posters - just insert photos of the children, local traffic environments and text in home languages. Encourage children to design and create these posters using electronic tablets that are so portable and easy to use in the learning environment. Email road safety information to families via the info sheet PDFs. Families can click on the links for even more information and ideas.



info sheets



Technology as a tool for exploring local communities ...

Shannon, an educator at Ivanhoe Preschool, shared our latest storybook, *Five Little Piggies*, with children. The story prompted conversations and further exploration of the Key Road Safety Message, **Always hold a grown-up's hand**. The children related the little piggies' adventures to their own safe journeys to similar places in their town.



"This little piggy is holding hands with his mummy piggy walking across our school crossing," said Shannon.

"My piggies are holding hands going home," said Harriet.

Using an electronic tablet, the children enthusiastically looked at interactive maps showing where they live and travel. Technology opens up possibilities for accessing images relevant to children's discussions and investigations while also helping them to make sense of the world around them (EYLF, 2010). The children talked about places they could see on the map and about the safe journeys they have walking with a grown-up.

Educators printed images of places around Ivanhoe to use as backgrounds for their piggy puppets. Shannon joined in with the children in the puppet storytelling. She encouraged discussion about what the little pigs were doing when walking in each scene and asked the children to talk about who holds their hands when they go walking.



"There's our oval, the big circle. It's next to the pool," said Jack.

Maps and related discussions can extend children's understanding of directionality while fostering a sense of place and belonging.

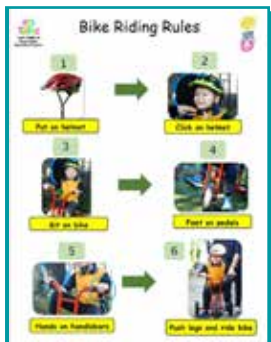


Another educator, Amarah, recorded the children's storytelling and conversations with Shannon. Her video was used as a tool for the children to revisit the experience (EYLF, 2010) and for educators to share road safety discussions and experiences with families. Videos allow families to have the opportunity to 'be there in the moment', hearing and seeing the experience unfold, gaining first-hand knowledge of their child's understandings and interests. They are also a great way to encourage families to keep talking about road safety at home!



Why not use the piggy cut-outs included in this Gazette to make puppets using pop sticks or pipe cleaners.

Technology as a tool for promoting inclusion and participation ...



Involve children in creating visuals for safe riding practices at your service.

To enhance road safety experiences and routines for children with autism, educators at Giant Steps, Gladesville, integrate technology within their programs. They also use technology to help engage families in discussions about the challenges they experience in travelling safely with their children.

Educators regularly use technology to create visuals that support safe arrivals and departures with the children and their families. Visual routines such as their **'Bike Riding Rules' poster** are also used throughout the day to provide predictability and support children's learning and development.

Kids and Traffic helped Giant Steps compose a safe riding song and combine it with photos and a video of the preschool children riding tricycles. Educators show this on an interactive whiteboard (IWB) to remind children of the safe riding practices to be followed and to emphasise the Key Road Safety Message, **'Always wear your helmet when riding your bike or wheeled toy'**.

Educators can pause the **Safe Riding video song** on the IWB and demonstrate actions to children such as 'Click on your helmet'. Technology used as a tool in this learning environment offers opportunities to cater to different learning styles while also promoting the inclusion and participation of all children (EYLF, 2010).

Educators emailed this road safety video to families to watch at home. Sharing road safety information more widely via electronic media can help involve family members who may not regularly visit your service.

Educators show photos on the IWB and use these with the children to reflect on their day. This helps remind children of safe travel practices such as **'Always buckle up safely'** before they are picked up at the end of the day.



Visit <http://www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au/this-is-the-way-i-ride-my-bike/> to watch their **Safe Riding video song**.



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Technology as a tool for revisiting safe journeys ...



Children from Kooloora Preschool, Toukley, shared stories about their safe journeys on a mini bus during an excursion to the local *Toukley Village Green*. Using Google Maps on an IWB, children and educators explored the bus route together by pointing out streets and landmarks. They talked about safe places to cross and discussed the meaning of the different pedestrian road signs they saw.

They viewed the *Kids and Traffic* video story, **'Going for a drive in the car today'**, on the IWB. This reminded children of how they buckled up safely on their excursion and when travelling in vehicles with their families. Matthew (right) enthusiastically shared the story of his safe journey to his dad's work. A longer, alternate route had to be taken on this day and Matthew described the journey and drew it on the IWB. Documenting

these types of learning experiences and including photos and comments to highlight the children's developing road safety understandings is a great way to engage families in discussions around safe travel.

Educators encouraged children to illustrate their own safe journeys using a drawing app. They used this intentional teaching opportunity to discuss the Key Road Safety Message, **'Always buckle up safely'**. Many children used the various colour options within the app to draw themselves buckled up safely in their car seats. Technology can be another tool alongside paper, pencils, scissors, glue, paint and crayons for children to experiment with when designing, drawing, composing and expressing their ideas around road safety. It's also a tool that provides great opportunities for reflection and revision (EYLF, 2010).



Consider children's use of a stylus which they can grasp much like a pencil.



For Ella and Khaiyu the new *Kids and Traffic* storybook, **'Five Little Piggies'**, provided inspiration for their safe journey drawings. After hearing how the piggies *'stay close to Mum or Dad or Pa'* when out walking, the two children talked with educators about safe walking adventures they have had with their families. This promoted valuable conversation around the question **'Who are the grown-ups that hold your hand when you go out walking?'**



Conversations between educators and children can also be recorded via many apps on electronic tablets. As well as providing more insight into children's road safety understandings, technology is also a valuable tool to share important road safety messages with families.

Kooloora Preschool, with support from *Kids and Traffic*, has begun to make links with other services around NSW to help extend their road safety education program. This provides opportunities for children to broaden their understandings of the



Matari describes his drawing of a safe journey with his Nan in her white car.

world and strengthens the connections between experiences and prior knowledge (EYLF, 2010). Using Skype on the IWB has enabled large groups of children to be involved in video conversations with educators and children from other services. These children have been very keen to share road safety drawings, photos and stories of their excursions and other safe journeys.

Think about links you can make with other people and services in your local community and further afield. Sharing stories and photos could add depth to your road safety education program with children and families. Let us know if you would like to link up with another service in NSW around your road safety education program.



Technology as a tool for documenting and sharing ...

Yarrowong Children's Centre in Orange hosted a *Kids and Traffic* workshop at their service. After attending, educator Meredith implemented some road safety learning experiences and took the opportunity to capture photos and videos to share with Yarrowong families along with the Key Road Safety Message **Always buckle up safely**. The children often take on the role of photographer in their play and learning experiences. The chance for children to take control of the camera promotes their competence and skills in manipulating these technological tools and their ability to experiment with different technologies (EYLF, 2010). Mikhaela and Abigail (photographers pictured right) captured moments with their friends singing 'Let's go driving' while buckled up safely in the pretend car the group had created. This highlighted the children's perspectives of the experience and what is of interest to them.



*"Let's go driving,
let's go driving.
In the car, in the car.
Buckle up your seatbelt,
buckle up your seatbelt.
In the car, in the car."*



Educator Demelza and children Marshall, Nash and Conner shared a pedestrian safety e-puzzle experience. They first created the puzzle from saved photos then completed it. Throughout the experience, Demelza posed questions to the children about the images being revealed by the puzzle.

*"I've seen that sign before, have you seen it too?"
"Yeah! It's on the gate," says Nash.*

"It says hold my hand. It reminds us when we are going home we need to hold hands with a grown-up," said Demelza.



This was a great opportunity to share the Key Road Safety Message, **Always hold a grown-up's hand**, with the children while creating and problem-solving in a small group.

Using the puzzle-making app during this road safety experience encouraged the group to engage socially in discussion, test out ideas, take turns to control the app, challenge each other's thinking and help each other to build new understandings (EYLF, 2010). The children's engagement in this experience prompted educators to add this to ideas they share regularly with families as an appropriate and effective use of screen time. Try the search term 'puzzle maker' to find similar apps to use with children at your service.

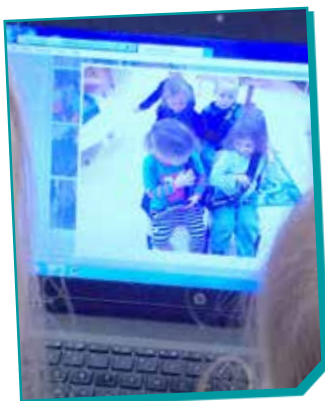
Educators at Yarrowong Children's Centre use an online documentation program to share road safety learning experiences, Key Road Safety Messages and road safety information with families.

"Parents are able to view daily information about their child's day, photos and observations of the child's participation in play and learning as they are posted ... [they] are able to provide feedback on postings." – Heather, Yarrowong Children's Centre Co-ordinator.

E-documentation is a great inclusion in an environment where families are respected and encouraged to collaborate in their child's learning and wellbeing (EYLF, 2010). It gives parents and grandparents the opportunity to view road safety learning experiences at a convenient time, opening up the potential for more informed conversations with their children and educators.



Contact us if you need a 'Hold my hand' gate sign.



Kids and Traffic launches a new workshop in 2017, 'Technology as a Tool in Road Safety Education'

This new workshop helps educators:

- explore technology as another tool for children to use during road safety learning experiences when creating, drawing, composing, designing and experimenting.
- discover ways of using technology with children to investigate, problem-solve and access information, images, videos and music related to road safety.
- find new ways of sharing documentation and key road safety information with families electronically