



Introduction

Too many children under 5 are killed or injured crossing the road and more than half of them are very near to home when this happens.

Every parent wants to keep their children safe and out of danger, Safer Steps has been developed to help parents and carers teach their children the basics of road safety. The earlier children begin to understand, the more likely they are to continue learning as they grow and develop.

But this is always easier said than done and what suits one parent and child may not always suit another. So we have included as much practical and realistic advice as possible in this resource.

Contents
Going Out
Crossing the Road
Going by Car
Safer Parking
Safer Places to Play

DVD

The enclosed DVD contains a guide to the basics of road safety for pre-school children. Designed by parents for parents, we hope you find it a useful and interesting resource.

The DVD can be watched in a modular format or as a whole programme and contains information on good pedestrian practices, crossing the road, going by car, safe parking and safer places to play.

If you require any further information please visit www.childroadsafety.derby.gov.uk

DVD Instructions

Insert the DVD disc and follow the on-screen options.

Going Out

Before going out with your child tell them where you are going and how you are going to get there. Always try to dress them in something bright that will help them be seen by motorists, especially if the weather is bad or it is dull or dark outside. Talk to them while you are helping them get ready and explain to them why they are wearing something bright.

Nearly every journey involves walking on the pavement, even if it is just to get into the car, so the importance of holding hands can't be stressed enough. Tell your child why it is so important, that they are very special and that you want to keep them safe.

It is advisable that wherever possible, a child under the age of 5 should not be allowed to walk on the pavement or across car parks unless they are holding hands with an adult as they are not aware enough to cross the road on their own, even if sometimes they think they are!

We all know how easily children can be distracted and it only takes a split second before they act on their impulse. If they are holding your hand, you have a better chance of keeping them out of danger. So if it's possible, holding hands is the best option.

Whether you have one, two, three or more children, there are lots of ways that you can reduce the stress of getting them safely out and about. When holding hands, if you have one child with you, make sure they always walk on the inside of the pavement furthest from the road. If you are pushing a buggy or you are carrying shopping, always ask your child to help you by holding onto the handles of the buggy or shopping bags. Children like to feel important so tell them that they are a big help.

Three children can walk safely with you with the eldest on the outside but stay as far away from the kerb as possible. If you have to move over to let people pass, always move to the inside of the pavement furthest from the road. Reins and wrist straps can also be useful.

In a car park, holding hands is vital as motorists can not see a small child through their rear windows or mirrors. Explain that car parks are very dangerous and holding hands when crossing a car park is very important. Cars are big and children are only small and are hard to see.

Remember: the car parks at nursery and playgroup are just as dangerous as any other car park so don't let your children run ahead or lag behind. If you're having a chat with other parents, make sure your children are in a safe place if they are not holding your hand. The same caution should be taken when crossing drives and alleyways.

Crossing the Road

Children learn by example - you will have noticed how they often copy the everyday things you do and say! So choosing the right place to cross the road will set them a good example for when they are older and more independent.

Explain to your children that where there is a pedestrian crossing or crossing patrol, this is the safest place to cross. Pedestrian crossings include Puffin, Pelican and Zebra crossings. The Puffin and Pelican crossings use a system of red man and green man lights to indicate to pedestrians when it is safe to cross and a traffic light system to control the traffic. Explain to your children that it is only safe to cross when you are sure that all the traffic has stopped and the green man light is on. Never start to cross the road if the green man is flashing. Talk through your actions and ask your children to concentrate on what you are doing as it is important for them to learn.

Remember: the red man and green man lights can be situated either across the road or at your side.

When using a Zebra crossing with your children, explain that you all have to stop on the pavement near to the kerb and wait until all the traffic coming from both directions has stopped. Only then is it safe to cross and you must keep looking and listening as you cross.

Major roads sometimes have traffic islands to allow you to cross to the middle of the road and then stop and wait before crossing to the other side. Each stage of the crossing should be treated the same way as crossing a smaller road. You need to explain that when you are waiting on a traffic island that it's much smaller than a pavement and your children should stand very still until you tell them it is safe to continue to cross.

School crossing patrols (or Lollipop women and men as they are usually called) will help you and your children to cross the road; they will stop the traffic and indicate to you when it is safe to cross. Make sure your children become familiar with the uniform the Lollipop person wears so they will be able to identify them in the future as an adult who it is safe to cross the road with. Police Officers and Traffic Wardens will also stop the traffic and assist you to cross the road safely. Again your children should become familiar with the uniform they wear.

Remember: to keep looking and listening for traffic as you cross.

Crossing between parked vehicles is always difficult but sometimes there's no avoiding it. If you have to cross between parked vehicles, always try to find the largest gap. Check they are not about to move and stand closest to the vehicle where you can see the oncoming traffic more clearly.

Crossing the road is never without its challenges but following the Green Cross Code is always advisable.

Going by Car

Every year around 8,000 children are injured while travelling in cars.

The law states that children must not use adult seat belts until they reach the height that the ordinary seat belts in cars will fit safely. The safest way for children to travel in cars is in a child seat that is suitable for their weight and size. Retailers often describe child restraints in terms of 'Stages' or 'Groups' here is a general guide:

Stage 1 - Group 0, up to 10 kgs Stage 1 - Group 0+, up to 13 kgs

Rearward facing baby seats are for babies roughly from birth to 6 to 9 months, or birth to 12 to 15 months. They can be used in the front or rear of the car. DO NOT put them in the front passenger seat if there is an active passenger airbag.

Stage 2 - Group 1, 9 to 18 kgs

Forward-facing child seats are for children roughly from 9 months to 4 years. They face forwards, have their own straps and it's safer to put them in the back of the car.

Stage 3 - Group 2, 15 to 25 kgs Stage 4 - Group 3, 22 to 36 kgs

Booster seats or cushions are for children aged about 4 to 11 years. They are designed to raise the child so they can use an adult seat belt safely, fitting across both their chest and hips.

By law, you have to wear a seat belt if one is fitted. No child can sit in the front seat without a seat belt. Children under 3 can only sit in the front if they are strapped into a proper child seat. If there is a suitable child restraint or seat belt in the front of the car but not in the back, children between 3 and 11 must use the front seat restraint or seat belt.

Getting into a routine when you are travelling by car and setting some very firm rules for your children will make the process of going out in the car less stressful and a whole lot safer.

Always hold hands, or if your hands are full, ask your children to hold onto your pocket if you do not have a free hand. Remind them that while they are waiting to get in the car they must stop and stand still until you have opened the car for them to get in. If your car is parked on the road, children should always get into the car from the pavement side. Get all the children in the car first then you can strap them into their child seats one by one and no one will be left standing on the pavement while you are distracted.

Take time to get the child comfortably strapped in. Make sure the seat's harness, if it has one, is correctly adjusted for your child. It should be quite tight, so that only one or two fingers can fit between the child's chest and the harness. The harness buckle should not rest over the child's tummy. Clothing can affect how snugly the harness fits, so check it every journey.

Going by Car

If you are using a booster seat or cushion, the adult seat belt restrains both the child and the seat or cushior Make sure that the belt is worn as tightly as possible, the lap belt goes from hip-bone to hip-bone, not the stomach. The diagonal strap rests on the child's shoulde not the neck, some seats have a clip to help position the belt. Never tuck the seat belt under the child's arm or behind their back.

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for fitting the child seats. Second-hand seats should only be used if you are sure of the history of the seat, you know and trust the person you are getting it from, they still have the manufacturer's instructions and that they can assure you it has not previously been involved in an incident, even if it does not appear to be damaged.

If your child repeatedly unfastens the seat belt because they are restless and bored, try and distract them by playing games, like I-Spy, play a story or music cassette or CD, remind them that if they do not stay fastened in the seats, the game, story or music will stop and the car will stop too.

Toys and games that they can safely play with in their car seats also help to keep them distracted and from trying to get out of their seat. As the driver, do not be distracted by these activities.

Children respond best to consistency, which is why a routine for travelling in the car will reduce the problems you may have.

Yery soon wearing seat belts becomes a habit. The mos mportant thing to remember is to be consistent. Always insist that your child wears a seat belt even if you are only going on a very short journey.

For more information on the use of child car seats, please contact your local Road Safety Department or visit www.childcarseats.org.uk

Safer Parking

Making a habit of the way you all get out of the car will get you all used to following a safe practice.

Always encourage your children to stay in their car seats until you open the car door for them and tell them it is safe to get out. If you have to unload buggies, shopping or other items from the boot, do this first.

If you are parking on the road, the safest side for the children to get out of the car is the one nearest the pavement; if possible, hold hands as soon as they get out

Whatever suits you best, depending on how many children you have and where you are parking, will work if: you remember to always hold onto your children's hand; never allow them to stand alone; or walk around on the pavement. If you are distracted, you will not notice them wandering off.

Car parks and roads where many cars are parked together are one of the most dangerous places for small children. Motorists cannot see them because of their size and children never even consider that a vehicle may move. When you are in one of these places, explain to your child that if they had been standing behind the vehicle, they would not have been seen as they are small. Tell them why it's best for them to always stay close to you and hold your hand as a motorist is more likely to see you because you are bigger.

The school run can be hard work sometimes and quite often parents will park right outside school on the yellow zig-zag lines. These parking restrictions are there to ensure that there is a safe place for children and parents to cross the road to get to school.

When cars park in this space it makes it very difficult to cross the road safely for everyone. It also provides more dangers for passing traffic as driver visibility of small children, who may dash into the road from between these parked cars, is severely impaired.

Not only is it dangerous it can also be expensive. A fine can be issued just for dropping a child off there and even disabled badge holders can not park on the yellow zig-zags.

Safer Places to Play

Outdoor play for children is essential, both for physical fitness and for overall health, well-being and happiness. So as they grow older, they will need to learn about safe places to play. These are areas that are enclosed, so that if you are distracted or unable to watch them for a few moments, they cannot gain access to the road.

Safer places include areas such as your garden, if it is enclosed, a playground or play area and the local park Under 5's should not play out unaccompanied.

By introducing these areas at an early age, children will soon develop an understanding of the places where the should and should not play.

For example, an alleyway may seem to a child to provide an ideal area for play. There may appear to be no traffic using the alleyway and that it is a safe distance from the road. Young children are not aware that vehicles can turn into or out of an alleyway at any time. They have no concept of speed and therefore do not know how quickly a vehicle may reach them.

Explain to your children about what is secure. Look at fences and how they help to keep them safe. Help them to understand why there is no traffic in a safe play area and point out why other areas are not safe to play in.

t is a good idea to use examples as it helps your children o make comparisons and see why you only want them to olay in safe places.

Children do not stop to think that roads are dangerous and that playing on a road, even when there is very little traffic, is putting them at risk.

While they are in a play environment, the issue of Stranger Danger arises. By about three years of age it's possible to start teaching your children this simple rule, "Never go off with a person you don't know, not even another child. If someone asks you to leave with them, go straight to the grown-up who brought you."

Acknowledgements

This Guide for Parents and Carers has been developed by families and staff from Sure Start, Clayton, Manchester. They have devised the content for the programme and contributed to the filming of the resource with the assistance of families from Audley and Queens Park Children's Centre, Blackburn.



The project was co-ordinated by Groundwork and Manchester City Council and funded by Neighbourhood Road Safety Initiative, New Deal for Communities and Sure Start Manchester.









www.childroadsafety.derby.gov.uk