



Media Release

Safekids Message this School Term:

PARENTS TO CHILDREN: NO HELMET, NO BIKE

NO helmet, NO bike. This is the safety message Safekids New Zealand wants parents and caregivers to teach their bicycle-riding children in preparation for the new school term.

“Cycling is a healthy push-play activity and is a favourite mode of transport for many children,” said Ann Weaver, Director, Safekids New Zealand. “However, parents must take as much preventative action as possible to ensure safety comes first when their children hop on a bike,” Ann said.

Safekids NZ reports that, on an average, 540 children are hospitalised and 5 children die from cycling-related injuries in New Zealand each year¹, with peak times for accidents in the hours before and after school.²

Cycle helmets are designed to be effective for crashes where children fall off bikes, run into obstacles or into each other. Statistics show that a properly worn helmet reduces the risk of head injury by 85%, of brain injury by 88%, of severe brain injury by at least 75%, and of facial injury by 65%.³

“Children’s cycling injuries can be prevented or their severity minimized by using helmets, adult guidance and using additional safety gear such as fluorescent reflective vests, elbow and knee pads,” Ann added.

Tips to Get Your Children to Wear Helmets

Safekids NZ helmet tips, as gathered from the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute (US):

- Establish the *wheeled vehicles-helmet* link early. Wearing helmets as soon as they get their first tricycles/ bicycle will make it a habit.
- Let them pick their helmet.
- Be a role model and wear one yourself.
- Encourage their friends to wear helmets.
- Explain that bikes are not toys, but their first vehicles.
- Explain that they can hurt their heads permanently or even die from a head injury.

For more information on cycle safety, please see the attached factsheet. For more child safety information, visit www.safekids.org.nz

-ENDS-

¹ National Injury Query System at www.otago.ac.nz/ipru/stats.

² CAS Land Transport NZ. Peak times for cycle accidents are between 3pm and 4pm (23%) and 8am and 9am (20%).

³ http://www.mrw.interscience.wiley.com/cochrane/clsysrev/articles/CD001855/pdf_fs.html



Editor's Notes:

About Safekids New Zealand.

Safekids New Zealand is the injury prevention service of Starship Children's Health and a member of Safe Kids Worldwide. Our mission is to reduce the incidence and severity of unintentional injuries to New Zealand's children aged 0 - 14 years. Our Vision: New Zealand children will be free to enjoy their childhood without being adversely affected by unintentional injury.

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