

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHO, UNICEF 2008 Report on Child Injury Prevention

'Now is the Time to Invest on Child Safety'



Following the release today of *The World Report on Child Injury Prevention*, The World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, Safe Kids Worldwide and now Safekids New Zealand, have come together with a united voice: *Calling for the new government to recognize unintentional childhood injuries as a major public health issue, and to make a cost-effective investment in child safety.*

Released at the 2nd Asia Pacific Injury Prevention Conference in Hanoi, Vietnam, *The World Report* provides a comprehensive and global review on unintentional injuries, or sometimes referred to as *accidents* (road traffic injuries, drowning, burns, falls and poisoning).

According to *The World Report*, 950,000 children and young people die annually worldwide, with unintentional injuries accounting for almost 90% of these cases.

"The common view in New Zealand and around the world that unintentional injuries are mere accidents is unacceptable. If a disease were killing our children at the rate that unintentional injuries are, the public would be outraged and demand that governments stop this global killer," said Ann Weaver, Director of Safekids New Zealand.

The Cost of Unintentional Injuries

According to *The World Report*, beyond the emotional strain on families and communities, the financial cost of unintentional injuries to governments is enormous, placing significant strain on often overstretched public health-care systems.

"In addition to the deaths, tens of millions of children around the world require hospital care for non-fatal injuries, many left with some form of disability with life long consequences," said Ann Weaver, Director of Safekids New Zealand.

The World Report also presents evidence that significant reductions in health-care costs can be achieved by implementing cost-effective primary prevention programmes.

A US cost analysis on child restraint intervention showed that for every US\$1 spent on a child restraint, there is a saving of US\$29 in direct and indirect health-care costs and other costs to society [See Table].

Table: Financial Savings from selected injury prevention interventions	
Expenditure of US\$1 each on:	Savings (US\$)
Smoke alarms	65
Child restraints	29
Bicycle helmets	29
Prevention counselling by paediatrician	10
Poison control services	7
Road safety improvements	3

*WHO, UNICEF World Report on Child Injury Prevention, 2008

The World Report also states that the cost of primary prevention programmes are much cheaper than long-term treatments of preventable injuries.

"*The World Report* shows that we've come a long way in understanding the science of injury prevention. It takes a multi-faceted approach involving grassroots networks, public education programmes, engineering and environment modifications, enactment and enforcement of laws and regulations, and strong research to drive cost-effective primary prevention programmes," Ms. Weaver said.

In response to the findings of *The World Report*, WHO, UNICEF, Safe Kids Worldwide and Safekids New Zealand are united in calling to governments to recognize Unintentional Injuries as a major public health issue, and to make a cost effective investment child safety.

“At a time when the New Zealand Government is refocusing its infrastructure investments, *The World Report* integrates the best and most cost-effective way to prevent childhood injuries,” Ms. Weaver said.

“By developing effective programmes, enacting child safety legislation, and continued investments towards a safe society for children, we can significantly reduce costs in our health-care system, improve capacity to make further reductions in injury rates, and protect our children” Ms. Weaver added.

The *World Report* on Child Injury Prevention is now available for download at the WHO website, http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/child/injury/world_report/en/index.html.

New Zealand Injury Statistics

The World Report by WHO and UNICEF rates Motor Vehicle Crash and Drowning injuries as the leading cause of childhood injuries resulting to deaths in New Zealand.

Based on Safekids New Zealand’s Unintentional Childhood Injury fact sheets, on average, 22 children a year are killed as car occupants, and 15 children drown every year.

According to the 2007 UNICEF Innocenti Report Card, New Zealand is ranked last (24th out of 24) among Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries in preventing child injury related deaths.

Safekids New Zealand fact sheet also show that *Falls* are the leading cause for hospitalisations, with 4,854 children in New Zealand injured severely enough to be hospitalized annually, or an average of 405 hospital admissions each month.

Safekids New Zealand data also shows that over 9,800 children in New Zealand are hospitalized annually with an unintentional injury. “This is equivalent to an average size classroom of children injured severely enough to be hospitalized every day,” said Ms. Weaver.

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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. For more information, visit www.safekids.org.nz or contact 09 631 0717 or email anthonyr@adhb.govt.nz.

About Safe Kids Worldwide

Safekids Worldwide is a global network of organizations whose mission is to prevent unintentional childhood injury, a leading killer of children 14 and under. More than 600 coalitions in 17 countries bring together health and safety experts, educators, corporations, foundations, governments and volunteers to educate and protect families.

Safe Kids Worldwide’s member countries include: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Israel, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, South Africa, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United States, and Vietnam. For more information, visit www.safekids.org.