

News Announcement

Children + ATVS: A Really Bad Idea

NZ'S CHILD SAFETY COMMUNITY CRITICIZES TOYOTA 'FREE KIDS QUAD BIKE' PROMOTION



23 JULY 2008: This is one of those things you call a *'really bad idea'*, said Ann Weaver, on behalf of Safekids New Zealand today as it spearheaded a call by advocacy groups for Toyota to pull its Hilux 'Free Kids Quad Bike' promotion.

Supported by Rural Women New Zealand, Plunket and the President of the New Zealand Paediatric Society, Safekids has asked the global car giant to ditch its latest promotion that is set to give away a 49.5cc All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) with every purchase of its new Toyota Hilux.

Safekids is concerned that Toyota's flooding of the market with 800 units as 'giveaways', trivializes the dangers posed by the machines. The ATVs, which weighs 105kg, are petrol-driven and can go up to 50 kph, and are marketed as sports machines suitable for children aged 6 years old, or individuals weighing up to 85kgs.

"These ATVs are not toys, but specialist children's machines which parents should consciously decide to buy only after carefully consideration of all the risks involved. They should not be given out as a freebie," said Ann Weaver, Director of Safekids NZ.

Furthermore, Safekids reminds the public that ATVs, including the ones given away by Toyota, are considered vehicles by the Land Transport Authority. ATV drivers must have a license, must wear a helmet and the vehicle must be registered if ridden on a road, public place or a beach.

"We have to ask the question: Are these ATVs suitable for small children to ride in back gardens?" Ann Weaver added.

"Safekids and its partners see this as an irresponsible marketing promotion that has the potential to increase the number of ATV-related injuries or even cause deaths of children, and have asked Toyota to stop the promotion, or at the very least offer their Hilux customers a child-friendly choice," Ann Weaver said.

Safekids has long advocated awareness on the dangers posed by ATVs to children. According to the latest figures released by Safekids from Otago University's Injury Prevention Research Unit, every year 3 children die and 52 others aged 0-14 years old are being injured by ATVs, severely enough to require hospitalisation.

ENDS

Editor's Notes:

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Additional Facts of ATV-related injuries on Children in New Zealand

- From 2002 to 2006, there have been a total of 260 reported cases of ATV-related injuries on children 0-14 years of age, severe enough to require hospitalisation. The yearly average of reported/known ATV-related injuries on children is 52 cases per year.*
- Between 2002 and 2006, there have been twice as many cases of children getting injured on an ATV outside farms, with 56 cases occurring at homes, streets & highways. *
- Of the 258 children discharged from hospitals between 2002 and 2006 where the principal diagnosis is an injury as a result of an ATV or other motor vehicle designed for off-road use, ages 10 to 14 years are the most often hospitalised (157 cases), followed by 5 to 9 year olds (80 cases), and pre-schoolers (21 cases).*
- For additional figures on ATV-related injuries on children 0-14 years of age, see the attached Fact Sheet.

* IPRU, *Injury Prevention Research Unit; National Injury Query System (NIQS), in Otago University, 2008.*