

Regional Forums Seek Views on Safekids' Strategy

On September 18 Safekids held its first regional forum to gather comment on its report addressing unintentional child injury within the Auckland region from 2004 – 2007.

The forum was the first of two meetings where the report, Keeping Kids Safe – “in the home, on the roads, at play” - Issues, Objectives and Strategies for the Prevention of Unintentional Child Injury in the Auckland Region 2004 – 2007, is to be presented, and comment sought. It was attended by representatives from the health, injury prevention, law enforcement, road safety and local government sectors.

Safekids' Senior Analyst John Wren said the report differed from the past Action Plans and Regional Plans developed by the organisation.

“Instead of producing an ‘action plan’ we have developed an overview of the child injury issues facing the Auckland Region, made recommendations about best injury prevention practice, and outlined some objectives for the next three years.”

The new direction recognised that many of the objectives of the original five year strategic plan which Safekids developed in collaboration with more than 100 organisations and individuals in 1995, and the release of the 1999 Regional Action Plan, had been accomplished.

Significant achievements since the writing of the first Plan included the establishment of a number of child injury prevention groups within the region, movement within Local and Regional Government to develop policies and initiatives that directly impacted upon child safety, and regional representation in contributing to national policies and standards affecting children.

The establishment of a growing number of CIPPs (Community Injury Prevention Programmes) within the region, and the annual KidSafe Week, which provided a focus for those working within the sector, were also positives.

John said in 2002, when review of the five year strategic plan was undertaken, it was decided by an advisory group that an action plan was not necessary for those working within the region. However, there was still a desire for a regional perspective; data analysis and advice; and regional activity aimed at facilitating communication, networking, linking and promoting opportunities for sharing action - when synergistic - across the region, while avoiding unnecessary duplication of documentation and other efforts.

Keeping Kids Safe – “in the home, on the roads, at play” - Issues, Objectives and Strategies for the Prevention of Unintentional Child Injury in the Auckland Region 2004 – 2007, provides that overall regional perspective.

A second forum will be held to discuss the report in November before it is finalised and launched. For further information about the forums, or Keeping Kids Safe – “in the home, on the roads, at play” - Issues, Objectives and Strategies for the Prevention of Unintentional Child Injury in the Auckland Region 2004 – 2007, please contact John Wren at Safekids on (09) 820 1195, email jwren@adhb.govt.nz.



Keeping our kids safe on the roads in the Auckland region is just one of the aims for Safekids

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Unicef Report: Highlights



*Executive Director of UNICEF,
Dennis McKinlay*

Safekids has welcomed the launch of the UNICEF New Zealand report: "Making New Zealand Fit for Children; Promoting a National Plan of Action for New Zealand (Healthy Lives Section)", which recommends actions for reducing our high unintentional injury statistics.

Safekids' director Ann Weaver said the report not only highlights the issue of unintentional injury, but also makes clear recommendations about the steps the government can take to reduce this major child health issue.

"We're delighted by the launch of the report, which for us confirms all that we do and all that we work toward. We hope that it provides a platform for discussion and progress in this area."

Safekids provided some input into the report, of which unintentional childhood injury was a major focus area along with nutrition, breastfeeding, and immunisation.

UNICEF produced the report in response to the UN Special Session to promote the "World Fit for Children" declaration and to support the development of a National Plan of Action. In May 2002 representatives from New Zealand including the Hon Steve Maharey, officials, two young people and an NGO representative attended the United Nations Special Session for Children held in New York. The purpose of that meeting was to review progress made in improving child well-being following the 1990 World Summit for Children, and through a process of consensus, develop new goals and targets for the next ten years.

At that time each participating country, including New Zealand, committed to developing a National Plan of Action, with specific time-bound, measurable goals and targets based on the declaration that came from the UN Special Session, a document known as "A World Fit for Children".

To date, New Zealand's Plan of Action has not been developed, said UNICEF Executive Director Dennis McKinlay.

"We believe that governments world-wide should take all their international commitments seriously. Where children are concerned it is not good enough to simply rubber stamp agreements. New Zealand has the means to lead by example and seriously review what it should be doing to reach such goals. Our report provides a starting point, a document which draws government attention to some of the key issues for this country. Now, what we hope is that government will fulfil its commitment to the UN and to its children and develop a Plan of Action."

"Dr Amanda D'Souza, with the support of the Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine, researched and consulted on aspects of child health to identify some of the key elements we believe should be included in a New Zealand Plan of Action."

"In preparing the report Dr D'Souza reviewed currently available statistics on unintentional childhood injury and spoke to 'experts' in the field (including Safekids). She developed an extensive background paper and from it UNICEF drew some key points about unintentional childhood injury in New Zealand. These informed our recommendations about key elements of a New Zealand Plan of Action."

Ann Weaver says while the key issues identified by UNICEF New Zealand are not news to Safekids, it is gratifying to see them highlighted in such an important, and welcome report.

Key issues include this country's poor international injury ranking on injury mortality rates. A 2001 report from UNICEF ranked New Zealand 22nd out of 26 OECD countries for the years 1991

to 1996 and if our rates had been as good as the best country (Sweden), 324 children would not have died during that period. Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death for children and young people aged 1 to 18 years of age. Childhood injury has a strong social gradient and children in households earning less than \$10,000 a year experience 3.3 times the risk of unintentional injury mortality than children living in households earning over \$50,000. Unintentional injury hospitalisation rates are also of concern and while there has been a slight decrease in these recently, rates for Maori and Pacific children have not decreased.

Mr McKinlay says despite these concerning figures, at present there is no comprehensive, stand-alone childhood injury prevention strategy and nor is childhood injury prevention a priority area of action for Government. There are positive policy developments including the Injury Prevention Strategy (not specific to children) and the development of an injury database.

"Solutions to some of the issues the UNICEF report raises, in particular addressing childhood poverty, and disparities in outcomes that exist between ethnic groups, are broader than the health sector alone and are the focus of some work in various government departments. However, UNICEF New Zealand is of the opinion that there is more that could be done to prioritise childhood injury prevention within the health sector - and more widely - including strengthening and enforcing legislation and standards," he said.

The goals of "A World Fit for Children" (the UN document) that relate to preventing child injury include:

Reduction in the infant and under-five mortality rate by at least one third (by 2010), in pursuit of the goal of reducing it by two thirds by 2015. (Children 0 to 4 years constitute one of the peaks in New Zealand childhood injury death rates)

Reduce child injuries due to accidents or other causes through the development and implementation of appropriate preventive measures.

Unintentional Childhood Injury

Key issues 2003

- New Zealand has a high rate of child injury mortality compared to other countries.
- Injury is the leading cause of death for New Zealand children aged 1 to 18 years.
- Almost half the injury deaths of children aged 0 to 17 years are traffic-related.
- Children aged 0 to 4 years and 15 to 17 years have the highest rates of injury death.
- There has been a reduction in injury mortality, over the last 10 years; but there are still large inequalities in mortality by ethnicity.
- Injury hospitalisation increased during the early 1990s; and there has been a gradual decline from 1998 for non-Maori and non-Pacific children but not for Maori and Pacific children.
- There is a strong social gradient in injury mortality in New Zealand, most likely due to differential exposure to risk.
- Maori and Pacific children experience a higher death rate than non-Maori, non-Pacific children.
- There is no national comprehensive child injury prevention strategy, nor is child injury prevention a priority for Government action, despite injury being the leading cause of mortality and morbidity for children.
- There are good road safety strategies and initiatives.
- Effective interventions and barriers to effective child injury prevention have been identified, and have not been sufficiently addressed.
- The Injury Prevention Strategy and development of the injury database are positive developments and may make a difference if effectively implemented. However, the needs of children are not specifically addressed in the strategy.
- Legislative injury prevention strategies are not strong enough, and there is insufficient compliance and enforcement of legislation and regulation.

Recommendations for the Plan of Action

UNICEF New Zealand recommends that the New Zealand Plan of Action include a range of measures designed to bring New Zealand's injury rates in line with comparable countries by 2010, including:

1. Action to ensure the full implementation of the Injury Prevention Strategy and the Road Safety Strategy 2010, as well as the development of a comprehensive Child Injury Prevention Action Plan which makes child injury prevention a Government priority and has defined goals, targets, time-lines and committed funding.
2. Ongoing support for the development of an injury surveillance system that is linked to research, policy, and practice; this includes improving the collection and monitoring of injury data by ethnicity.
3. Ensuring that all injury prevention interventions are assessed for their impact on reducing or increasing inequalities. Promote culturally appropriate interventions, such as community-based initiatives, particularly for Maori and Pacific communities.
4. Ongoing support for the New Zealand Transport Strategy's moves to improve public transport initiatives, and provide safe alternatives to motor vehicle traffic. Extend initiatives to encourage safe cycling and walking.
5. Strengthening injury prevention-related legislation, regulations and safety standards and improving monitoring and enforcement.
6. Prioritisation of strategies that modify environmental risk to injury, for example, traffic calming techniques, and fencing of driveways.
7. Strengthening support for organisations that develop and promote programmes to reduce childhood injury.



With nearly half the injury deaths of children aged 0 to 17 years being traffic-related, preventing injuries to our youngest motor vehicle passengers is an important aim for Safekids.

Look what's happening.....

It's all happening at the moment – with conferences, breakfasts, new programmes, and resources. This issue we give you information about what's going on, where you need to be, and what you need to know about if you're working in child safety.

WaterSafe Guidelines for Schools

WaterSafe Auckland has developed a new FREE resource for Auckland and Northland primary and intermediate schools (for years 5 & 6) due for delivery before aquatic programmes begin in term four.

The 'WaterSafe Guidelines for Schools' and 'the Rainbow System of Supervision' video meet the needs of teachers planning to take groups on school camps near water environments.

A number of children have drowned while on school camps and teachers are becoming more concerned with the responsibility and risk involved in running programmes for education outside the classroom near water. The resource assists with pre-camp planning and preparation; the management of activities while at camp; the 'how to' for supervision; and the development of a 'WaterSafe Policy' for the school.

WaterSafe Auckland says aquatics are an essential part of education for all students in New Zealand. Quality aquatic programmes, both in physical education and through education outside the classroom, present wonderful teaching and learning opportunities for teachers and students in unique and enjoyable environments.

However - "The fundamental difference between the aquatic environment and all other teaching environments is the unrelenting demand for constant vigilance it puts on participants and supervisors whether in, on or near water," says WaterSafe Auckland chairman Kevin Moran.

The resource is an educational tool for teachers to address this issue and allows for 'best practice' in the teaching environment.



If you would like information about the resource, please call WaterSafe Auckland on ph (09) 306 0809.

Tracks are for Trains Launched

At the end of August Tranz Rail launched its nationwide safety education programme Tracks Are for Trains, aimed at children aged eight to 11 years.

The education programme was developed to help children understand why rail tracks and trains are so dangerous. It explains about the importance of keeping off the track and shows kids safe behaviour at railway stations and level crossings.

Tranz Rail sent the programme free of charge to 1562 primary and intermediate schools in close proximity to the rail network. Managing Director Michael Beard said the programme was another step in Tranz Rail's ongoing commitment to rail safety.

Public safety was a prime consideration for Tranz Rail, which stated that the numbers of level crossing accidents had steadily declined from a high of 76 in 1996 to a low of 47 in the 2001 -2002 year. For the previous 12 months the figure was 49.

We are committed to improving public safety around the rail network and helping teach children safe behaviour near railway tracks. However it is only with the support of local communities and by working in partnership with other organisations such as the police that we can hope to reduce these figures.

Ngaruawahia was chosen as the launch venue for the programme. The tragic death last year of school boy Jayden Tepu had a major impact on the school and the community. Since then Tranz Rail has continued to work closely with various community groups and the police in Ngaruawahia to promote safe behaviour.

"We need more of the kind of support that we have received from Ngaruawahia," Mr Beard said. "Let's hope other schools and communities around the country will give the same support to this programme and work with us to keep our children safe."

Tranz Rail first began its RailSafe initiatives in 1994. The first version of its Tracks are for Trains programme was developed in 1998.

The key messages remain unchanged in the new programme;

**Trains are quiet
Trains are heavy
Trains take a long time to stop
Tracks are for trains only**

According to Tranz Rail, trespassers in the rail corridor are a major problem and one Tranz Rail takes seriously. In 2002, 37 incidents involved children trespassing in the rail corridor. Four children were injured, three seriously, and one child was killed.

New "Pool Alone" Policy

A revised policy for caregiver supervision of young children at public swimming pools was introduced at the New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA) Just Add Water forum in Hanmer on September 11.

The new policy states that children under eight years must be actively supervised by a caregiver 16 years or over. Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) says 'actively supervised' means watching your child at all times and being able to provide immediate assistance.

Six young children aged under five years drowned in public pools between June 1999 and November 2002. This is considerably more than the average of one child every two years who drowned between 1980 and 1999. The rise led to the development of the new policy and a desire to better communicate supervision requirements and caregiver responsibilities.

NZRA, in conjunction with WSNZ, have refined the existing policy over the past 18 months to increase the caregiver age requirement and provide a much-needed definition of supervision.

ACC is helping to fund the promotional material as an extension of the ACC PoolSafe Quality Management Scheme for public pools, which is managed by WSNZ and provides independent assessments of pool policy and procedures, including the Pool Alone policy. The ACC will fund new signs which will be displayed in all public pools from mid September and will promote the new policy to caregivers and children.

Weaving the Strands 2003:

Injury Prevention Network of Aotearoa New Zealand Conference October 2003

**Powhiri and Opening Address: 9am-10am
Wednesday 29th October 2003**

Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand Wellington.

The Injury Prevention Network of Aotearoa New Zealand (IPNANZ) is holding its second conference Weaving the Strands 2003 from 29th – 31st October 2003 at Te Papa Tongarewa, Museum of New Zealand, Wellington.

The conference will have a strong indigenous focus underpinned with an emphasis on quality and creativity related to developing best practice for effective injury prevention in Aotearoa New Zealand. IPNANZ conference Weaving the Strands 2001 was considered to be a very successful conference both in terms of content and organisation by the people who participated in October 2001. We are working to achieve an equally successful experience in 2003.

See: www.ipn.org.nz :IPNANZ conference 2003 for registration brochure and outline of programme
or contact Valerie Norton National Coordinator IPNANZ, Tel (04) 472 2562, Mobile 0274 966 795.



Bike Wise Week 2004

National Bike Wise Week is New Zealand's only nationally co-ordinated week promoting cycling as a fun, healthy, means of transport and recreation. Running from 14-22 February 2004 it is the ideal time to promote cycling and cycle safety. During the week hundreds of different biking events and activities take place, including bike skills days, Bike to Work Days, family fun days, bike rides etc. Getting involved in the week is heaps of fun, and Bike Wise have made it very easy by providing information, ideas, "how to" guides, free Bike Wise resources to use as prizes at your event and loads more. *For more information go to www.bikewise.co.nz or contact Bike Wise on: ph: (04) 472 5777, or email: bikeweek@healthsponsorship.co.nz.*

Littlies Lobby Parliamentary Children's Caucus Breakfast

Dr Cindy Kiro, New Zealand's recently appointed Commissioner for Children, will be guest speaker at the Parliamentary Children's Caucus Breakfast in the Grand Hall, Parliament, on Wednesday October 15th. This will be the final Littlies Lobby breakfast event for 2003.

As Commissioner for Children, it is Dr Kiro's role to monitor and review policy and practices of Child, Youth and Family and any matter affecting children and young people. She will lead the Office of the Commissioner for Children in advocating on behalf of our most vulnerable citizens.

Leaving her role as Associate Professor and Director of the Waioara Centre for Public Health Research at Massey University to become the Commissioner for Children, Dr Kiro has also previously held

ACC Child Safety Grants

The second application round for ACC Child Safety Grants is now open and applications will be accepted until 5pm on November 28, 2003.

ACC provide the grants to community groups wishing to undertake child safety projects within their area. Projects must meet specific criteria, including that they are primary prevention, of a longer term nature and are able to be evaluated. Groups can apply for between \$500 and \$1000 for projects, excluding GST and must provide a proposed budget.

Applications are decided by representatives from a range of agencies with an interest in child safety issues.

We strongly encourage groups to utilise the opportunity to apply for grants as this money can make a big difference to work you are planning.

Application forms and some helpful guidelines on applying for grants can be found and downloaded at www.kidsafe.org.nz or you can obtain copies by contacting Vikki Jarvis at Safekids on (09) 820 1199 or email victoriaj@adhb.govt.nz.



NZ Cycling Conference 2003

For those involved in cycle safety and implementation of local cycle strategies, the NZ Cycling Conference 2003 is a must.

"Cycling Strategies & How to Implement Them" is the key theme for the conference, to be held on October 10 & 11 on Auckland's North Shore.

New Zealand's draft national walking and cycling strategy will be presented, as will a plethora of presentations and workshops on other cycling related topics – from regional case studies on the implementation of cycling strategies to cycle safe routes to schools.

The conference will be opened by Minister of Transport the Hon Paul Swain and the keynote speaker is Steven Norris, the UK Government's Chair of National Cycling Strategy Board. Safekids' Senior Analyst John Wren will also be a speaker, presenting on the issue of cycle helmet wearing in New Zealand.

Information about the conference, and registration forms, can be obtained at www.cycling-support.org.nz.

senior management positions in the health field and has extensive experience in child advocacy and Maori development. She holds a PhD in Social Policy and an MBA in Business Administration. She also holds a current Certificate of Competency in Social Work Practice. Dr Kiro is married with a family.

Littlies Lobby facilitates Parliamentary Children's Caucus Breakfasts quarterly. The events are always well attended by MPs and Littlies Lobby members. On October 15, Dr Kiro will share her vision for the Office of the Commissioner for Children and her role as guardian of children and young people's interests and rights.

You can attend the next Parliamentary Children's Caucus Breakfast by joining Littlies Lobby. Visit www.littlieslobby.org.nz and click the membership button. Once you have joined you will be invited to take part in this important cross party initiative in support of children.

MEET THE NEW TEAM

Safekids has had a few changes of late, a new director, the addition of some committed new staff, plus a change in the roles of some existing personnel. So, we thought it was time we introduced the new look team.



Director - Ann Weaver

New Director Ann Weaver is now in her second month with Safekids and says she has met an amazing group of dedicated people committed to injury prevention in that time. Over the next month she's looking forward to participating in her first KidSafe Week. Ann previously worked in the health sector and for the Children, Youth & Family Service, and is the mother of two adult children and grandma to Kyle (2). She has brought with her a wide range of management and advocacy skills, which she plans to use to continue the momentum that Safekids has generated in preventing unintentional childhood injuries during the past ten years.

injury prevention community lobby national and regional agencies, and local government, on issues relating to child injury.

"Both roles keep me very busy as there's always something happening. I get to meet a wide range of interesting people, and the best part about my job is that I feel able to help make a difference to the community and society in which I live."

John came to Safekids two years ago from the Injury Prevention Research Unit, and his research and analyst skills have been of huge benefit to us.



Coalition and Communications Co-ordinator - Vikki Jarvis

"The thing I like about being part of a small team is knowing that everybody is working together towards the same goal - 'safe kids'," says Vikki Jarvis.

Vikki originally joined Safekids in May last year as a temp. In addition to being the Coalition Coordinator for KidSafe Week, Vikki is now assisting the Communications Advisor with the organisation's external communications programme. Vikki has two children, Lauren (7) and Callum (2 1/2) and loves being a mum. Apart from her efficiency, and her bright personality, everyone enjoys having her on the team because of the home-baking provided on a fairly regular basis!



National Kidsafe Week Coordinator/Communications Advisor - Joy Gunn

Joy Gunn has been appointed National KidSafe Week Coordinator, formalising her role of the past two months as Acting National Coordinator. She has worked with Safekids on and off since 1995 and helped establish the first KidSafe Week in 1996. For the past three years she's been involved with KidSafe Week promotion and marketing, and adds the national coordination of the campaign to that role. In addition she will now be responsible for Safekids' external communications and media relations.

Joy is based in Dunedin and jokingly calls herself "Safekids' South Island representative". As the mother of three children, all under eight, Joy is passionate about children's health and safety issues, and is involved in a number of support groups for children and their families.



Senior Analyst - John Wren

John Wren wears two hats in his work with Safekids. He is both Senior Analyst and Advocate. The first hat is an "analyst's" one, which means he provides Safekids and anybody else who asks with information and advice about what the child injury issues are and how to prevent them. In his other role he helps both us, and the wider



PA/Administrator - Rhonda Jordan

Every office needs someone to keep it running smoothly. In Safekids' case this is Rhonda Jordan. Rhonda joined Safekids in 1997 as Administrator/Coordinator and enjoys being part of a small and busy team. During her time with us she's been involved in coordinating the printing and distribution

of KidSafe Week resources and Safekids' publications, as well as taking primary responsibility for the day to day administration tasks that keep the organisation ticking along. Her new role is as Personal Assistant to Director Ann Weaver, but she will also continue to support staff with administration tasks where required. She counts the best part of her job as "...working together with the Safekids' team to help keep our children safe in the future. As a grandma myself this is really important and relevant to me."



Injury Prevention Advisor – Ray Ropata

Ray Ropata was recently appointed as one of two Injury Prevention Advisors for Safekids and starts officially in mid October. Ray will work with community groups on programmes which prevent unintentional childhood injury. In particular he has been employed to work with Maori on this issue.

Ray was born in Porirua and spent 11 years on the East Coast before moving to Auckland three years ago. He has affiliations with Ngati Porou, Ngati Raukawa, Atiawa and Ngati Toa.

He spent the last 18 months working for the Injury Prevention Research Centre as a project manager/researcher and before that was employed by an iwi health provider. While much of his work has been related to drug and alcohol prevention, he is looking forward to the challenge of focusing on unintentional child injury, something he is enthusiastic about as the father of two boys. In addition to spending time with his family, Ray is a keen musician; an activity he says allows him to blow off any steam at the end of a hard day.



Injury Prevention Advisor – Janine McCrorie

Like Ray, Janine McCrorie has been appointed as an Injury Prevention Advisor, and joins Safekids in mid October. She replaces Bonnie Dowding who departed in April. Janine is a paediatric nurse and is completing her last paper in her Paediatric Masters in Child and Family Nursing. She has been working in a nurse-led community clinic and joins us to further her interest in child health issues.

As someone who has been community-based for five years, her new role allows her to utilise her skills and knowledge to coordinate the work of community injury prevention groups within the region. A member of PITA (Preventing Injury Through Action) Janine says she's learned a lot about child injury prevention and is looking forward to the new job.

Outside work she's a keen mountain biker and likes to keep fit.



Information Centre Manager – Simon Whitlock

Simon joined the team at Safekids in April 2000, as Information Centre Manager, after qualifying with an MLIS (Master of Library and Information Studies) from Victoria University in Wellington. Simon is responsible for the management of the Safekids' Information and Resource Centre. The Information Centre provides Safekids and other organisations with a strong base of information to assist with their work in child injury prevention.

"Basically I see my role as being fairly straightforward – that is the collection and dissemination of new and relevant information to the field of unintentional childhood injury and its prevention. i.e. getting information in and getting information out! It is easy to stay motivated in this job because you know that a piece of information or a resource might just save a child from injury, and having that thought available in the back of your mind is definitely one of the more rewarding aspects of this job."

Safekids in the Media

In August an article appeared in the NZ Herald criticising the increasing awareness in other countries about unintentional injury prevention, and the policies and practices of those nations. The article's author was of the opinion that by trying to prevent injuries to children, we were creating a culture that was risk averse and unadventurous. Safekids responded to this article with the following letter, which the NZ Herald published on August 18th.

Dear Editor,

I would like to reply to Barbara Sumner Burstyn's article in the New Zealand Herald (4/8/2003). The article suggests that activities aimed at preventing injuries to children are creating a society that is risk averse, and that attempts to build a safety culture are likely to be detrimental to the development of our children. Safekids strongly disagrees with this view.

...continued on page 12



KIDSAFE WEEK 2003

The people who make

From the far north to the deep south a lot of people make KidSafe Week happen each and every year. Not only do they put their best efforts into the Week and its planning, but all year round they work on programmes to keep our kids safe and well – in the home, on the road and at play.

This issue we're profiling two coalition coordinators – one from the South Island and one from the North, and we plan to feature profiles of other coalition members, and the work they and their groups do, in each issue of Safekids News.

Sandy Pokaia - Kirikiriroa Maori Coalition

Sandy Pokaia leads one of KidSafe Week's Maori coalitions and has been involved in the week for at least five years.

In her year round role as an Iwi health provider, she says much of her work is injury prevention and the complexities and time it takes could be a full time job.

For her the ability to establish a Maori coalition a few years ago was a turning point in her involvement with KidSafe Week.

"With a Maori coalition we were able to access more resources and focus our concentration on the Maori population of Kirikiriroa more fully than when we were not in a Maori Coalition."

Sandy says a highlight in the KidSafe campaign was when the Maori coalition worked together with 11 Hamilton Kohanga Reo groups for a 2 hour event at Kirikiriroa Marae, focusing on all aspects of injury prevention. The kohanga's were divided into groups and were given a specific injury prevention subject to draw pictures about. They then talked through the preventative measures and then did a waiata pertaining to that subject.

They then got up before the groups and presented back in their own way the key prevention messages to the rest of the groups. The high point was getting all our Hamilton Kohanga Reo to come together into one place, as this seldom occurs."

Three years ago the group decided to host a health promotion day during KidSafe Week. Sandy says this event continues to provide a wonderful way to reach people in her area. Parents who would not normally turn up for anything else come to the half day event and access information. The day, which can attract up to 400 people, provides Sandy and her coalition with one of the few opportunities for face to face education with families who are struggling with many issues - financial and social.

This year, as well as hosting the health promotion day, the coalition will work with schools in the area to look at their safety practices and policies. Where schools do not have effective policies, the coalition will help them develop these. The project is expected to take 10 months and has been partly funded with an ACC Child Safety grant. Sandy says it's exciting for her to be able to work with schools to make long term changes.

Advocating for long term change is a big focus for her at present, as her group joins other coalitions in the area to lobby for funding to establish a community safety programme, much like the one in Waitakere City.

Jan Wilson - Invercargill Coalition

A public health nurse, Jan Wilson leads one of our southern most coalitions. Based in Invercargill, the geographical area she and the coalition cover is huge, which poses problems of its own.

Jan joined the coalition when she took up her job last year, just before KidSafe Week and was thrown in the deep end. Since then she has worked alongside the other 12 or so coalition members to focus on activities

for KidSafe Week which work in their community - a community which is widespread and comprises a number of small towns and communities.

Jan says it can be difficult having a large geographical area where people live in small rural communities, especially when distributing information.

This year the coalition has put its efforts into preventing ATV related injuries. Jan says as a region with a large rural population this was seen as the key focus. The coalition has developed a local resource about ATV related injuries to children for parents of preschoolers, as well as curriculum based activities for older children.

"We produced the resource for preschools to provide families with some ideas about alternatives to carrying the child with them on the ATV. We know some people have strapped the car seat to the ATV, which is scary and that's one issue we wanted to address."

The resource works well with the national Keep Kids off ATVs flyer for parents, which the coalition also plan to distribute. In addition it's developed a resource kit for 95 schools in the region, which again works well with the national kit produced by the police. This will be distributed closer to the Week.

In Invercargill itself the coalition is organising a cycling event for families in early November and the production of school based resources. Jan says while KidSafe Week can be hard there are some benefits.

"KidSafe Week is good for raising awareness and getting the community involved. It gives us a foundation to work from, and we like to do more than just run events. This year the themes have allowed us to work with schools and preschools. The Week also gives us the opportunity to work collaboratively, which is great."

it happen

Esme's Back – and Learning About Cutting Injury!

Remember Esme? She's the little girl who for the last three years has helped preschoolers and younger school children learn about staying safe in and around the home. Each year her stories have linked with our KidSafe Week themes and this year it's no different.

Esme and her family return in *Esme and the Birthday Party* – a book produced by Darfield librarian Lynda Seaton and the Waimakariri KidSafe Week Coalition as an education tool for younger children and their families.

The book focuses on preventing cutting injuries and is designed for older primary school children to read with, or to younger kids. The Esme stories are always interesting with a good safety message and timed to come out just before KidSafe Week. Groups can order the books from the Waimakariri coalition at a cost of \$5.00 each. Order forms are available on-line at www.kidsafe.org.nz. You can then print the form and fax or post it.

If you have any queries contact Sandra James ph 03 313 6136 ext 859 or sandra@wmk.govt.nz

Launch Events about Being Bike Wise

This year's KidSafe Week launch events are all about families, kids and being Bike Wise.

Four Bike Wise events will be used to publicly launch KidSafe Week on Sunday October 19th. While the Week officially starts on Friday October 17, organisers wanted to focus the cycle safety theme for this year on providing fun events for families.

The four KidSafe Week coalitions holding special 'launches' on the 19th are Dunedin and Nelson in the South Island and Hawkes Bay and Auckland's North Shore in the North Island. While the events will be different – Dunedin and Auckland will use their launch to open cycle skills areas, while Hawkes Bay will coordinate with the annual Tour the Bays ride – they all have something in common – child safety.

Cycle skills courses, helmet and bike checks, helpful information for families on cycling,

as well as fun activities and entertainment, will be key factors of the events.

National Kidsafe Week Coordinator Joy Gunn says the events all aim to raise awareness of the issues for child cyclists and the steps families, kids, schools and communities can take to make cycling as safe as it is fun.

The Bike Wise events are only just the beginning of cycle safety related activity for KidSafe Week.

A number of coalitions are planning activities around this issue and these range from education programmes in schools to larger community focused cycling events.

Information about cycling events and other KidSafe Week activities can be found at www.kidsafe.org.nz.



Former Children's Commissioner Joins Kidsafe Campaign

Former Commissioner for Children, Roger McClay, has become a Safekids' Child Safety Ambassador.

Mr McClay will play a key role in the upcoming KidSafe Week (October 17 -24) as a KidSafe Week Ambassador but will also work with Safekids to advocate and promote other child safety issues within New Zealand.

In August he stepped down from his five year post as Commissioner for Children for a well earned break. During his time as Commissioner he was instrumental in raising government and public awareness of the issue of intentional injuries to young New Zealanders. He also supported efforts by Safekids to reduce unintentional injuries.

Not only does he bring with him a wealth of experience and knowledge about children's issues, but also his passion for children's welfare is well recognized. Safekids is excited about his involvement in its work and the work of KidSafe Week organisers.

KidSafe Week Ambassadors and TV presenters Pio Terei and Suzy Cato continue to lend their support and well known faces to our work in reducing unintentional injuries to New Zealand children.

Playgrounds *and our Children* ■■

In February this year Safekids held a symposium to further explore the issues around playground injuries and child development. In our June issue of Safekids News, we featured two opinion pieces on this issue. The article that follows is from a presentation provided by Jo Bowler at the symposium, and like the other two pieces featured in Safekids News, does not necessarily reflect the views of Safekids.

Middle Childhood - Competence and Caution

By Josephine Bowler, Massey University

If humans were just physical beings the issue of child safety would be so easy. We could observe, measure, chart, and produce risk-potential formulae to create perfect playgrounds and policies. But we also have a psychological self – an inextricable combination of the physical, the cognitive and the emotional dimensions of being. And all these developmental domains must be taken into account in relation to safety and the prediction of risk. I am taking it as given that human beings must take risks. From infancy onwards exploratory behaviour is necessary to development... This ongoing developmental need to explore the properties of our environment begins with an infant's first steps and leads humans beyond the earth and into space.

Playgrounds and recreational environments are an important part of this journey. They provide challenges that are simultaneously physical, cognitive and emotional. However the social context of playgrounds is something that planners and policy-makers sometimes overlook. So it is timely to visit the research and literature about child development that can inform good decision-making over issues of risk and safety.

My focus is on the developmental stages of middle childhood and pre-adolescence, - a period encompassing age 6 to around 12 years. During this period there are qualitative changes in biology and cognition, differences in body type become more pronounced, and peer relationships become more important. What happens during middle childhood in terms of playfulness, willingness to experiment, and risk-taking is very important to the next stage of adolescence, and attitudes towards healthy exercise in adulthood. This is a journey that begins in early childhood where the youngster

resonates between initiative and autonomy on the one hand and feelings of helplessness and frustration on the other, as she, or he, tries to master the skills of climbing, balancing, constructing things, and a multitude of other developmental tasks. The framework of psychosocial stages given us by Erikson (1968) still appears to fit what we can observe about human development in terms of emotional health and resilience. Erikson's concept of the developmental crisis is a useful explanatory tool for understanding why experiences of failure and success are both necessary. In middle childhood the crisis is one of industry versus inferiority, with positive weighting towards industry leading to what Erikson called the virtue of a sense of competence.

In the pursuit of competence children have a natural tendency towards caution even in the action of risk taking – and even without adult presence and warnings. We know from the experiments of Gibson (1969) on visual perception that infants of around eight months, who are placed in a situation where they perceive a sudden fall ahead of them, will hesitate. Their heart rate increases and they typically refuse to crawl into the danger zone. Research on attachment in the second half of the 20th century begun by the work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth also informs us that children, who are reared feeling unsafe, and unprotected by adults, develop a recognisable avoidant behavioural pattern of relating to the world. In situations of perceived threat their behaviour has the goal of survival. Howe (1995) offers a readable introduction to these ideas.

Playgrounds are places where important physical things happen for children, in skill building, and mastery, and where important emotional things happen as well. Risk cannot be construed simply in physical terms, since a child's level of emotional arousal, and perceptions of safety, risk, and danger, are sufficient to inhibit or to facilitate "having a go". By seven years children are well on the way to developing an exploratory style. They have a personal history of situations that involved them in both approach and avoidance, both risk-taking and caution, and by eight they have already learned that both are necessary to gaining competence in the mastery of physical feats. By detailed observations of children's interactions in playgrounds, Smith (1998) has produced an informative study on playground risk-taking that focuses on the relationship of the adult and child in a framework of communication

and guidance. He makes the point that risk is something that can not necessarily be objectified and made visible, but is perceived from within the individual. We do not always perceive risk as something to be avoided, in the way that we avoid pain, but as something that helps in the construction of personal meaning. It is also therefore something that helps in the construction of our self-concept and our attitudes to others. Smith's study makes explicit the nature of the "interactions that occur when a child's sense of playground touches us". "Only by being with the child in this interactive and self reflective way do we appreciate the full meaning of the term risk."

To understand playground risk as adults we have to try to return ourselves to the child's world, the landscape of our own childhood, to attempt to understand what is happening in the spaces between the child and others, and in the spaces between the child and the environment, or play equipment. It's only by attempting this that the riskiness of children's activity becomes contextualised and therefore meaningful. The potential for risk is always present, most significantly when the activity engages children with equipment in a co-operative effort. There are different degrees of cooperation involved in seesaws, merry-go-rounds, swings, flying foxes and anything else where children venture at the same time.

In the absence of adult supervision, a playground has two resources that act to scaffold opportunities for developing competence. The first is its physical attributes. Playgrounds offer children opportunities to reach out and do things with their bodies they would not otherwise be attempting. And playground equipment allows them to come back and back until they master that skill, and so move on to other challenges. The second attribute is the social context. A great amount of learning about risk happens within, and because of, the social environment, since play involves interaction.

But children don't just watch the skilfulness and technique of others. They watch for emotional cues as well. Did he hurt himself when he landed? Did she climb down smiling? They evaluate the risks in terms of their appraisal of their own, and the abilities of other children with whom they compare themselves. And they assess the opportunities for their own safety in terms of the levels of busyness, aggression, leadership, or competitiveness of the children they are watching. They will often wait some time

for a safe opportunity to enter the play. For some children playgrounds can offer an uninhibited sense of bodily freedom. No potential for movement is left unexplored. For others a crowded playground can be a daunting place and it's likely that temperament plays a part in these differences. Studies such as the early ones by Thomas and Chess (1977), and the ongoing Australian Temperament Study, show that from infancy there are differences among children in terms of their approach-avoidance behaviour, and their adaptability and resilience in response to stress and novelty. A non-competitive slightly anxious child is not going to make equal use of equipment covered with noisy, jostling, jeering others.

Research into attachment and emotional resilience has made one thing clear. Children whose parents or caregivers are responsive to their needs, and who are helped to develop a positive sense of autonomy and self worth, are better able to appraise new situations without excessive anxiety, and to take risks in exploring their environment. There is no research that I have been able to find that suggests that emotionally insecure children are liable to be less physically competent. However it could be reasonably hypothesized that children who are reared, feeling less secure and less safe in their relationships, and therefore their world, learn not to expect help from others, but to teach themselves, through trial and error. In this process, the observation of peers and their skill and attitude modelling is vital.

Middle childhood brings a social orientation of children towards relationships with each other. This sociocentric propensity can be contrasted with the egocentrism of early childhood thought. Making and keeping a friend is an important developmental task between 6 and 10 years requiring interactive skills that have to be learned before the onset, and loneliness, of adolescence. The making, breaking, and sustaining of friendships is learned in the context of playing with others, which inevitably involves both physical and social risk taking.

In middle childhood also, leadership among children shifts with the situation and the abilities of those involved. But children will often perceive when others need help. You can see this when observing children at play - a hand held out and taken, standing back to let another have a turn, or doing something alongside another, watchfully. This kind of scaffolding amongst children is developmentally historic, as shown in the

Maori phrase, *tuakana-teina*, used to describe the help offered spontaneously by an older child, to one younger. Western cultures tend to call this leadership, but in either case, it involves some type of supportive offering from a child who feels competent towards one whose behaviour shows signs of hesitancy or distress. Hartup (1989), who has written on the developmental significance of relationships, gives us the useful construct of horizontal and vertical relationships. Vertical relationships are those between an adult and child where there is an unequal power base, where the authority comes downwards to the child from the adult. It is this power that is used by parents and teachers to guide and scaffold the child in learning situations, and to control the consequences that are dispensed. And vertical power is also used in an abusive manner to denigrate a child's attempts. In horizontal relationships there is a more or less equal power distribution, between child and child (Bowler, 1997). This is the give and take of childhood play, and Hartup makes the point that both vertical and horizontal relationships are necessary in the development of physical and emotional well being and resilience.

The impact of peers on opportunities to develop competency is also affected by what has been described as the society of children. This is a phenomena linked with middle childhood, and described by Berger (1998). "When groups of school age children play together they tend to develop patterns of interaction that regulate their activities in ways that are quite distinct from the regulations imposed on them by adults." The society of children is a sub-culture where they create their own unwritten norms, rules and rituals. It is characterised by what adults would call "silly jokes", shared vocabulary, and a concealment of the conflict within the group. You don't tell adults what's happened since those who tell tales are despised. The society of children offers an explanation of how bullying is maintained and concealed.

Around 11 or 12, at the onset of puberty, girls seem to disappear from playgrounds and are found instead on the fringes of activities such as the skateboarding ramp. In pre-adolescence, the psychological and behavioural differences between boys and girls become greater because of increasing socialisation pressures to conform to masculine and feminine gender roles.

I have revisited some well-known theory of child development to illustrate both the social context and the twin elements of caution and risk taking necessary to the development of

competence. In the planning of play areas, a focus on the child's social context translates into the following kinds of implications. Firstly, graded skill sequences should be available, for balance, for climbing, for traversing using hands, for leaping, sliding and swinging. By graded sequence I mean something that is going to be unattractive as a challenge for those who are competent but offer an empty niche to be used by those who feel less competent. Secondly, cooperative activities using apparatus carry more physical risk. This is because safe use of the equipment depends on the mindfulness and the altruism of the individuals that make up the group using it. Therefore children should be trained in the safe use of such equipment. They will then use this knowledge naturally, in the peer group context, to train other children in safety, through modelling. Thirdly, the importance of children watching others should be understood. They need opportunities to observe, without feeling pressure to enter the game before they are ready. Observation of others is an indication of natural caution and a necessary pre-requisite to taking a chance, and the subsequent development of competence. I would provide seats around playgrounds, because this gives the message, "Hey! It's okay to wait and watch the others before trying it yourself." In calculating playground risk in middle childhood, the social-emotional aspects of development need to be considered since risk taking and caution are interwoven in the pursuit of competence within the social context of play.

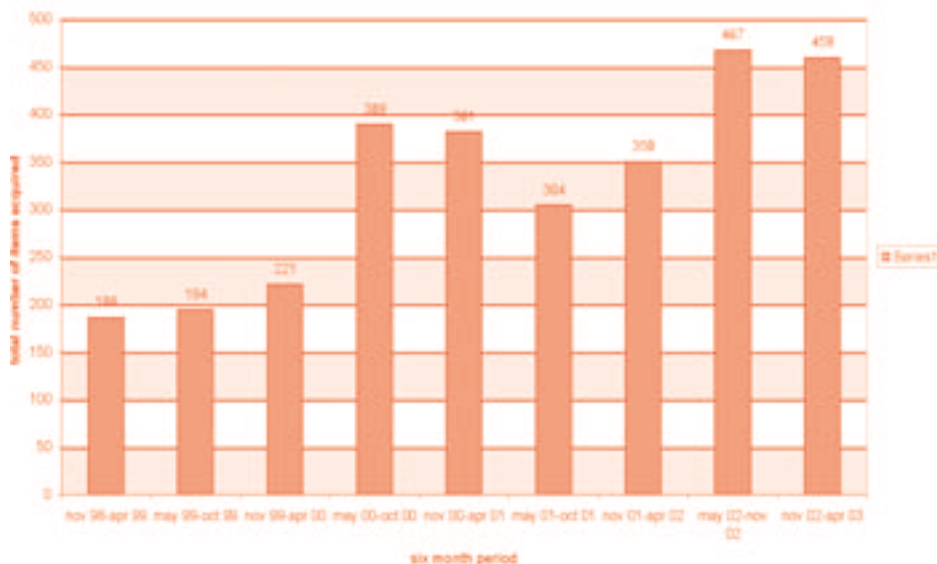
This article has been edited for Safekids News. For a full text and list of the references identified in this article, please contact Joy Gunn (email joy.gunn@internet.co.nz).



Info Centre Update ■ from **Simon Whitlock**

Last month I catalogued the Safekids Information & Resource Centre's 7000th item! For me this was a milestone as I work to identify, gather and make available information to those with an interest in unintentional childhood injury and its prevention. The collection of information and resources held in the centre continues to expand in size at a growing rate. Over the last 12 months, new items have been acquired, catalogued, and added to the centre's collection at a rate of approximately 77 new items per month.

New items catalogued and added to the database



Safekids in the Media ...continued from page 7

Unintentional and intentional injury is now the principal cause of child death in all 26 OECD nations. In New Zealand unintentional injury is the leading cause of admission to public hospitals for children aged 5-14 years, and the second leading cause of admission for those aged 15-34.

Hospital admissions for injury are a major contributor to health costs. The average cost of an injury hospital admission is 10% greater than that of a non-injury admission.

Furthermore, contrary to the title and content of the opinion piece, what the injury prevention activities indicate is that we are actually more informed about the issues and we are in fact getting better at managing risk, not becoming risk averse.

Finally, injury prevention activities are aimed at improving the quality of life of children. Safekids is not opposed to risk per se. We are opposed to unnecessary risk taking with our

children without giving some thought to what the consequences might be. As indicated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 "the child, by means of his/her physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care".

*Yours sincerely
Ann Weaver
Director, Safekids*

Safekids is concerned by the number of recent opinion pieces which have appeared in the print media criticising the work undertaken by organisations to prevent injuries to children and adults. In addition to the article referred to above, the NZ Police has been criticised for its speed enforcement campaigns. Safekids encourages those working within injury prevention to reply to such criticisms within our media. The above letter can be used under your organisation's name, if you wish. Please just remove the Safekids reference and replace it with your own name.

KidsInfo Bulletin:

Each time 100 new items are added to the Information & Resource Centre catalogue, the KidsInfo Bulletin is produced – this is a report which provides reference information and an abstract/description of each new item. Items are listed under broad term categories throughout the report (some examples of broad term categories include; cyclists, falls, drowning, poisoning etc). The report is then disseminated via email. It is useful as a tool for current awareness, as well as a useful way of keeping up-to-date with what is coming into the Info Centre. If you do not currently receive the KidsInfo Bulletin via email, and you would like to do so, please send an email to (simonw@adhb.govt.nz) and I will add your name and email address to the list. We are currently also investigating the possibility of 'posting' the KidsInfo Bulletin to the Safekids website (www.safekids.org.nz) each time it is produced, as well as including an archive feature for accessing previous reports. Keep a look out for this over the next little while.

Safekids has information packs available within the following topic areas (hard copy only):

- Information Pack No.1:
*Unintentional Childhood Injury
(An Overview)*
- Information Pack No.2:
Baby Walkers
- Information Pack No.3:
Drive Overs
- Information Pack No.4:
Hot Water Scalds
- Information Pack No.5:
Poisonings
- Information Pack No.6:
Child Motor Vehicle Passengers
- Information Pack No.7:
Child Drownings

Contact me if you wish to order any of these:

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