



Cycle safety

Introduction

Many people are unaware that the number of fatalities among young people caused by road accidents is higher than deaths from many other external causes, including some which receive much more publicity from the media.

There is a need for all those involved with children to teach clear road safety messages effectively and consistently, working together to help children understand and manage risk.

This is one of six Lesson Packs aimed at Key Stage 2. The others are:

- Crossing the road safety on your own
- In-car safety
- Be bright, be seen
- Crossing the road safely with an adult
- Pedestrian safety

Each Lesson Pack contains a Lesson Plan and a range of resources to help deliver the lesson. All the THINK! resources you need can be accessed via the THINK! Resource Centre (<http://think.direct.gov.uk/resource-centre>).

The learning materials and ideas are designed to be used flexibly so that teachers, assistants and parents can use them in ways which suit their circumstances and the needs of their children.

Useful websites

THINK! Resource Centre

- The Resource Centre lists all the THINK! education materials referred to in any of the Lesson Packs. Items can be downloaded, ordered for postal delivery or viewed via an online link (or several of these) depending upon their format.
<http://think.direct.gov.uk/resource-centre>

THINK! Education website

- A range of road safety information and resources for pupils, teachers and parents. Some of the resources will also be useful for road safety professionals and out-of-school groups.
<http://think.direct.gov.uk/education/early-years-and-primary>

Tales of the Road

- Materials and information aimed at 6-11 year olds covering a variety of topics.
<http://talesoftheroad.direct.gov.uk>



Why teach road safety?

There has been a reduction in deaths and serious injuries on our roads over the years but there is a need to reduce deaths and injuries even further.

As background:

- In 2011, 29 children aged 0-11 years were killed on Britain's roads. Another 1,374 were seriously injured.
- Of the above, 7 deaths and 321 serious injuries were in the 3-5 year old age bracket.
- Almost 77% of children aged 3-5 killed or seriously injured in 2011 were on foot at the time.
- Most children under 9 can't judge how fast vehicles are going or how far away they are.
- In comparison with other countries, Britain's overall road safety record for children is on the whole very good, and its rate for child fatalities is well below the European average.

Parents are often uncertain about where the responsibility for teaching road safety lies. One of the aims of this resource is to ensure that this responsibility is shared by all those involved with children.

It should also be emphasised that there is a need for overall balance when teaching road safety: we must not suggest to children that they are always at great risk near traffic and we certainly do not want to convey the message to anyone, least of all parents, that children can only be kept safe by keeping them indoors or in cars. Walking and cycling must continue to be promoted as healthy, enjoyable activities; the challenge is to give children the skills, understanding and confidence to deal with traffic safely while they are engaged in them.

Taking children off the premises

In addition to learning road safety skills in the classroom, it is vital that children gain practical experience. Some activities in this resource may involve taking children off the school premises and research shows that children learn about roads, traffic and safe behaviour most effectively at first hand.

Good planning, close supervision and risk assessment are all key parts of taking children near traffic. Leaders must ensure that school policies and Local Authority guidance is followed and that parental permission is given for all activities which take place outside the boundaries of the school.

Official health and safety advice can be found on the Department for Education website at www.education.gov.uk

Involving parents

The success of road safety education can be greatly increased if there is shared responsibility between schools and parents, which is backed up by official messages through the media and from outside agencies such as Local Authority Road Safety Officers and the police and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). Children will learn effectively if they receive the same clear safety instructions from home as from school, so it is vital that parents are encouraged to become involved with road safety from the beginning.



To help achieve this aim, each Lesson Pack includes a Home-link Sheet for parents. The purposes of these are to:

- inform parents about the road safety activities that their children are carrying out and the accompanying learning objectives;
- give advice and ideas for parents about how they can reinforce key road safety messages through simple, enjoyable activities with their children;
- underline the message that the home plays a vital part in children's learning about road safety, not least through providing examples of good behaviour.

As with any initiative involving parents, there will inevitably be a mixed response but there are a number of ways that parents can be encouraged to become involved in this important work:

- Holding a parents' meeting to introduce the work can be an effective way to raise awareness. The Home-link Sheets can be shown and the importance of communicating a united message to children can be stressed.
- Parents can be asked to feed back on the effectiveness of the home-link activities by writing comments in a questionnaire to return to school. This could also have space for suggestions for how to improve road safety learning or for local issues to address.
- Parents can be invited into school to see some of the children's work and to watch road safety activities going on: this can range from a full-blown 'road safety week' to an open day or a special assembly where children show visitors what they have learned.
- Outside agencies such as a Local Authority Road Safety Officer or the police may be willing to give a talk to parents to launch the project. 'Road safety education: A guide for early years settings and schools teaching children aged 3-11' (TINF 1306) has been produced to help schools plan and coordinate the involvement of outside agencies.
- The theme of road safety and details of children's activities can be featured in parents' newsletters and on the school website if there is one.

Schools can also refer parents to the parents' area of the THINK! Education website.

Managing sensitivities and diversity

Teaching staff using this resource should be aware of any child whose family member or friend may have been involved in a serious traffic incident. Special sensitivity will need to be shown in these cases and it may be appropriate to pre-warn the child's parent / carer so they are able to prepare the child for the lessons.

Diversity is also an important issue as there will be a wide range in children's awareness of roads, traffic, signs and safety procedures depending on many factors. Some children may come from homes where there is no car, for example. The activities may also need to be slightly adapted for urban and rural locations, although we have tried to ensure that a range of situations and environments is represented in the materials.