

# National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education: Holistic Approaches

The early years are a critical time to introduce key concepts for lifelong learning. Road safety education is an important component of early childhood education as it lays the foundation for children to become safer road users. The National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education have been developed by early childhood education and road safety experts across Australia and New Zealand. The eight national practices are aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework.

## National Practice No. 1 – Holistic Approaches: Recognise that children’s learning is integrated and interconnected when making curriculum decisions about road safety education.

**What is it?** A holistic approach to teaching road safety education seeks to acknowledge the complex interplay between a child’s physical, social and emotional wellbeing. A holistic approach also seeks to maximise the connections between children, family, school and community. An approach that recognises children’s experiences of travelling as passengers, pedestrians and cyclists promotes meaningful learning opportunities within the classroom.

- Discuss how using the road safely requires all kinds of senses. For example:
  - sight – looking and checking traffic on both sides;
  - sound – listening to traffic noises and anticipating the direction from where the sound is coming; and
  - touch – holding hands with an adult and stopping from the edge of the street before crossing.

- Create a dynamic learning environment by using physical games, music and movement to build interest in road safety. Promote a variety of learning experiences that appeal to young learners, for example:
  - teaching by physically performing actions, or ‘doing’ (kinaesthetic learners);
  - learning through language such as stories (linguistic learners, or those who learn through narrative); or
  - listening to road safety songs (auditory learners).
- Seek to connect road safety education within the learning environment to the ‘real world’ traffic environment. Practice road safety rules by setting up a ‘road’ in an outdoor play area, and ask children to demonstrate safe road behaviours such as walking, stopping, waiting, looking, listening, and crossing the road holding an adult’s hand.
- Create a dialogue with children by asking questions and requesting demonstrations of safe road behaviour such as:
  - Show me how to cross the road safely with an adult.
  - How do you know traffic is coming?
  - When is it safe to cross?
  - What do you do when you are crossing the road?
- Ask questions about children’s prior road safety experiences, and seek to maximise the connection to local community by asking children to share examples of safe road behaviours to their life.

