

National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education: Responsiveness to Children

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. 2 – Responsiveness to Children: Deliver road safety education which is responsive to individual children and builds on children’s strengths, knowledge and interests.

What is it? Being responsive to children requires educators to support children’s sense of identity and who they are becoming, and seek to actively develop these attributes. A responsive educative practice requires educators to understand children’s unique sense of self, and to build upon the curriculum by planning and implementing learning experiences that reflect and respond to students. Responsive education can be enacted in many ways, including actively participating in children’s play and facilitating their development through the provision of resources to support their understanding. Responsiveness is about listening to the needs and interests of children and working with them to maximise learning opportunities.

- Listen to children and ask questions about their experiences and knowledge of road safety in their local community. Be responsive by seeking to develop new skills and provide active learning opportunities that reflect their current knowledge and experience as they develop critical road safety skills.
- Incorporate children’s families into learning where possible, including speaking with them about the importance of road safety, and including them in activities through volunteering opportunities.

- Reinforce the importance of road safety education with families and encourage a whole-of-life practice of safer road use by feeding back information on childrens’ learnings to parents and carers.
- Consider responses within the community to road safety as a whole, including obtaining information about how families arrive and leave every day. This information can be standardised and formally incorporated into enrolment through forms or interview questions during intake processes. Seek to understand additional specific needs, for example, dropping off by other family members or caretakers, or any special needs for children with disability.
- Look for opportunities to develop localised resources that are specific to the experiences and needs of children and their families. Seek to emphasise road safety messages that have meaning within the context of the local community – for example, drop zones around the service.
- Responsiveness can also include modifying existing approaches to make programs more accessible and safer for children to attend.

