



National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education

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 safe 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, which forms the basis of early childhood education policy-making in Australia.

The National Practices are derived from the evidence base relating to effective learning and teaching practices across Australia, to ensure that early childhood road safety programs are backed by a strong evidence-base.

The National Practices guide early childhood educators and curriculum developers in implementing road safety education programs that maximise a child's learning about road safety in the context of family and community.

Road safety education for early childhood should align with the National Practices to ensure that educative principles are developmentally appropriate and linked to current best practice pedagogical processes.

The National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety:

- **Holistic approaches** – Recognise that children's learning is integrated and interconnected when making curriculum decisions about road safety education.
- **Responsiveness to children** – Deliver road safety education which is responsive to individual children and extends children's strengths, knowledge and interests.
- **Learning through play** – Through play-based learning seek opportunities to address road safety in a way that expands children's thinking and encourages problem solving.
- **Intentional teaching** – Engage in intentional teaching which extends and expands children's learning about road safety.
- **Learning environments** – Provide opportunities in the learning environment, including the local community, for safe and meaningful interaction with children, parents and carers about road safety.
- **Cultural competence** – Implement road safety education that is culturally relevant for the diversity of children, their families and the community.
- **Continuity of learning and transitions** – Use the opportunity of transitions, in active partnership with children, families and the local community, for road safety education.
- **Assessment for learning** – Together with children and families, reflect on each child's learning and application of road safety to plan for future learning.



Key Road Safety Messages

The following key road safety messages focus on pedestrian, passenger and bike riding safety. They may help to guide you in selecting and sequencing learning experiences when developing road safety education programs for children in an early learning environment.



Being a safe passenger:

- Child passengers are safer in the back seat.
- It is important to sit quietly and not distract the driver or other people in the vehicle.
- The law requires all passengers to:
 - : Wear a seatbelt or appropriate restraint when travelling in a car (children under seven should be in a correctly fitted booster seat) – it will keep the passenger restrained if a vehicle turns sharply, stops suddenly or hits an object or another vehicle
 - : Keep hands, head and legs inside the car at all times.



Being a safe bike rider:

- Do not play on the road.
- Always ride supervised and wear a correctly fitted Australian Standards approved helmet
- Ride on footpaths or bicycle paths – never on the road.
- Ask an adult where it is safe to play, and stay in this area.



Being a safe pedestrian:

- Do not cross the road without an adult.
- Always cross the road at the safest possible point such as traffic lights, a pedestrian (zebra) crossing, refuge, or a position highly visible to drivers.
- Special care should be taken when walking on or near roads as they can be dangerous. Always hold an adult's hand.
- Stop, look, listen and think before you cross a road:
 - : Stop – at the kerb.
 - : Look right, look left and look right again.
 - : Listen for cars and other vehicles approaching.
 - : Think whether or not it is safe to cross and wait until there is a safe break in traffic and all is clear to cross.
- Never play near cars, even if it's on your own driveway.
- Make sure to look for cars when crossing driveways, and only walk when you are sure it is safe.

Background/attribution: In 2012, the Road Safety Education Reference Group of Australasia (RSERGA) commissioned the Child Health Promotion Research Centre at Edith Cowan University to develop the National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education, a series of high-level principles. The eight national practices are aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework, which forms the basis of early childhood education policy-making in Australia.