

Teaching Children about Traffic Safety: ***Do As I Say & As I Do***



Children learn about pedestrian safety by watching the adults around them. Therefore, it is important for adults to make safe choices and set good examples for their children. It is also important to understand some of the differences between child and adult perception as it relates to traffic safety (Source: Federal Office of Road Safety, Australia):

- The hearing of children is not as well developed as adults and as a result, they do not always know which direction a sound is coming from.
- Children have difficulty judging the speed and distance of vehicles. They do not always distinguish between a large vehicle going slowly and a small vehicle going fast – the larger vehicle may seem more dangerous to them.
- The peripheral vision of children is not well developed.
- Because children are small, they may not be able to see over parked vehicles or bushes.

Teach children safe pedestrian and traffic skills by always following these basic traffic safety rules:

General Rules of the Road

- Do not allow children to play on the road. Identify other places such as playgrounds or parks.
- When walking along sidewalks, observe lanes and driveways. Teach children that vehicles can approach from these areas and that drivers backing out of a driveway may not be able to see them.
- When walking on a street with no sidewalks, pedestrians should walk close to the edge of the road, facing traffic.

Crossing

- Never allow children to cross streets alone. Parental or adult supervision is essential until the child develops traffic skills and appropriate judgment.
- Always cross at an intersection and explain to children why you make this choice.
- Cross at signalized intersections only when the walk indicator is lit.
- At intersections, a pedestrian should stop at the curb, look around to ensure traffic has stopped, and then cross when it is safe to do so.
- At a crosswalk, stop and check that drivers are aware of your presence and cross only when all traffic has come to a full stop or there is a sufficient gap in traffic to safely cross the street.
- Never walk diagonally across a street.
- Do not cross between parked vehicles.

Finally, when driving, consider child and pedestrian safety and:

- Park far enough back from a signed and marked crosswalk so you do not block either the visibility of children attempting to cross or motorists' visibility of children at the crosswalk.
- If you drive your child to and from school, choose a safe location for dropping off and picking up your child. Choose a location that minimizes the child's exposure to traffic and avoid dropping your child off on the opposite side of a busy street.
- Obey all "No Parking" and "No Stopping" regulations in school areas. These regulations are in place to create a safe pedestrian and traffic environment in school areas.

And, always **choose safety over convenience**.

Traffic Assessment Branch
Transportation Engineering Division



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