

## **Driveway Run-over Prevention Project**

The Drive-way Run-over Prevention Project (DRoPP) began a number of years ago as a sub-group of the Safekids Regional Pedestrian Strategy. Initially the project group had representation from many agencies and organisations interested in child health and injury prevention. Over time many of these organisations found it difficult to continue to support the project due to resource issues, both fiscal and physical, within the constraints various contracts.

The project group now consists of representatives from Auckland District Health Board, Plunket (Waitemata & Auckland), Communities Living Injury Free (Auckland City), Injury Free Counties-Manukau, Safe Waitakere and Child Safety Foundation NZ. These core organisations have maintained commitment and support for the project over the past three years. A key aspect for the continuation of the project has been the administrative capacity of each member, therefore the Child Safety Foundation NZ agreed to lead this aspect of the project with support from the members.

The project group members all work in the areas of child health or injury prevention and are committed to using a collaborative coalition style for the development, implementation and evaluation of this project. All members believe this project is easily transferable for delivery to any community.

The project group developed a package for Well Child Health practitioners to deliver driveway safety messages to families and care-givers of children between 9 and 18 months of age. This varied depending on individual Well Child Provider organisations and their commitment to other safety or health messages targeted to this age range. E.g. Some providers utilised the core visit at 15 months to deliver this message whilst others utilised additional contact opportunities to engage with families around driveway safety.

The Well Child Health package included a sticker for the WCH book with the key messages from the Safekids national drive-over campaign (check, supervise, separate) along with a gift for a male driver in the family, which the carer was asked to pass on, creating an opportunity for the issue to be explored by the family themselves. Fact sheets and strategies for families were also available to assist families to make changes for their children's safety. Well Child Health providers from across the region have been delivering the project for the past 6-8 months, raising awareness of driveway risks for young children. The project group are developing a feed-back process to capture responses from the Well Child provider groups. This will give the practitioners an opportunity to recognise the benefits and report the challenges back to the project planning team to inform future development of the project.

The second component of the regional project was the development of a community resource which could be utilised to raise awareness with individual participants at local events as identified by the project group. Following a literature scan, the group found a resource that had been developed in USA which focused on raising driver awareness of the scope of the 'blind spot' behind vehicles. This resource identified a length of up to 7 metres which could not be viewed through the vehicle mirrors (internal or external). The project group

developed a local version of the resource to fit into the concept and format of the Well Child component, retaining the simple messages, colour and style.

The community kit has a 7 metre mat which is rolled out behind a vehicle; three figurines (appropriate in size and shape to various toddler actions and ages) are placed along the mat. Participants are invited to sit in the vehicle and report what they are able to see in the vehicle mirrors or by turning around to look out the back window. This very simple demonstration allows participants to gauge the size of the vehicle blind spot. There are currently 4 of these kits in the Auckland region available for use in the community and they have been well utilised throughout a range of summer public events as well as for pre-school parent education opportunities. Feedback from participants has been very positive.

The kit has been demonstrated through a number of national forums including the Injury Prevention Network Aotearoa New Zealand (IPNANZ) conference 2007 and the Safekids leadership conference 2008, raising the profile of both the injury issue and the success of the kit. Many coalition groups around the country have borrowed a kit for specific events and currently the project group are promoting the purchase and use of the community kits to similar organisations with very positive results. A number of community providers are seeking funding to purchase a kit for use in their area and some have already purchased one to loan to community groups to raise driver awareness.

Next steps for the project will be to evaluate the Well Child component of the project and look for additional partners to assist with on-going development and promotional opportunities.

One of the key issues facing the project group has been the lack of available funding streams for support of this initiative. Road Safety funding agencies clearly designate this issue as an off-road injury therefore it does not sit inside their funding criteria. Our national injury prevention funding through ACC for home injury issues has specific focus areas based around injury costs and numbers, also eliminating the drive-over issue from those funding streams.

The project group is committed to building relationships with the private sector to look at synergies and opportunities which will benefit both the project and any potential sponsor.

By: Berenice Langson

# Purchase your DRoPP Kit today

New Zealand has one of the highest recorded rates of driveway injuries in the world.

The Driveway Run-over Prevention Project (DRoPP) kit provides a practical exercise, attracting many drivers to engage in critically thinking about their reversing behaviour. The kit requires about 2 tandem parking spaces and access to a vehicle to complete the demonstration. The driver immediately realises seeing children behind them is extremely difficult.

Berenice Langson from the Child Safety Foundation says that the kit is a MUST for every community throughout New Zealand.

- 😊 CHECK for children before driving off
- 😊 SUPERVISE children around vehicles ALWAYS
- 😊 SEPARATE play areas from driveways



**Want to know more?  
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