

WELCOME!

Jessica Peterson, MS
Safe Kids Nebraska Coordinator

Welcome to the first issue of Safe Kids Times! This newsletter is dedicated to reducing the number of unintentional injuries and deaths to Nebraska children. We hope you find this newsletter to be a valuable resource for you, your family, friends and colleagues. Our purpose is to provide you with current information, safety tips, and prevention practices concerning unintentional injuries of children. Our program's mission is to reduce unintentional childhood injuries and deaths affecting Nebraska's children from birth to age fourteen.

Nationally and in Nebraska, unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death for children ages fourteen and under. Both nationally and statewide, unintentional injury has surpassed disease to become the number one cause of death among children ages one to 14. Ninety percent of these injuries could be prevented if families and caregivers took the simple steps necessary to protect their children.

Safe Kids Nebraska, coordinated through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Division, focuses on preventing these injuries by educating adults and children, creating safe environments and advocating for effective laws. Safe Kids Nebraska serves as a statewide voice for individuals and organizations working together to achieve the mission of the program. There are Safe Kids programs throughout Nebraska in Lincoln, Omaha, Papillion, Grand Island, Hastings, O'Neill, Columbus, Superior, Gering, Seward, York, Ogallala, Kearney, Auburn and Albion.



Safe Kids Worldwide

Safe communities are healthy communities. When people cannot take part in daily activities such as walking or biking because of potential injuries, community health is at risk. Injuries, both intentional and unintentional, are a leading cause of death for all people. Unintentional injuries, such as motor vehicle crashes, pedestrian and bicycle injuries, burns, falls, poisoning, drowning, and suffocation, are the leading cause of death for people ages 1–44 in the United States. Medical spending to treat injuries is on the same level with, if not more than, the costs associated with smoking or obesity. Unintentional injury is a serious public health concern.

Safe Kids Worldwide exists to eliminate accidental childhood injury and death. SKWW is a global network of coalitions and community partners dedicated to preventing accidental injuries to children under age 15 by stimulating changes in

attitudes, behavior and the environment. They empower families and communities to educate adults and children, create safer environments, conduct research and advocate for effective laws. Since its inception in 1987, the U.S. childhood unintentional injury rate has declined 45 percent- saving an estimated 38,000 children's lives.

The proven science of injury prevention and control underlines all Safe Kids campaign initiatives. Decisions to focus on particular risk areas are data-driven —based on death and injury rates and the availability of effective prevention interventions. A team of public health specialists translate injury prevention research into successful multi-faceted community based initiatives. These experts provide technical assistance to state and local Safe Kids coalitions to

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WORLDWIDE

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tailor, implement and evaluate these programs with one goal—to prevent injuries and save lives. The Campaign has received awards from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Public Health Association for outstanding services in the area of injury prevention practice and advocacy.

The Campaign relies on the support of more than 300 state and local Safe Kids coalitions in all 50

states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico to reach out to local communities with prevention messages. These dedicated professionals and volunteers have distributed nearly 1 million bicycle helmets, 1 million child safety seats and 100,000 smoke alarms to families in need. The coalitions work closely with law enforcement officers, firefighters and paramedics, medical and health professionals, educators, parents, grandparents, businesses, public policy-makers and, most importantly, kids.



Mark your calendar!

SEPTEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

OCTOBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

NOVEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

SEPTEMBER

1–7 National Childhood Injury Prevention Week

20–27 Child Passenger Safety Week

OCTOBER

5–11 National Fire Prevention Week

8 International Walk to School Day

15–18 Safe Kids Worldwide Child Injury Prevention Conference (Washington, D.C., U.S.A)

20–26 National Health Education Week

NOVEMBER

2–8 Safe Crossing Week

15 World Kindness Day

Safe Kids Program Hits Major Milestone—One Million Seats Checked for Proper Installation

Safe Kids Buckle Up, the child passenger safety program of Safe Kids USA sponsored by Chevrolet and General Motors, has reached a milestone no other safety program can claim: one million car seats and booster seats checked for proper installation.

Safe Kids Nebraska has been holding events through Safe Kids Buckle Up for nine years and has checked more than 45,000 child safety seats and currently has 426 Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians.

Nationally, at approximately 30 minutes per inspection, one million car seat inspections represents more than 500,000 volunteer hours—or 57 years for one person working around the clock.

The millionth seat was checked on June 12 at an event held at the Los Angeles Sports Arena. Nearly 200 car seat checkup events are being held at Chevrolet dealerships and community locations throughout the country in celebration of the millionth seat milestone.

Significant progress has been made since 1997 when the program checked its first car seat. Statistics from the National Highway Transportation Administration show a 25% drop in vehicle crash fatalities for children under the age of 5 from 1997 to 2006 (the latest year with available data).

More good news has been seen in restraint use. Car seats have saved the lives of an estimated 3,800 children ages 0 to 4 from 1997 to 2006. Of the children in fatal crashes where restraint use was known, 46% were unrestrained in 1997. This number decreased to 25% in 2006. Nebraska's observed restraint use for child passengers is at 93.2 % according to the Nebraska Office of Highway Safety.

The partnership between Safe Kids USA and General Motors is the longest running corporate/nonprofit partnership in history to address safety for children in and around vehicles. In 2004, Chevrolet became the lead brand in the relationship. Safe Kids has more than 600 local coalitions and chapters, staffed mostly by volunteers, who provide injury prevention programs to communities throughout the country free of charge.



Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among children ages 3 to 14, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. In 2005, 1,946 children ages 14 and under died and an estimated 234,000 were injured in crashes. However, studies show correctly used child safety seats are extremely effective, reducing the risk of death by as much as 71%. But nearly 73% of child restraints are not installed or used correctly. Half of children who die in crashes are completely unrestrained.

Safe Kids Buckle Up is a national program developed by Safe Kids USA and sponsored by the General Motors Foundation and Chevrolet to educate parents and caregivers about the importance of protecting children in and around vehicles at all times. Since 1997, the program has inspected one million car seats, donated approximately 365,000

seats to families in need and educated millions of adults and children through programs such as Spot the Tot, Never Leave Your Child Alone and the Automotive Safety Patch program.

Nebraska's Safe Kids Buckle Up program is proud of its many volunteers across the state who give their time to enhance the safety of children in and around motor vehicles. If you would like to join this staff of volunteers, contact Jessica Peterson at (402) 471-8749 or jessica.peterson@dhhs.ne.gov. To locate a fitting station or car seat check up event in your area, log on to www.safekidsnebraska.org and click on the event calendar link.

We're on the Web!
www.safekidsnebraska.org

Child pedestrian safety: A community approach

It takes only a minute for lives to change. Few news stories are as distressing as a child killed or injured while crossing the street or playing in a driveway. Yet, we live in a society that depends heavily on motor vehicle transportation. Between 1995 and 2004, the total number of children ages 14 and under killed as pedestrians decreased by 40 percent. However, pedestrian injury is still the second leading cause of injury-related death in the United States for children ages 5–14. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 583 child pedestrians were killed in 2004; 70 percent of these deaths were a result of an incident with a motor vehicle. In addition, more than 33,000 children were treated in emergency rooms in 2005 for pedestrian related injuries.

Children are mostly at risk to pedestrian injuries because they are exposed to traffic threats that exceed their cognitive, behavioral, physical and sensory abilities. As parents and caregivers, there are many ways to reduce a child's risk. Some recommendations for increasing safety include:

- Not letting children younger than 10 years of age cross the street alone,
- Not allowing children to play in the street, and teaching them to look both ways for danger at least twice before crossing the street.
- Wearing bright colors so they're more easily seen by drivers,
- Teaching them to walk on sidewalks,
- If there are no sidewalks, facing towards traffic can prevent injury.

200,000

DID YOU KNOW?

Each year in the United States, emergency departments treat more than 200,000 children ages 14 and younger for playground-related injuries (CDC, 2008)



What else can we do?

The downward trend in child pedestrian injuries shown is hopeful, but more needs to be done to protect children from injury as they walk play outside. A multifaceted approach which includes education, advocacy and engineering for safer pedestrian environments is necessary to continue the prevention of injuries and encourage more children to walk.

In 2000, Safe Kids Worldwide, with the support of FedEx, launched Safe Kids Walk this Way. This program addresses child pedestrian safety through community-based efforts that teach children to be safe pedestrians, adults to be safe drivers and advocates for environmental improvements in places where children walk or would like to be able to walk.

Working together in communities will prevent childhood injuries. Over the past eight years, Safe Kids' 600 coalitions and chapters in the United States, FedEx volunteers, parents, transportation and law enforcement officials, and other safety

advocates have banded together to heighten awareness of how walkable communities protect our children's health and safety.

Work with your local Safe Kids chapter or Safe Routes to School program to incorporate any of these research-based initiatives:

- Increase the visibility of child pedestrians through the use of retro-reflective materials and bright colors on jackets
- Establish and enforce lower motor vehicle speed limits, especially in residential areas and near schools where children walk or would like to be able to walk
- Support engineering measures to reduce pedestrian and motor vehicle injuries,
- Educate young drivers about the risks of being involved in pedestrian/motor vehicle crashes
- Adapt safety education and messages to groups who are at high risk for injury.

To find your local Safe Kids coalition or chapter to www.safekidsnebraska.org and click on Find Your Local Program.

Safe Kids Southeast

Safe Kids Southeast, a chapter of Safe Kids Nebraska Coalition, has extensive roots providing it with a solid foundation on which a strong future will be made. The chapter coordinator is Laura Osborne, a native and current resident of Auburn in Nemaha County. She founded what would later become the Safe Kids Southeast Chapter in 1999.

“That spring,” Laura says, “I was watching a program on television which featured Joe Colella discussing how his niece had died because her car seat had not been installed properly. At that time, my son was just two years old, and I buckled him into a car seat every day. So to find out that he could be hurt or killed simply because I hadn’t used his car seat correctly scared me half to death.

“The television program suggested that parents have nationally-certified child passenger safety technicians check their car seat installations to ensure their child’s safety. The next day, I set out to find one of these technicians. The closest one? At least one hour’s drive away. The people I met through these inquiries, however, helped me establish what we first called Nemaha County Traffic Safety. At that time, I found myself in the company of several people who wanted to help in the effort to keep kids safe from needless injuries and death on our roadways. Some of those founding members are still working with us today.

“Since 1999, our group has grown,” Laura says. “We began to take in more counties, we enlisted more volunteers, and we have been glad to have several more individuals become certified as CPS Techs. In the summer of 2007, we again added to our ranks. Last July a training was held in Auburn to certify individuals as CPS techs. In that class were four people from Gage County. They were a very enthusiastic group – so much so that we dubbed them the “Fab Four”! Among them was a truly special individual — Jeremy Wach.

“Jeremy was no stranger to causes like ours — he was involved in other public safety activities. One of them was his position as a volunteer fire fighter. Jeremy took time to talk to me during that July class about how Gage County could be more involved in the work of childhood injury

prevention. His enthusiasm, along with that of his classmates, helped propel us into adding Gage County as well as Johnson and Pawnee counties, into our coalition coverage area, then to apply for status as a Safe Kids Chapter. That application was made on October 5th, 2007.

“By the end of October, we were approved as a Safe Kids Chapter. We were poised to begin a new era in this work for southeast Nebraska’s children. But then, the worst possible news came on November 5th. Jeremy Wach died while fighting a fire in Wymore. Many of us in this coalition had the chance to know Jeremy for just a few months — but what a *privilege* that was for us! I know that in the future, when my willingness to continue doing public safety work is tested, tried and challenged, I will be inspired to continue because of Jeremy’s example. To honor his memory, our shirts display a special logo incorporating his technician certification number and angel’s wings and halo. We are thankful for Jeremy’s example — for his spirit of service — for his strength of character.

“We moved forward as a Safe Kids chapter, as Jeremy would want us to do, hosting our kickoff event in Auburn on February 12th of this year,” Laura continues. “We are very excited to have additional resources to help us continue with work we have already been doing in the past. Not only do we help caregivers with child passenger safety needs, we also provide education about pedestrian safety and bicycle safety.”

Safe Kids Southeast covers Nemaha, Richardson, Otoe, Johnson, Gage and Pawnee counties. They continue to develop stronger partnerships with local businesses, organizations and individuals while seeking out new partnerships at the same time.

Since 1999, the group has assisted more than 1,000 children become safely secured in motor vehicles. Their message about the importance of bike helmets hit home on May 31st of this year when Laura’s own son, Josh Osborne, was saved by his bicycle helmet.

“Josh was riding his bicycle around a residential area of Auburn when he crashed,” Laura says. “He received some severe cuts and bruises and broke off half of one front tooth when he crashed. We felt very lucky when we inspected his helmet. It was damaged and cracked! Since he was wearing it, he did not have to undergo a head CT scan and we were told we could observe him at home and avoid an emergency room visit all together. Just 12 days later, Josh made me very proud by taking his crashed helmet to a group of 4-H members to discuss the importance of bicycle safety! His injuries are almost completely healed now and he is willing to use his story to help make a difference for others.”

The Safe Kids Southeast Chapter can be reached by calling the Nemaha County Sheriff’s Department at (402) 274-3139 or by e-mailing Laura Osborne at carseatsbylaura@yahoo.com.



Hot Weather and Vehicles can be a Deadly Combination for Kids

As temperatures heat up, children are at a serious risk for heat stroke when left alone even for a few minutes in a closed vehicle. Approximately 365 children across the United States have died from heatstroke caused by being left or trapped in a vehicle over the past decade.

Heat is much more dangerous to children than it is to adults. When left in a hot vehicle, a young child's core body temperature may increase three to five times faster than that of an adult. This could cause permanent injury or even death. Heat stroke occurs when the core body temperature reaches 104 degrees Fahrenheit. A core body temperature of 107 degrees Fahrenheit is considered lethal.

The inside of a vehicle can rise 19 degrees above the outside temperature in just 10

minutes. After an hour, the temperature inside and outside of a vehicle can differ by 45 degrees or more—even if the window is left open a crack.

According to research conducted by San Francisco State University, even with relatively cool temperatures outside—70 degrees—the inside of a car can reach a dangerous temperature in just minutes. The research also revealed that more than half of these children were accidentally left behind in a closed, parked car by parents or caregivers while nearly a third of these children were trapped while playing in a vehicle unattended. Sadly, one in five children who died were intentionally left in the vehicle by an adult.

Safe Kids Nebraska suggests these tips for parents and caregivers:

- Teach children not to play in, on or around vehicles.
- Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle, even with the window slightly open.
- Always lock a vehicle's doors and trunk—especially at home. Keep keys and remote entry devices out of children's reach.
- Place something that you'll need at your next stop—such as a purse, a lunch, gym bag or briefcase—on the floor of the backseat where the child is sitting. This simple act could help prevent you from accidentally forgetting a child.



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