

Pedestrian Safety

Kidsafe SA Inc. | June 2019

Walking is an important part of children's lives. It is important for their health and fitness, and their ability to get around their community independently. Being a pedestrian however can be dangerous, especially for children who have not yet developed the skills to navigate the road safely.

Here are some reasons why children are at risk:

Child's Height

As children are small it can be difficult for drivers to see them, and for children to see over objects which may be blocking their view of moving traffic.

Brain development

As children's brains are still developing they may not have a full understanding of the dangers around them, particularly as a pedestrian. This lack of understanding often results in children imitating inappropriate behaviors and forgetting about the traffic around them. Children may also have difficulty identifying where sounds are coming from and judging speed, this can make it challenging to make decisions.

Experience with Traffic

As children have had little experience with traffic, it can be difficult for them to make 'safe' decisions. Due to their lack of experience they may not realise how things work as either a driver or pedestrian. For example, younger children may not realise that they may be able to see the car, but the driver may not be able to see them e.g. when a vehicle is reversing out of a driveway.

Preventing Pedestrian Injuries

It is important for parents and carers to be good role models, to explain the road rules to children and supervise children when near traffic. Here are some guidelines to help keep children safe as pedestrians:

- Hold your child's hand when near traffic, especially when crossing the road.
- Teach children to use the 'safety door' to get in and out of cars. This is the door on the kerb side behind the passenger seat.
- Teach children to use footpaths, but make sure they know to watch out for cars when passing or crossing a driveway.
- Explain words like "fast", "slow", "near" and "far".



- Teach children to "Stop, Look, Listen and Think" before crossing the road and make sure to explain what this means.
- Teach children about safe places to cross the road including crosswalks and traffic lights.
- Talk about signs and explain what they mean.
- Make sure children wear clothes that are easy to see when out and about.

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