

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN MOTOR VEHICLES

CHILD RESTRAINT INFORMATION SESSIONS FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES



On average, six children under the age of eight years are killed, and 342 are injured as passengers in vehicles on Victorian roads each year.

Previous research has shown that children from families who report speaking a language other than English at home, in a country where English is the dominant language, are at greater risk of not using the right type of restraint and/or of not using the restraint correctly.

Neuroscience Research Australia Research Fellow Dr Julie Brown conducted research to explore barriers to optimal child restraint usage among families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in NSW. The research involved conducting 11 focus groups with families from a range of CALD communities, including Arabic, Assyrian, Cantonese, Mandarin, Turkish and Vietnamese.

The research found that knowledge gaps in the CALD communities studied are similar to those reported in other population groups. Therefore, key messages relating to child restraints and booster seats should be the same for all families. However, the research also revealed that there is a need to ensure access to *detailed* information using targeted delivery strategies and relevant community languages for CALD groups. In addition, practical constraints

such as the cost of child restraints, family size and vehicle size may be particularly important in some CALD communities.

Dr Brown recently spoke with ELAA about the research. *"We've found a specific increase in risk in CALD communities of not using the most appropriate restraint for the child's size and/or using it incorrectly. All parents want to protect their children but not all know how best to do this when travelling in a motor vehicle. For parents to ensure their children are optimally restrained and need to know more detail than that it is illegal not to use restraints. Everyone needs detailed information and members of CALD communities are not always getting access to this. These sessions are really important as it's exactly what they're missing out on at the moment".*

Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) has incorporated the research findings into the interactive information sessions it offers to CALD communities throughout Victoria, as part of the VicRoads funded Starting Out Safely program.

The intention of the child restraint and booster seat information sessions is to educate parents and carers from CALD communities about Victoria's child restraint road rules and provide guidance on how to keep children safe in motor vehicles.

Early Learning Association Australia CEO, Emma King, said the free information sessions have been specifically developed for newly arrived parents and carers.

"Our education sessions are designed and delivered to ensure that people leave with an understanding of how important it is to install and use restraints correctly. We also use the assistance of interpreters when required," Ms King said.

"We find that people come away with a real enthusiasm to ensure they're doing the right thing. We all recognise that we want to keep our children safe and we need to give CALD communities the information to do that," Ms King said.

ELAA has been delivering child restraint information sessions for organisations such as AMES, Diversitat and Newhope Foundation as well as working with Maternal Child Health nurses to provide sessions through CALD playgroups. Following a recent information session, Mehdi Hossini, Driver Training Educator at Diversitat, said that participants "mentioned that that was the first time they had this kind of lesson... and really understood the importance of the child restraint in terms of age and heights".

For more information on these sessions, contact Early Learning Association Australia on 03 9489 3500 or email rse@elaa.org.au

