

EXCELLENCE IN ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION IN ACTION

The annual Starting Out Safely Road Safety Education Award is sponsored by VicRoads and is awarded, each year, during the (Together We Grow) Early Childhood Education Conference hosted by ELAA and Gowrie Victoria.

The Award seeks to recognise the achievements of early childhood services and educators who provide Road Safety Education. The winning service receives \$500 together with a Road Safety Education pack full of great resources.

The 2017 *Starting Out Safely* Road Safety Education Award was awarded to Bonbeach Preschool.

“We take road safety extremely seriously in our community and this is reflected in the program at Bonbeach Preschool,” says Bonbeach Preschool Committee Chairperson, Michael Wilson.

In winning the Award, Bonbeach Preschool demonstrated a strong commitment to embedding road safety education into their curriculum through:

- engaging in meaningful conversations with adults and children about safety through daily conversations; road safety newsletter articles that include content from the childroadsafety website; and the promotion of vehicle child restraint information for families
- advocating for clearer road markings and a one-way system in the car park shared with Bonbeach Primary School which has

led to a much safer experience for children and families at drop-off and pick-up

- taking children on regular walking excursions in the local community – using the Stop! Look! Listen! Think! principles
- creating resources and equipment to support ongoing road safety education at the service
- inviting a crossing supervisor to the kindergarten to discuss road safety with the children
- undertaking the *Starting Out Safely* Road Safety Professional Development session and running a ThingleToodle session at the Kindergarten.

Bonbeach Preschool Director, Emily Malone, says “several of our preschool educators (including myself) have attended the *Starting Out Safely* professional development training and this has allowed us to confidently imbed road safety into our programs. At Bonbeach, road safety education is a community effort and we enlist the support of parents and guardians to attend community walks with the children ... this is their own neighbourhood and they are building on the skills they have learnt from their families”.

Bonbeach’s passion for including RSE in their program has led them to innovate and improvise in order to keep costs manageable. “Great pride is taken in recreating real-life traffic scenarios for our children to practice being safe. Our own money has been spent on resources and equipment to design and make our own petrol bowser, train tracks, railway crossing etc. In fact, the local council (City of Kingston) saw the examples of our ‘homemade’ props and used this as inspiration to build even better equipment for the council’s own use.”

Bonbeach Preschool is also fortunate in that it is co-located with Bonbeach Primary School. “This allows us to influence not only the preschool’s families but the larger community that is Bonbeach Primary School and Preschool,” says Michael. “As a parent with a child at each service, I’m well placed to see how Road Safety Education is a part of the children’s learning from three-year-old preschool through to Grade 6.”

“We look forward to spending our prize on new and updated equipment to continue teaching our children the importance of road safety,” says Emily Malone. “The road safety education pack will be a highly-valued resource which we will use to build on our already strong focus on road safety and being a safe pedestrian.”

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 – Emily Malone, Bonbeach Preschool Director



Bonbeach Preschool

Operating since 1995, Bonbeach Preschool is co-located and integrated with Bonbeach Primary School, although maintains a separate entrance to the Primary School and a separate outdoor play area. The Preschool runs two three-year-old groups and two four-year-old groups catering to approximately 92 children and families. Most of these children follow onto the adjoining Bonbeach Primary School and all preschool children take part in whole school events. They also participate in the transition program co-ordinated by the preschool educators and Prep teachers, offering a smooth transition into their first year of school.

The Starting Out Safely Program

VicRoads has a long history of supporting road safety education in the pre-school years, dating as far back as 1989 when the *Starting Out Safely* program was first introduced. In 2011 VicRoads funded ELAA to deliver *Starting Out Safely* to prepare children to become safer road users, and support them to reach their full potential as active and responsible members of the community.

The program has since evolved to become one of the most comprehensive early childhood road safety education programs in Australia and is unique in that the content has been created to align with the NQS and VEYLDF, and is also delivered by early childhood experts.

Since 2011, *Starting Out Safely* has reached thousands of children and educators across Victoria through:

- professional development in road safety education for early childhood educators and tertiary students
- child restraint and booster-seat education sessions to new parents, including special sessions for culturally and linguistically diverse communities and the development of a new video resource on the safe transportation of children in cars with the assistance of VicRoads, TAC and the Royal Children's Hospital
- ThingleToodle incursions to long day care and kindergarten programs; and
- advocating for the value of early childhood road safety education with State and Federal policy makers.

To find out more about a *Starting Out Safely* Professional Development session go to childroadsafety.org.au or contact the ELAA RSE team at rse@elaa.org.au