



## Starting Out Safely

## Starting Out Safely Road Safety Educator Resource

### National Practice: Intentional teaching

Engage in intentional teaching which extends and expands children's learning about road safety.



Purposeful support from adults enriches children's learning. When describing intentional teaching as deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful, it is important to recognise that rather than a structured or formal teaching strategy, intentional teaching occurs every day through inviting learning spaces, in respectful and emotionally nurturing environments, and in the uninterrupted time educators provide for children to play.

**Road safety education is reinforced when educators make deliberate decisions to include materials/resources and teach specific skills that support children to become safer road users.**

To achieve this, educators require knowledge of road safety strategies as well as an understanding of children's strengths, abilities, interests, past experiences and dispositions. Educators use this understanding to intentionally include road safety in their curriculums.



### Connections

#### Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

"Intentional teaching involves educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions. Intentional teaching is the opposite of teaching by rote or continuing with traditions simply because things have 'always' been done that way" (*Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, 2009, p.45*).

#### National Quality Standard

##### Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice

1.2.2: Educators respond to children's ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child's learning.

##### Quality Area 5: Relationships with children

5.1.2: Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.



## Road safety education in practice

**Case Study 1:** Intentional teaching is an effective way to extend children’s learning about road safety. As a Family Day Care (FDC) educator greeted one of her regular families, she was bombarded with stories of the weekend’s events from enthusiastic three-year-old twins. Their parent joined in and explained that they had been involved in a small crash in the car park of the shopping centre. Everyone was safe but it was unnerving and had since been the focus of much of the family’s conversations.

The educator took the opportunity presented by the children’s interest to intentionally explore the impact of the incident. A road mat, car, lego people and blocks provided a back drop to talk with the children about what had happened in the car park. The educator learned that the twins and their baby brother were in the right child restraints for their size and their mother was wearing a seatbelt, and that this kept them safe when they had the crash.

The conversation continued later that day when the FDC educator took the children by car to the library. As they got into the car, the educator asked the children what they needed to do to keep safe. The children discussed the importance of sitting in your

child restraint and keeping your arms in the harness. The educator then spoke about the importance of her role in checking that the children were secured correctly in their child restraints. This conversation built on the discussion earlier in the day, reinforcing the children’s learning about being safe passengers.

**Case Study 2:** Being intentional can also extend to the families who use early childhood services. The team of educators at a newly-built integrated service next door to a school identified that the car park/drop-off area was creating problems, especially for families with young children in prams. The design and layout meant that entrances were hard to navigate and the car park was extremely busy at the beginning and end of each day.

Having noticed and discussed that this was an issue for children’s safe arrival at the service, the team made deliberate and thoughtful efforts to discuss the issue with parents and elicit their ideas for how they might arrive and use the car park more safely. Their ongoing intentional action on this issue resulted in educators providing clearer parent information, being present in the car park to give directions and taking children out into the car park with their families, where possible, to learn more about how to keep safe in that environment.



## Practice suggestions

### **Being intentional is about educators being thoughtful, deliberate and purposeful.**

The following ideas can help strengthen this practice.

- Engage in authentic, meaningful conversations with children that purposefully include key road safety concepts and vocabulary. The following are some open-ended questions to use when talking to children about road safety. You might also develop additional questions.
  - How did you get here today?
  - Why do you sit in a booster seat or use a child restraint in the car?
  - Can you think of any other ways you could get to preschool?
  - How will you know when it’s safe to cross the road?
  - What do we look for when we cross the road together?
  - What sounds are we listening for when crossing the road?
  - I wonder what might happen if I didn’t wear a helmet?
- Plan experiences that offer children an opportunity to explore concepts related to being a safe road user e.g. games that feature learning about spatial relations (inside/outside, up/down), colour, shape, size and number.
- Provide materials that deliberately invite children to think about becoming safer road users e.g. hang posters displaying appropriate child restraints/booster seats, supply seatbelts and other props for dramatic play and create a storage space for bicycle helmets. Choose storybooks that provide an opportunity to discuss road safety.
- Invite older children to be involved in helping to plan excursions for themselves and younger peers where appropriate, and use opportunities in this planning to discuss road safety issues and solutions.
- Encourage children to be active in advocating for their own safety. Children could discuss safety issues/incidents within their own community and decide how to take action to keep themselves and the people they know safe. Actions may include writing to the local government or making signage for their street.
- Educators might invite children to engage in the risk assessment process before venturing out of the service. Children could use discussion, images and props to identify what to be mindful of and how to keep safe.