

Many car parks are effectively 'shared zones' with the balance in favour of cars instead of pedestrians.

Car parks can be especially dangerous places for young children. Cars are going in all directions and drivers can be concentrating on getting that perfect car spot. They often don't have clearly marked walking areas and you often have to walk behind cars to get to where you are going. Young children, being small, are often hard to see. So, it is vital that they are supervised in car parks.

Getting out of the car children should:

- wait for an adult to get strollers, babies, or toddlers out of the car first
- wait for an adult to let them out of the car
- stand next to the car and wait for an adult's instructions
- walk through the car park holding an adult's hand or a part of their clothing, pram, trolley or shopping bag
- keep looking and listening for cars moving in and out of parking bays.

Getting into the car children should:

- wait beside the car until an adult opens the door
- be put in the car before toddlers, babies, shopping and strollers.

Parents and educators can talk to children about car parks and discuss:

- who gets in and out of the car first
- places where it is safer for pedestrians to walk
- the people and traffic that use the car park (e.g. shoppers, trolley collectors, couriers, trucks, motorbikes, cars)
- words that describe parts of the car park (e.g. parking bay, lane, kerb, parking meter, trolley return)
- and watch how cars drive in and out of parking bays
- why drivers find it difficult to see young children walking alone.

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How can educators work with families and children to make them safer in car parks?

You can use the enrolment interview process with families to alert them to any particular traffic hazards at and around the service (tricky intersection or busy car park) and offer advice on how to manage these safely. You can also use this as an opportunity to discuss the benefits of walking with children to the service. Educators can discuss with families the behaviour that is expected of them to help keep their children safe. This includes issues like role modelling good road safety practices, never ever leaving children unattended in the car and transporting children in the right car seat for their size.

You can consider an excursion for the children to your car park, so you can talk to them about what happens in the car park and how they can keep safe. It goes without saying, don't do this when the car park is full and busy.

It may also be useful to conduct an inspection of your car park to consider any design flaws or areas of improvement that may be required. Is there a clearly marked safe route for pedestrians to your service? Is there vegetation that obstructs the line of sight of drivers? Are there issues with traffic flow?

