

Road Safety Education Play Mat



As part of the Starting Out Safely Program, the Road Safety Education Play Mat is a practical tool to embed learning about Road Safety into early years curriculum.

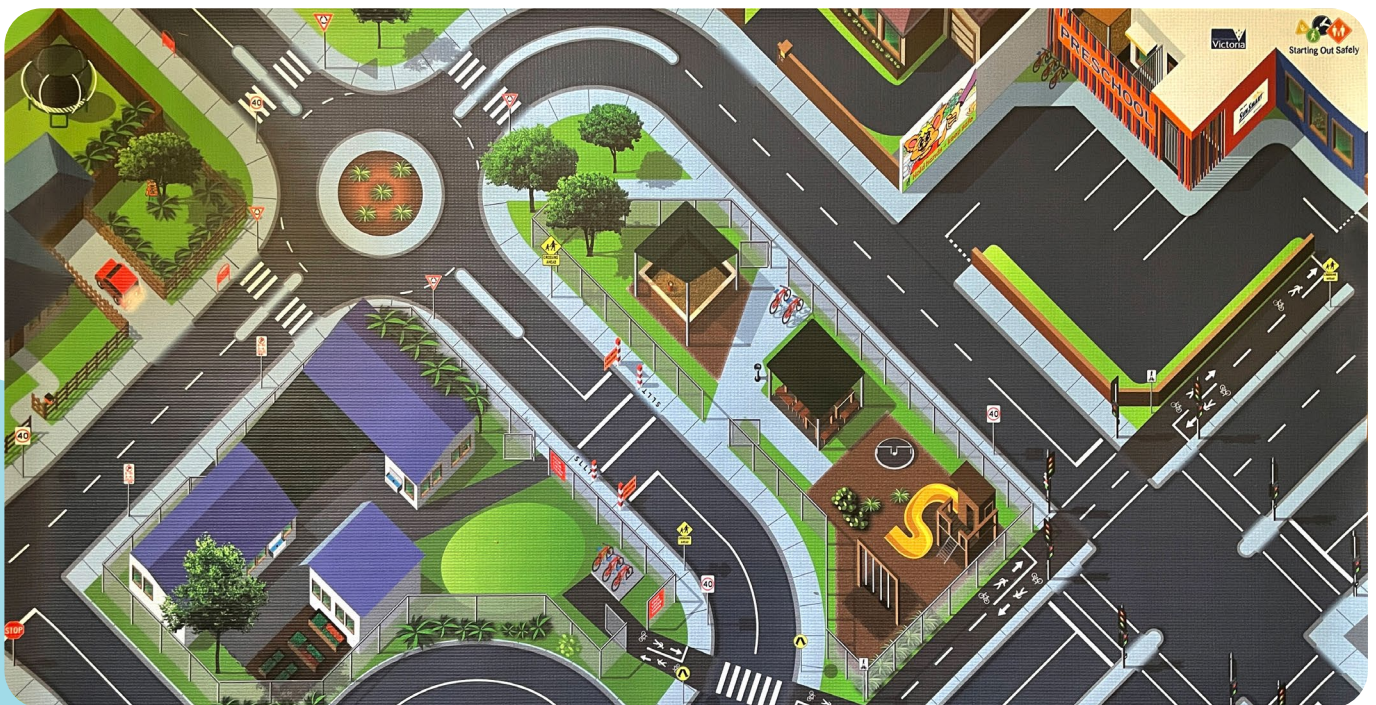
The Road Safety Mat is designed to be used alongside the [Road Safety Educator Resource](#) and the [Road Safety Education at Home Resource](#) to support educators to extend children's development of skills, knowledge, understandings, behaviours and attitudes that assist children to be safer on our roads.

Most suitable for use by children over 3 years old, due to the scale of the materials needed to use the play mat, the mat features Victorian road features and signage in a suburban Victorian streetscape. The 120cm x 80cm vinyl mat is designed to be used on the floor, at platform level or rectangular table.

The mat is suitable for use in all Early Years education and care settings including Kindergarten, Long Day Care, Out of School Hours Care, Family Day Care, and the Early Years of Primary School.

While the road mat can be used as a play space on its own, it is encouraged that educators integrate the mat into existing play spaces such as construction and block areas and creative arts spaces.

Continuous provision of the road safety mat and other road safety resources such as ([Road Safety Education at Home Resource](#) and [Road Sign Kit](#)) along with educator engagement provides daily opportunities to develop skills, knowledge, understandings, behaviours, and attitudes that assist children to be safer on our roads.



For more information: www.childroadsafety.org.au

Planning for Road Safety Education using the play mat

ROAD SAFETY LEARNING GOALS

Children become safer road users when educators intentionally plan to support and extend learning in one of the following domains.

Skills

- > Being able to stop
- > Listening
- > Gross motor skills
- > Motor planning skills
- > Self-regulation

Understanding

- > Why we want to be safe and why it's important to our community
- > Cause and effect
- > Speed > Distance
- > Spatial relations
- > Consequences

Knowledge

- > The language and vocabulary of road safety
- > What happens
- > Conceptual

Attitude

- > Self-respect
- > Taking care
- > Respect for others
- > Awareness

The Planning Cycle from the RSE Educator Resource will help you develop measurable goals for learning and link them to all aspects of your curriculum through intentional teaching.

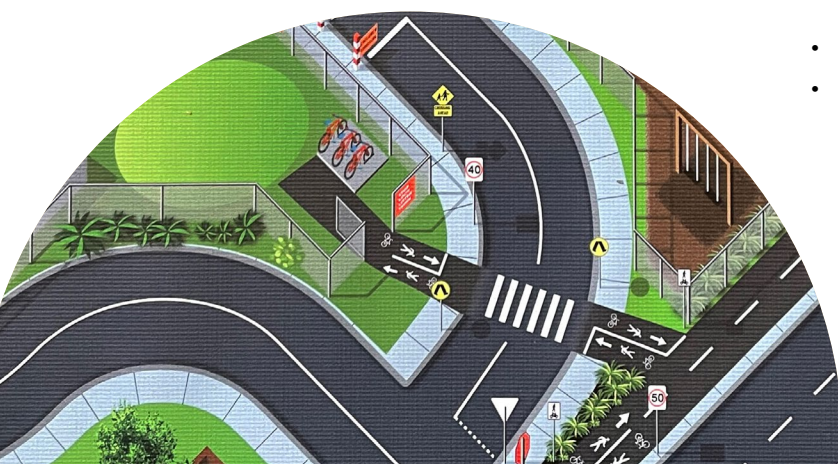
For example: in a primary school, discussing the speed limits on the road mat can be linked to 'counting in 10s,' while discussing the concepts of 'stop and go' with very young children link to communication and self-regulation development, as well as supporting children's learning about road safety concepts.

Using the RSE Educator Resource reflection questions (p3) or the RSE Curriculum Tool from the '[Embedding Road Safety into Curriculum](#)' PL session to identify your Road Safety goal or intention before introducing the road mat will ensure all educators are aware of the current road safety challenges and learning intentions for your learning community. These will influence the discussions, explicit and incidental teaching strategies used by educators.

Depending on your learning intentions the play mat offers many opportunities for discussions, storytelling and providing provocations.

When introducing the mat talk to the children about the topography whilst engaging with the children

- What do you see?
- What landmarks are familiar? Different?
- Does this place look like our community? Why? Why not?
- What is the safest way for this family to get to the playground from their house? What makes you say that?
- Where should I park my car when I go to the shops?
- Why do you think the speed limit is different in these two places?





Community Road Safety Challenges

- Relevant to the road safety messages that are important to your community can be addressed using social stories and the road mat. For example: wearing helmets, holding hands to cross the road or the use of child car seats. The mat can be used for story telling for small or large groups of children, imaginative play and construction.

Example: wearing a helmet when bike, scooter, and skate riding.

When setting up the Road Safety Education Play Mat: place cars, people in situations that invite conversation about safe road use. In this example the police officer is speaking to the person riding a bike.

*Why might they be speaking to the police officer?
(To get directions, report an issue?)*

Perhaps they were stopped for a reason?

Why might the police officer be worried about the person riding their bike?

What is the safety issue?

What could the person do to be safer?

*What is the role of the police officer?
(Ensuring people use the road safely, enforcing rules)
what might happen here? Why?*



Using the road mat – practical considerations

- Ensure the vehicles and people used fit on the roads and footpaths. This is important when discussing how to position yourself in traffic. Small metal cars, vehicles and people from small construction sets and some brands of small wooden cars will all work. You could also make your own vehicles from small boxes.
- Consider using a platform or low table without chairs to enable children to move around the mat freely if required.
- Ensure there is plenty of space to move around the mat – children often like to lie on their stomachs to play with transport materials – this ‘tummy time’ can be calming for children and is a great way to strengthen core muscles, so this should be encouraged and provided for in terms of space around the mat if it is on the floor.

What if we don't have the Road Safety Education Play Mat?

As an alternative to or extension of using the play mat you can:

- Use a generic road play mat. These are useful but will often lack the detail of the Road Safety Education Play Mat and the signage, road markings etc will not usually be based on Victorian roads. You can use these mats and add your own detailed road signs, road markings using masking tape and hand made signs.
- Create your own road mat at a scale that fits the resources you have – (eg dolls house dolls and vehicles, large construction set vehicles or wooden train tracks). The Road Safety Education at Home Resource ‘[Map Making](#)’ will give you some tips on how to get started with this.



Extension Ideas

Creating your own resources

- Print out a map of your local area and compare it to the road mat. What is different? The same? Document the children's thoughts using a mind map or Venn diagram.
- Create an extension of the mat with the children – this could be done by placing the mat on one table and a large sheet of cardboard on the table next to it, to create your own streetscape.
- Create more roads, train tracks and other landmarks with children and use them as 'loose parts' in your construction/ block area. Roads can be made from painted cardboard boxes, old denim jeans, felt or other upcycled materials.
- Use the Educator Resource and the videos from the [RSE Inquiry Projects](#) to be inspired by how others teach Road Safety Education in their services.

Language acquisition and beginner reading

The road mat provides endless opportunities for developing children's vocabulary. Interesting words that may not be used in everyday language can be introduced to children through play situations. Using the play mat as a resource to support children's creative writing in the early years of primary school will also support the development of descriptive text, positional language, and plot development. The downloadable road safety books and videos of the books being read <https://childroadsafety.org.au/educators/road-safety-books/> are also great resources to use in a variety of ways and settings.

You might ask children to locate particular signage (can you find a Stop sign?) and ask what it means, ask children to describe what cars/people should do when they see these signs.

Some examples of road safety vocabulary:

- pavement and footpath (synonyms)
- pedestrian or zebra crossing (synonyms)
- roundabout
- rail crossing, traffic lights,
- kerb
- driveway
- carpark
- on, beside, over, behind, next to, after, before, high, low, around (positional language)
- fast, slow, stopped, moving
- lush green grass, tall trees, huge building (descriptive words)
- safety door, tram zone, shared path (bikes and walking)



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