

ThingleToodle is coming to visit...



Thank you for hosting a ThingleToodle (TT) education session at your service.

To make the most of the session educators and staff should read the following information about the Starting Out Safely program and preparing for the session.

Starting Out Safely, funded by the Transport Accident Commission (TAC), is Victoria's early childhood road safety education program. The program is about children, parents, carers and early childhood educators working together to guide children's learning in *being* and *becoming* safe and independent road users.

The TT education sessions, which are part of the Starting Out Safely program, are fun and engaging visits developed especially for preschool children to enhance their understanding and awareness of road safety. The TT session is one of many opportunities to include road safety education in the early learning curriculum.



How will children benefit from road safety education?

Road safety education during early childhood and the school years plays an important role in laying the foundations for safe road use throughout life and supporting children to reach their full potential as active and responsible citizens. Educators can play a vital part in helping to develop safe road use behaviours and attitudes of children. You can also support the important role that parents and carers play in helping their children to be safe in traffic and learn about road safety.

Working collaboratively with families to help children become safe and responsible road users aligns with the learning outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). With the introduction of the National Quality Standard (NQS), all early childhood services may now be assessed on how road safety education and active transport initiatives are incorporated into the program.

Reference: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). (2012). A picture of Australia's children 2012 (Cat No. PHE 167). Canberra, Australia: AIHW.

Road trauma is one of the leading causes of death among young children aged 1-14 (AIHW, 2012). Young children are at risk as passengers in motor vehicles, as pedestrians and as cyclists. They are particularly vulnerable because of their small size and the fact that their cognitive and perceptual skills are still developing.



Road trauma is one of the leading causes of death among young Australians

(AIHW 2012)

Making road safety education part of everyday learning

The TT education sessions, as part of the Starting Out Safely program, provides one road safety education learning opportunity. For ideas to build on children's understanding about road safety, refer to the resources available at www.childroadsafety.org.au.

As an educator, you can contribute to making children safer road users by:

- 1 embedding road safety education in the curriculum in line with the *National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education**
- 2 ensuring a road safety education and active transport policy is in place at your service
- 3 ensuring children wear bicycle helmets where bicycles or wheeled toys are used as part of the program
- 4 adopting safe transport practices when children are participating in excursions or outings
- 5 informing and encouraging parents and carers to be proactive road safety role models for their children by adopting and promoting safe road user behaviours.

* The National Practices, developed by early childhood education and road safety experts across Australia and New Zealand, include eight practices aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework (see attached document).





We encourage educators to promote the road safety visit to parents and carers through your newsletters and social media. The www.childroadsafety.org.au site contains a TT tab with links to the previsit information, videos of the Professor and TT and songs to download.

Starting Out Safely is a great resource to share with families. There is even a road safety education at home resource for you to use and share with parents and carers. <https://childroadsafety.org.au/educators/remote-learning-resources/>

On the day of the visit

The TT session will run for approximately 35 minutes – it is a fun and interactive scripted performance involving a special visit from TT, our road safety mascot, and friend, Professor Eric Speriment.

The facilitator (aka Professor Eric or Erica Speriment) will arrive early to ask the educator and staff about the children, talk about how the session will run and to set-up the performance space.

Here is a list of things that you need to prepare for the TT session.

1. Invite families

The TT sessions and early childhood road safety education is all about working together to guide children in being and becoming safe road users, so we welcome families and carers to the session if you would like to invite them.

2. Organise a performance space

Please clear a space, which can be indoors or outdoors depending on the weather, that is large enough for two performers to move freely at the front. The space should comfortably accommodate all the children attending the performance to be seated (on the floor or chairs).

3. Supervise children during the performance and note child staff ratios

The TT session naturally creates great excitement amongst the children, and we ask that you actively supervise children throughout the session so that everyone can enjoy the performance and to ensure the safety and well-being of all present. Prior to commencement of session please make the presenter aware of any children that may not wish to engage or may find the session overwhelming. Our presenters are experienced children's performers and will be responsive to the needs of all children.

Please note that the facilitator delivering the TT session should not be considered part of your service's child staff ratio. It is important that the number of staff present is as per your compliance requirements with the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Please contact ELAA on email rse@elaa.org.au if you have any problems with organising any of the above, or have any questions about the session.



Practice suggestions to make the most of the TT session

The TT education session will cover some key road safety education concepts which some children may be familiar with through the ThingleToodle advertising campaigns. These include:

- holding hands with an adult before crossing the road
- Stop! Look! Listen! Think! before crossing the road
- the importance of using child restraints or booster seats correctly
- the importance of wearing a bicycle helmet when riding.

The TT session should be viewed as one of many opportunities to include road safety education in the early learning curriculum. You may like to use some of the following practice ideas before and after the TT session.

The TT songs

During the performance the children will be asked to sing-along with the TT road safety songs. You may like to practise these with the children prior to our visit. <https://childroadsafety.org.au/thingle-toodle/video/>
<https://childroadsafety.org.au/parents/road-safety-songs/>



For more practice ideas go to childroadsafety.org.au or elaa.org.au.

Sharing stories

Engage in meaningful conversations with children that purposefully include key road safety concepts, for example; How did you get here today? Why do you sit in a booster seat in the car? How will you know when it's safe to cross the roads? I wonder what might happen if I didn't wear a helmet?

Choose story books that provide an opportunity to discuss road safety with children. The TAC has a number of story books, such as *Click Clack* and *That's the sound the street makes*, Available for download via:

<https://childroadsafety.org.au/educators/road-safety-books/>.

Create learning environments conducive to road safety education

Imaginative learning environments can be created to enhance children's learning about road safety. For example: encourage children to set-up road crossing situations, provide small cars, bicycles and scooters in imaginative play areas and provide dress-ups for a variety of road safety related occupations such as police officers or crossing supervisors.

Visit places in your local community

Neighbourhood walks, where families can be included, give children and their families the opportunity to connect with their community while learning about road safety. Children can practise crossing roads safely, learn the importance of holding hands with an adult near roads and what to look out for when preparing to cross roads.

Resources for educators

To download the National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education or for more information go to:

www.childroadsafety.org.au or
www.carseatssavelives.com.au

Please visit:

<https://childroadsafety.org.au/information-resources-educators/>



ELAA delivers Victoria's early childhood road safety education program, Starting Out Safely, on behalf of the TAC. Contact the RSE team on (03) 9411 4116 or email rse@elaa.org.au