

NATIONAL APPROACH TO ROAD SAFETY

NEW NATIONAL PRACTICES PROVIDE EDUCATORS WITH AN IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY TO REDUCE CHILDREN'S ROAD TRAUMA, WRITES NICOLE PILSWORTH.

After such significant change in the early childhood sector it is great to see that other agencies, with children's safety and wellbeing as a focus, have developed tools to support curriculum decision making for early childhood educators.

The *National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education* have been developed by early childhood education and road safety experts across Australia and New Zealand.

The eight national practices are based on research and are aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

The new practices provide early childhood educators with an important opportunity for reducing road trauma in children.

Their significant focus on family involvement reinforces the shared role that educators and families play in developing children's capacity to be safe road users.

There are many different points within an early childhood curriculum where this shared responsibility can be developed and implemented.

Research shows that if children are exposed to a learning environment that merely focuses upon teaching the road safety rules, they are unlikely to be able to implement them in a "real world" situation.

However, if these rules are coupled with a learning environment that promotes practical implementation then it is more likely to be effective.

The eight national practices for early childhood road safety education are:

- Recognise that children's learning is integrated and interconnected when making curriculum decisions about road safety education.
- Deliver road safety education which is responsive to individual children and extends children's strengths, knowledge and interests.
- Through play-based learning seek opportunities to address road safety

in a way that expands children's thinking and encourages problem solving.

- Engage in intentional teaching which extends and expands children's learning about road safety.
- Provide opportunities in the learning environment, including the local community, for safe and meaningful interaction with children, parents and carers about road safety.
- Implement road safety education that is culturally relevant for the diversity of children, their families and the community.
- Together with children and families reflect on each child's learning and application of road safety to plan for future learning.

Nicole Pilsworth is an early childhood consultant and KPV Board member.

For information about free road safety education workshops contact KPV on (03) 9489 3500 or rse@kpv.org.au

Information about the national practices is available at the VicRoads website www.vicroads.vic.gov.au