



RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE IN ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION

The staff and Committee of Management at Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre in Camberwell believe in being active and visible in the community and keeping their children safe through, not only supervision, but through education that equips them with self protection skills for life.

It was through this approach, plus a multi-faceted Road Safety Education program, that Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre was chosen to be the 2018 *Starting Out Safely* Road Safety Education Award winner at this year's Early Childhood Education Conference.

"The *Starting Out Safely* Professional Development inspired us to make additions and changes to our practices and approaches to informing both children and families," said Through Road Early Childhood Teacher, Poppy Woodhouse.

However those "additions and changes" were also inspired by very practical considerations says Poppy, "We are in a fortunate location – on a street with a lovely community and within walking distance to local parks, aged care services

and schools – however, we are also near two major busy roads, tramlines, train stations/crossings and unsigned laneways".

To address the road safety education needs relevant to their service, Through Road developed a strategy that focused on three key areas:

- prioritising resources and teaching that fosters conversation and awareness of road safety among children
- making the most of external resources within the community
- using regular excursions as opportunities to find 'teachable moments'.

In addition to car sets and wooden road signage kits, Poppy Woodhouse says her service invested in "quality location-specific resources such as wooden models of Melbourne trams so educators could scaffold learning around the specific hazards of the children's world". Poppy notes that staff also encouraged the children to express their knowledge and experience as passengers in vehicles during play. Staff would note the children's comments and responses during these times and use those observations to inform further teaching opportunities and communication with families.

The centre also looked outside its boundaries for resources and sources of inspiration including watching videos such as 'Stop. Look. Listen. Think' and 'King of the Road'; visits from the Police; and talking about the role of crossing supervisors in keeping children safe. "We also find the ThingleToodle road safety incursion is a great way to engage the children in a fun, and highly memorable way, whilst providing us with new resources in the form of songs and activities," said Poppy.

Poppy says the centre also makes the most of the opportunities presented by excursions into the local community. "On our way to our regular Bush Kinder sessions we pass by a local mechanic. We can look in at their work and see damaged cars being repaired. Children hypothesise what might have happened to cause accidents; how drivers or people may not have been safe and we have observed the children incorporating their experiences from the police visits and mechanic into their play."

ELAA congratulates the children, staff, and committee at Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre on winning the 2018 *Starting Out Safely* Road Safety Education Award.



Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre.

Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre is a not-for-profit, 44-place long day care centre in Camberwell, Victoria. The centre is community based, and overseen by a parent committee of management. At its last assessment, Through Road received an overall rating of Exceeding National Quality Service in all areas, under the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care.

The program has been developed through evidence based research, in collaboration with early childhood experts.

Want a Road Safety Education program like Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre? ELAA can help you.

ELAA has delivered the *Starting Out Safely* Road Safety Education Program on behalf of Vic Roads since 2011.

The program has been developed through evidence based research, in collaboration with early childhood experts. It works with children, parents, carers and early childhood educators to guide children's learning in being and becoming safe, independent road users.

The program differs from other Australian states in that it takes a holistic approach to Road Safety Education. It not only reaches out directly to children (over 75000) through dedicated 'ThingleToodle' sessions at their preschool and care centres, but also provides professional development for early childhood educators. This equips educators to prepare children for the road safety sessions and to embed ongoing Road Safety Education in centres.

The *Starting Out Safely* program website childroadsafety.org.au has plenty of resources to help you develop a best-practice Road Safety Education program for your service including:

- RSE resources and information for educators
- information on the professional development program and ThingleToodle incursions
- RSE policies for services
- RSE information for families
- information on choosing and using child car seats (in 22 languages and 10 audio versions)
- transportation of children with additional needs
- link to the Car Seats Save Lives website including Victoria's latest video for parents and carers
- links to research and publications.