As the mother of three children and also being witness to road trauma involving children and the devastating ripple effect this can have, Victoria Police’s Senior Sergeant Sarah Carmichael has taken a proactive approach to engaging and educating the community in relation to road safety.

This project theme aligns with the Victoria Police Road Safety Action Plan – working in partnership to promote and drive the imperative. The plan has a specific focus on elderly and young road users and to embed an active and effective partnership approach to road safety so that community and stakeholder engagement becomes a part of road policing business.

It aligns with the Victoria Police Road Safety Strategy 2013 – 2018:
- to improve compliance with wearing child restraints to reduce road trauma
- working with our road safety partners to raise awareness of the dangers of failing to wear a seatbelt/restraint
- to promote seatbelt compliance for all vehicle occupants
- to change road user behaviour to reduce the level of road trauma associated with vulnerable road users.

Lastly, this project aligns with Towards Zero – to address safer road users by highlighting that reducing road trauma is a shared responsibility. All members of the community have a role to play by abiding by the road rules and setting a good example for others by belting up and ensuring everyone in the car is wearing a seatbelt. Being a good road model for our children will help ensure that everyone has a safe journey.

Sen Sgt Carmichael spearheaded this local initiative as part of the Victoria Police / Rotary Leaders Mentoring Program (LMP) within the City of Greater Dandenong to educate and empower the community in relation to the safe transportation of children. This project was supported and achieved through assistance from key partners including Early Learning Association Australia, Britax, Baby on Board, Monash University Accident Research Centre, City of Greater Dandenong, Springvale Service for Children, Rotary Central Melbourne, Rotary Keysborough / Noble Park and Rotary Dingley.

As part of this project, a Community Education Forum was held on 20 August at the Springvale Town Hall, including subject matter experts from the Royal Children’s Hospital (Associate Prof Warwick Teague), Monash University Accident Research Centre (PHD Candidate Suzanne Cross), Victoria Police (Acting Assistant Commissioner Michael Grainger and Early Learning Association Australia (Zora Marko) all presented upon the theme.

“We had approximately 110 people in attendance from the community, health and education sectors, City of Greater Dandenong Council as well as local police,” Sen Sgt Carmichael said.

This event was complemented by two child car seat checking days on 31 August and 1 September at Springvale Service for Children, which put the theory into practice.

“Cold and wet weather aside, we achieved really fantastic results, with active engagement from the community, police and project partners with more than 300 people in attendance over the course of the two days.”

On the first day, 58 child car seat checks were conducted and of these, only two were correctly fitted. On the second day, only four of the child car seats were correctly fitted of the 50 checked. Overall, 95% of the total 108 child car seats were incorrectly fitted.

Additionally, 19 new child car seats were fitted to replace those found to be aged, damaged or not age appropriate. These child car seats were generously donated by Britax, being the leading manufacturer of child car seats within Australia.

On the figures, the results are utterly appalling. However, it has truly highlighted that this is an area that needs attention. The aim of the project was to start a conversation and to question the status quo in

Apply the 5 Step Test
The law says that children do not have to be in a child car seat once they are over seven years of age. The law also allows children to sit in the front seat of a car once they are over seven years of age – this is not safe. However, research shows that children are safest if they stay in a child car seat until they are approximately 145cm, regardless of age. In general, children will reach this size when they are 10 to 12 years of age.

We recommend that you only consider moving your child out of their booster seat once they have passed the ‘5 Step Test’. Here is what to look for:

1. Can your child sit with their back against the vehicle seat?
2. Do your child’s knees bend in front of the edge of the seat cushion?
3. Is the lap belt sitting low across your child’s hips and touching their thighs?
4. Does the sash belt sit across the middle of your child’s shoulder?
5. Can your child stay seated correctly like this for the entire trip without slumping?

6. Can your child stay seated correctly like this for the entire trip without slumping?

7. Can your child stay seated correctly like this for the entire trip without slumping?

8. Can your child stay seated correctly like this for the entire trip without slumping?

9. Can your child stay seated correctly like this for the entire trip without sluming?
RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS
ELAA delivers Starting Out Safely, Victoria’s early childhood road safety education program on behalf of VicRoads.
ELAA has developed a number of online resources to help educators, parents and children understand and reinforce the message that children under 145 centimetres should not be in adult seat belts or in the front seat of the car. One of the resources available, the video, Child Restraints and Booster Seats – What You Need to Know provides parents and care-givers with valuable research and ideas they can apply in their daily routine to help protect the lives of the children in their care.
www.carseatssavelives.com.au
www.childroadsafety.org.au

What is digital technology?
People have always created and used technology. Technology is defined by people using knowledge about how things in the world work to create new objects or tools that help them in their lives. Traditional technologies, like analogue (painting, film-based, drawing) and mechanical (blocks, wheels, levers) are well-known in early childhood education (Early Childhood Australia, 2018). Educators use these technologies to help children explore their world, make meaning and share ideas. Digital technology involves people generating, storing, retrieving, sharing and communicating information in digital form. Digital information can take many forms, such as video, image, text, and audio. There are various technologies children can use to engage with these forms, such as computers, touchscreen devices, phones, digital video cameras, internet-connected toys and robotics.

Digital play
Digital play describes how children engage with digital technologies. In early childhood education, play is associated with learning. Play provides opportunities for exploring materials, problem-solving and engaging with peers and adults. Digital play builds on the idea of play for learning for early childhood education. Young children will often explore the capabilities of different technologies. They may spend time pressing the same buttons repeatedly, testing an app or software several times over or trialing different ways of recording video. This exploratory activity is important because it is how children learn to use technologies through play (Bird & Edwards, 2015).