

factsheet

pedestrian safety

This factsheet presents background information mainly for people working with children and families, and students undertaking projects.

Child Accident Prevention Trust publishes a range of resources for parents, carers and older children, containing comprehensive safety advice. A complete list of these resources – leaflets, booklets, posters, guides, etc – can be found at www.capt.org.uk together with details of how to obtain them.

How many child pedestrians are killed and injured?

Pedestrian injury is the leading cause of accidental death of children in Great Britain. The numbers of pedestrian deaths and injuries to children aged under 16 years in 2006 in accidents reported to the police are as follows:

	Killed	Seriously injured	Slightly injured	All severities
England	60	1,642	7,003	8,705
Scotland	9	238	745	992
Wales	2	74	358	434
Northern Ireland	4	63	178	245
Great Britain	71	1,954	8,106	10,131
United Kingdom	75	2,017	8,284	10,376

The majority of these accidents happen where children spend most time - close to home in residential streets.

What influences pedestrian accidents?

Speed

The faster the traffic, the greater the risk of death and serious injury. When children are hit by cars travelling at 20mph 5% are killed, most suffer only minor injuries and about 30% suffer no injury at all. At 30mph nearly 80% of children will survive, although they may be seriously injured. At 40mph 80% of children are killed.

Driver behaviour and child development

Children make unpredictable pedestrians. Traffic-coping skills are complex and children do not have the ability to judge speed, distance and danger accurately until around the age of 11. Even children above this age are easily distracted and may not always behave as drivers expect. Young children are also much smaller than adults and so difficult to see. In residential streets drivers need to compensate by driving slowly enough to be able to stop safely in time for a child.

Economic and social factors

Social and economic factors play a part in child pedestrian injuries. Research has shown that children from social class V are five times more likely to be killed than those from social class I. Children whose families have fewer resources tend to live near more dangerous road environments, have fewer provisions for safe places to play, and tend to go out as pedestrians more often than children from wealthier homes.

Gender

Almost twice as many boys than girls are killed or seriously injured as pedestrians

How do we compare to other countries in Europe?

The United Kingdom has the one of lowest rates of child road traffic deaths in Europe. However, the UK rates for child pedestrian deaths do not compare as well to the rest of Europe, with Wales and Scotland having particularly high rates. In 2001, the lowest child pedestrian death rate per 100,000 population was in Denmark.

What can be done to reduce child pedestrian accidents?

Central and local government have vital roles to play in the prevention of child pedestrian injuries through the control and regulation of traffic, speed and driver behaviour and the design of safer environments. The following measures have all been shown to have an effect in reducing pedestrian accidents:

- traffic calming including speed bump and 20mph speed zones
- traffic management that encourages drivers to avoid residential streets
- pedestrian crossings, parking restrictions and the provision of playgrounds all help to make the environment safer for children
- the creation of 'Home Zones' in residential streets where speeds are kept to around 10 mph and pedestrians and cyclists have priority over cars. (Visit www.homezonenews.org.uk).

Road safety education can also play a part in reducing pedestrian casualties:

- drivers need to learn that low speeds in residential areas and around schools and playgrounds will increase their chance of stopping in time and will reduce the likelihood of serious injury and death if they are in collision with a child.
- parents need information to understand their children's ability to cope with traffic and to be able to help their children learn pedestrian skills over time.
- children need adult supervision, roadside pedestrian skills training and road safety education in schools. Many local authorities run pedestrian training schemes in conjunction with schools.
- in Scotland, the Scottish Road Safety Campaign runs the Children's Traffic Club that provides resources to parents to assist them with road safety education of young children (www.road-safety.org.uk)
- "walking bus" schemes, which allow children to walk to and from school in supervised groups safely, can help children learn how to negotiate roads safely – again ask your road safety officer about such schemes or visit www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk.

Further information

The Department for Transport produces pedestrian safety information for children and lesson plans for teachers. See www.think.dft.gov.uk or www.hedgehogs.gov.uk/arrivealive/index.htm for details.

The Scottish Road Safety Campaign produces a range of programme materials and advice. children (www.road-safety.org.uk). In Wales, Road Safety Wales Diogelwch Ffyrdd Cymru coordinates activities (www.roadsafetywales.co.uk).

Contact your road safety officer (at your local council in England and Wales, or via the police in Scotland) for information on local programmes and resources.

For information on other child safety topics see capt's website at <http://www.capt.org.uk/> or write to us at the address below.

Revision date: May 2008

CHILD ACCIDENT PREVENTION TRUST 22-26 FARRINGDON LANE LONDON EC1R 3AJ
t 020 7608 3828 f 020 7608 3674 e safe@capt.org.uk www.capt.org.uk

All figures are the latest available. Factsheets are updated regularly. Please check the capt website for latest editions. This factsheet may be copied for educational purposes but not for financial gain. © capt 2008