

TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR ***Children in Traffic***

It is recommended that supervisors and instructors perform the following steps:

1. Introduce the video and state the main teaching points:

Suggested Introduction: "You are about to see a video that will demonstrate why children in traffic behave differently from adults. After we watch the video, we will discuss some key issues to make sure that everyone understands the developmental differences between children and adults. If there are any parts you don't understand, feel free to ask questions at that time."

2. Show the video and discuss each point, either by stopping the tape after each point is presented or at the end of the video.

3. Reinforce these key points

Children See Differently:

Children have narrow peripheral vision and they have difficulty judging speed and distance.

Children Hear Differently:

Children take longer to locate where a sound is coming from. This means they

may not respond quickly to horns or sirens.

Children Perceive Traffic Situations Differently:

Children don't share the experience adults have with many traffic situations. They often make decisions without seeing the possible dangers.

Children React Spontaneously and Unexpectedly:

Children's attention is less flexible than that of adults so they tend to concentrate on only one thing at a time. Children under the age of 8 can be especially vulnerable because they have not yet developed a keen sense of danger. Also, children's reaction time may be slower so they may take longer to react to traffic hazards.

4. **Make sure viewers can answer these questions. You may want to ask them before they watch the video and again afterward to see how their responses change.**

Why do younger children find vehicles less threatening than they should?

Children may see vehicles as creatures with the lights and bumper looking similar to eyes and a mouth. They may even think that cars are looking at them.

Why do children have difficulty determining the speed of a car and its distance from them?

Because a car doesn't change shape as it moves, children may not be able to tell the difference between a parked car and a moving car. An object that changes shape as it moves, like a dog or person, will be easier for them to judge. This makes judging the time and distance they have before a car arrives much more difficult.

If there is a possibility that children are around, how should you change your driving behavior?

Edge away from cars and transfer your foot to the brake; this will allow for more response time. Be especially alert and watch the sides of the road for playing children.

Can you name a few situations where it is especially important to be alert as a driver?

When you see children on bikes or near bike paths. When schools let out and children are anxious to get home to play. Near playgrounds or in residential areas.

What should you be especially aware of as a driver?

Younger children (kindergarten through first graders) are most vulnerable as pedestrians because of their lack of experience and inability to perceive danger. Schools and children on bikes should also raise warning flags for drivers.

How can we reduce the dangers of traffic?

Being aware of the traffic hazards can help reduce the problem. If we can see traffic through children's eyes, we can anticipate the mistakes they will make. As parents, we should teach our children safe practices, and as pedestrians, we should provide good examples for them to follow.

What are three factors that limit a child's ability to deal safely with traffic?

Children are limited by their psychological development, physical development, and lack of experience in the world.

Topics for discussion:

- Parked Cars
- Field of Vision
- Speed and Distance
- Sense of Hearing
- Kids in Crosswalks
- Distracted Kids
- Schools and Bikes

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety
1440 New York Avenue, N.W. Suite 201
Washington, D.C. 20005
202/638-5944 • Fax: 202/638-5943