

## SAFEKIDS CAMPAIGN LAUNCHES WITH WREATHS, BALLOONS AND PROMISES

This year's Safekids Campaign was launched in ten communities throughout New Zealand with 'Black Friday' events held to raise awareness of child pedestrian injury.

In the launch areas; Ashburton, Auckland, Dunedin, Fairlie, Feilding, Oamaru, Rotorua, Tauranga, Timaru, and Waimate, local children and Coalitions presented mayors or council representatives with a wreath in memory of child pedestrians killed on our roads.

Campaign Coalitions also highlighted national or regional child pedestrian injury statistics to their council using a variety of 'visual' reminders.

In Timaru, Fairlie and Waimate children held white crosses representing the 14 children, on average, killed as pedestrians every year in this country. In other areas black balloons were released. In Feilding, where the walking bus concept was promoted, the school with the balloon that travelled the furthest received a prize. In Dunedin, 120 children released 120 black balloons to represent those injured or killed on the city's roads in the last ten years.

Bright yellow cards, listing solutions to help keep kids safe on the roads, were also presented at the launches. In most communities these were written by children who wanted councils to think about them as road users.



*Feilding school children watch as black balloons are released to launch the start of the Safekids Campaign 2005/06 in their community.*

The launches were a huge success in each area; attracting public and media attention and, in some places, decision maker promises that council will look into pedestrian safety issues.

More on the launches and the Safekids Campaign can be found on pages 6 and 7

**Safekids News** is the official quarterly publication of Safekids New Zealand – the child safety service of Starship Children's Health.

For editorial contributions or enquiries email [JoyGunn@adhb.govt.nz](mailto:JoyGunn@adhb.govt.nz) or telephone (03) 455 4242.

Publication of contributed material is at the discretion of Safekids.

If you no longer wish to receive Safekids News please email Helen Stretton ([HStretton@adhb.govt.nz](mailto:HStretton@adhb.govt.nz)) or phone her on (09) 630 9955.

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# FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

By Ann Weaver, Director, Safekids New Zealand

During October and November I was fortunate enough to attend three conferences focused on safety. The first of these was the SAFE KIDS Worldwide Leadership Conference held in Washington DC in the USA. Fifteen countries were represented at the conference opened by the organisation's president and CEO Dr Martin Eichelberger, and Chief Operating Officer Beverly Farinelli. This conference was an ideal opportunity to network with our colleagues from around the world who are working to reduce injuries to children using a range of programmes.



*SAFE KIDS Canada staff Pamela Fuselli Director of Programmes and Services (left) and Allyson Hewitt Executive Director (right) with Ann Weaver, Director of Safekids Zealand.*

Each country presented on one new programme. For example, Israel has developed a programme focused on “bedside instruction to families of children hospitalised due to an injury”. When children are admitted to hospitals with an unintentional injury, their families are asked to participate in the programme, which involves collecting all details about the injury. Specially trained volunteers (usually retired medical professionals such as nurses) work with the family on completing coloured questionnaires. Each colour relates to a different injury issue. A copy of the completed questionnaire is kept in the child's medical file and a copy of a written safety message relating to the injury is given to the family on discharge (also kept on file). The voluntary programme has a 90% response rate from patients' families.

Six weeks after the child's discharge public health nurses follow up with families, and to date 95% of participants have been able to repeat the safety message and said they had made the behavioural change needed.

Other achievements by SAFE KIDS Worldwide members around the globe...

## Austria

- *Taking the lead in developing the first Child Safety Action Plan in co-operation with the Austrian Ministry of Health and Women*
- *Taking the lead in childhood injury data collection*
- *Creating and building the first Austrian Child Safety House as a centre of competence on child safety*

## Brazil

- *Developed their first Strategic Plan*

## Canada

- *Launched a new logo and brand identity*
- *Successfully advocated to the Ontario government to pass booster seat legislation*

## China

- *Through their “Walk this Way” programme educated 300,000 children on pedestrian safety. 342 schools improved roading around their schools; 44 crosswalks were established; 52 traffic signals were installed for speed reduction and “take care of children” signs were placed in 36 schools*

## Germany

- *The Minister of Health launched their “Child Safety Day”*
- *Formed a relationship with the Ministry of Consumer Protection and have now jointly set up a hotline for parents “Dial Safety”*

## Israel

- *Established an information hotline*
- *Held the first congress on “injury prevention” with all Muslim leaders in the country*

## Philippines

- *Developed a volunteer pool to deliver training to schools in collaboration with FedEx*
- *Held a National Safekids Week in collaboration with the Philippine College of Surgeons*

## South Africa

- *Produced and distributed child safety resources through media*

## Korea

- *Became a member of the SAFE KIDS Worldwide group*

## United Arab Emirate

- *Is launching a new “Safety School Bus”*
- *Produced and disseminated 10,000 safety leaflets a month*

## Uganda

- *Has introduced an Injury Prevention School Project*
- *Has developed a child pedestrian project*

## USA

- *Has three more coalitions*
- *Has officially become a member of the worldwide group*

## Vietnam

- *Has gained the first self-sustaining project – Safe Xe Om Fleet from funding gained from the helmet factory project. This programme is designed to improve safer motorbike driving practices*

The second conference I attended was the 2005 Canadian Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion Conference in Halifax Nova Scotia in November. The conference was co-hosted by Safe Communities; Safe KIDS Canada and SmartRisk.

The conference theme was “Evidence to Action: Injury, Violence and Suicide Prevention”. More than 600 health promotion and injury prevention professionals, researchers, medical practitioners, government reps, and emergency personnel from across Canada attended the conference.

During the conference delegates agreed to support the implementation of a national injury-prevention strategy called “Ending Canada’s Invisible Epidemic: A Strategy to Reduce and Control Injuries”. This document is supported by some areas. It’s hoped the federal government will also support it and make an annual \$50 million investment, solving their \$14.7 billion problem.

Other issues covered at the conference included All Terrain Vehicles (ATV) Safety; road rules; making schools injury-free and preventing falls in the elderly. Of particular interest was a session on ATVs by Michael Haslett from Dalhousie University who presented his research titled “The Epidemiology of All Terrain Vehicle Associated Injury in Nova Scotia: A Population Based study”. This study is due to be published and is worthwhile research for New Zealand to support our stance that no one under the age of 16 years (which this research supports) should ride an ATV. Canada is currently trying to pass legislation that will ban children younger than 14 from driving ATVs.

The 8th Annual Safe Communities National conference which was one of the pre-conference sessions I attended. There are currently 48 designated Safe Communities in Canada, which account for approx 22% of the population. This session was lead by Paul Kells who is the Founding president of Safe Communities in Canada.

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## NEW PLYMOUTH BECOMES THIRD NZ SAFE COMMUNITY

On October 27th New Plymouth became the 95th place in the world and the third city in New Zealand to be named a Safe Community by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The accreditation of New Plymouth as a WHO Safe Community was the culmination of years of work by many different organisations in the district that developed injury prevention programmes to make the community as safe as possible. New Plymouth District has carried out pioneering work in many areas of injury prevention. Taranaki, for example, was the first place in the country to launch parent education sessions about child falls. Its programme has since been picked up in many other parts of New Zealand.

Spokesperson for New Plymouth injurySafe (NPiS), Dr Alan Parsons, said the WHO recognition was made possible as



*Pupils from Welbourn Primary School release 95 balloons to represent the 95 WHO Safe Communities around the world during the official accreditation ceremony for New Plymouth.*

a result of people working together to try to reduce the number of injuries.

“The collaborative approach means we can draw on the skills of many individuals and agencies to provide information and programmes to many people identified as being at risk, such as children, the elderly in their own homes, people taking part in sports, pedestrians and drivers ... pretty much everyone in the community.”

NPiS comprises representatives from the Taranaki District Health Board, ACC, New Plymouth District Council, Tui Ora, KidSafe Taranaki Trust and the New Zealand Police. More than 70 stakeholder groups are involved in promoting injury prevention activities in the New Plymouth District.

The bid to gain WHO accreditation started in 2001 with an ACC-funded assessment of community injury in New Plymouth. The research and consultation work identified the types of injuries, the population groups and the locations that needed to be given priority in an injury prevention programme. Some existing work was extended and new programmes developed as a result of the assessment.

Programmes and campaigns that have helped build the safe community culture in New Plymouth include the Thinksmart Sports Club programme which challenges the link between youth alcohol consumption and sport; Horsing Around, an education programme directed at rider knowledge and skill; the Agricultural Team Challenge, a competition focusing on farm safety; Positive Ageing New Plymouth’s Tai Chi classes and the Otago Exercise Programme to help build strength and reduce the number of falls experienced by older people; a ‘Think Before you Buy Under 18s Drink’ campaign; and some 2,500 home safety checks carried out by volunteer fire officers.

The WHO Safe Communities concept recognises safety as a universal concern and the responsibility. The WHO model was initiated in Sweden and is administered from the Karolinska Institute for Social Medicine in Stockholm. In 2004 the Safe Communities Foundation of New Zealand (SCFNZ) was established to support the development of injury prevention and safety promotion here.

*For more information on Safe Communities go to [www.safecommunities.org.nz](http://www.safecommunities.org.nz)*

# ACTION UPDATE

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## National News – Putting Kids' Safety First

In November, Safekids New Zealand with the support of Reckitt Benckiser (makers of Finish) distributed public education materials on preventing childhood poisoning from auto-dishwasher detergents to families, through early childhood centres and doctors surgeries.

The materials, including an education leaflet and magnets for families, and posters for centres and surgeries; highlight the dangers of caustic dishwasher detergents, and provide four key messages about preventing poisoning.

These are; select a non-caustic product, store the product out of reach of young children, secure the product safely; and stop children getting into the dishwasher.

Plunket centres and Coalitions involved in the Safekids Campaign also received copies of the resources. If you'd like copies for your organisation please contact Isabel Bird at Safekids on (09) 631 0724 or email [Infocentre@safekids.org.nz](mailto:Infocentre@safekids.org.nz)



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## New Look for Preventing Falls in Under Fives Resource

ACC has modified and updated the educational resource used to deliver its 'preventing falls in under fives' community parent education sessions. ACC has used the Child Safety Foundation resource over recent years to inform parents and caregivers about the prevalence and severity of falling within the under five age group. The resource provides advice and information about positive parenting behaviour and creating safer home environments for children.

The revamped resource has three main foci to prevent falls in younger children; to gain an understanding of the environment children are placed in, the nature of the child's development, and supervision within that environment.

The resource material is now available in three formats; an A3 flipchart used for small group delivery; an A4 file used for one to one home visits by well child providers; and in PowerPoint format for delivery to larger groups.

The resources are the primary tool used by ACC contracted community providers to educate parents and caregivers. It's a vital, visual tool used to deliver ACC's Preventing Falls in Under Fives programmes.

ACC Injury Prevention Consultants are currently delivering the resources to community providers of the education sessions. If you'd like more information about these please contact Mark Vernon, Programme Manager Injury Prevention on (09) 915 9419 or email [mark.vernon@acc.co.nz](mailto:mark.vernon@acc.co.nz)

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## Be In To Win

Your chance to be recognised for your road safety initiative is here with entries now open for the 2005 Road Safety Innovation and Achievement Awards. The winner in each category receives a cash prize of \$2000, with the overall Premier Award winner receiving an additional \$3000 cash prize.

There are five categories, plus the premier award:

- *Road Safety Education Award*
- *Road Safety Community Award*
- *Road Safety in Organisations Award*
- *Road Safety Vehicle Based Award*
- *Road Safety Road-engineering Award*

This is the third annual Road Safety Innovation and Achievement Awards. Winners have come from across the country and from a wide range of initiatives. The Premier Award last year was shared by the New Lynn Tongan Methodist church and Databrake International.

The awards are funded by the Road Safety Trust, and administered by Land Transport New Zealand. The Awards Organising Committee comprises representatives from the Automobile Association, AA Driver Education Foundation, the New Zealand Police, Land Transport New Zealand and ACC.

The awards are open until 10 March 2006. For more information and entry forms see: [www.roadsafetyinnovationawards.org.nz](http://www.roadsafetyinnovationawards.org.nz) or call 0800 699 000.

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## IPNANZ Conference 2005

In the first week of November around 150 representatives involved in injury prevention and health promotion attended the 3rd Injury Prevention Network of Aotearoa Conference in Wellington, New Zealand.

The conference provided a place for programmes and initiatives to be shared, debate to occur on injury prevention and its role in New Zealand, and an opportunity to hear about the various strands of the New Zealand Injury Prevention Strategy ([www.nzips.govt.nz](http://www.nzips.govt.nz)).

Delegates put injury prevention words into action by agreeing to call for the ban of over-the-counter sales of fireworks in New Zealand; an issue which will no doubt be hotly debated. *PowerPoint presentations from the conference can be downloaded at [www.ipn.org.nz](http://www.ipn.org.nz)*

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## Get Out, Stay Out for Preschool Kids

The Fire Service has developed a new fire safety package called Get Out, Stay Out, for preschoolers, along the lines of its Fire Wise campaign.

The package is designed to be delivered by preschool educators, and features a host of friendly characters such as a smoke alarm and a fire extinguisher to teach kids fire safety messages. The key points the Fire Service wants kids to get is to be aware that when a fire starts in the house, get out to safety, and don't play with matches and lighters.



The messages are delivered through a colourful flip chart, a song on CD, posters and a story book for children to take home. The idea is that kids will take the message home and improve the attitudes of their parents to fire safety, both with the book and with questions such as, "Mum, where are our smoke alarms?"

The preschool packs were designed following extensive consultation with early childhood educators and ties in with Ministry of Education outcomes.

Get Out, Stay Out is being trialled in the Auckland, the Bay of Plenty, Waikato, Otago and Southland fire regions.

## AUCKLAND

### Safe Summer 2005/06

WaterSafe Auckland Inc (WAI) is giving extra focus to the supervision message this summer. 'Accidental immersions' are still happening too often in the Auckland region with three preschoolers drownings already in home pools during 2005. (Drownbase Water Safety New Zealand)

Supervision safety messages and learning to swim will be the main theme of Safe Summer 2005/06. WAI continues to consult closely with all councils and local aquatic partners to ensure a strong collaborative campaign this summer. It works with Swimming NZ, Coastguard, Surf Lifesaving and Maritime NZ to ensure the right messages reach the right people and that the Auckland drowning rate continues to fall.

A dynamic media campaign, guaranteed to get people talking and encourage behaviour change has been developed for summer 2005/06. A new logo with the message 'Wise Up to The Water' will replace the existing purple Safe Summer logo. Look out for new billboards, bus shelter ads, and a new television ad and radio campaign.

The Safe Summer outdoor campaign is once again supported by 'In The Field' event promotions. The Safe Summer promo team will be out in full force at this year's Santa Parade, Tamariki Sports Day and in 2006 at the Teddy Bear's Picnic, Asian Lantern Festival and Pacifika Festival. WAI is partnering with Surf Lifesaving Northern Region at several of these events.

Information on the Safe Summer campaign will be posted on the WAI website at [www.watersafe.org.nz/](http://www.watersafe.org.nz/)

## WAIKATO

### "Staying Alive" Expo Message

From October 9 – 15 thousands of school children attended the Staying Alive Expo held at Mystery Creek near Hamilton.

The expo was designed to provide a dramatic message about safety to visitors and it accomplished this; utilising mangled cars, fire vehicles, mobile training centres, demonstrations (involving the cutting open of an earthquake-damaged building) and video presentations from various emergency services. The New Zealand Fire Service, police, ambulance and rescue teams were just some of the organisations involved in the expo.



*"I'm going to be fireman when I grow up" – two kids check out the fire appliances at the Staying Alive Expo held at Mystery Creek.*

An impressive part of the expo was the house of hazards – a vivid demonstration of dangers around the home. During the expo the house was set fire to. Firefighters put this out, leaving visitors to walk through the charred remains and see what four minutes of fire can do.

## ADVOCACY MATTERS

### Banning Public Sales of Fireworks

During the recent Injury Prevention Network of Aotearoa New Zealand conference in Wellington, delegates agreed to support a call for over-the-counter sales of fireworks to be banned in New Zealand.

The call followed concerns about the use of fireworks in New Zealand. The New Zealand Fire Service responded to more than 60 fireworks-related calls in the lead up to Guy Fawkes and more than 200 on the night itself.

The family of a child who was blinded by fireworks has also joined the call for a ban on the public sale of fireworks, and Minister for the Environment, the Honourable David Benson-Pope is interested in the public's view on this subject. If you wish to comment on this issue, you can write to the Minister at Parliament, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.

### Child Safety in Our Communities

Child pedestrian safety and the prevention of childhood falls in the community are two issues covered in the recently produced Safekids Community Child Falls & Pedestrian Safety Checklist. The checklist has been sent to coalitions involved in the Safekids Campaign and focuses on pedestrian safety and falls prevention. However, if your group or organisation has not received copies and wishes to work with local government on these issues, please contact Vikki Jarvis on (09) 631 0726 or email [Victoriaj@adhb.govt.nz](mailto:Victoriaj@adhb.govt.nz) Copies of the document are free.

## GUEST EDITORIAL:

### Drowning – We Must Take Responsibility

by Robbie McDougall, Royal Life Saving Society,  
General Manager

New Zealand has a disproportionately high rate of drowning deaths per capita. Statistics show that the majority of drownings occur in unpatrolled areas – beaches, lakes, rivers and at home. Our challenge, as parents, caregivers, teachers, and whanau, is to stop the tragedy that is drowning.

Logic tells us we must equip our children, and those supervising them, with skills to deal with water and its inherent dangers; to develop self survival skills and then to equip them to offer rescue assistance whilst ensuring their own safety. Swimming, rescue and survival skills all work in tandem but too few have the benefit of such coordinated instruction.

In a continued effort to provide readily accessible and affordable water safety education for New Zealand children the Royal Life Saving Society introduced AquaSafe – a sequential survival and rescue programme aimed at primary and intermediate aged children. Each component of AquaSafe, and other award programmes, are specifically designed to prepare children, youth and adults, as caregivers and participants, to be safe in, on and around the water. Complementing AquaSafe are a series of specific awards designed for caregivers,



Students from St Bernadette's school, in Christchurch, learn about safe rescues as they take part in the RLSSNZ AquaSafe programme at QEII in Christchurch.

fishermen – anyone, swimmers or not, who find themselves in an aquatic environment.

Keep our kids safe this summer and for all those to come! For information on water safety, life saving and swimming education and providers, for schools and individuals contact The Royal Life Saving Society at [rllsanz@inet.net.nz](mailto:rllsanz@inet.net.nz) or telephone (03)366 7644.

For information on the Watersafe Auckland's latest water safety programme go to page 5. For more information on water safety you can also visit [www.watersafe.org.nz](http://www.watersafe.org.nz) and [www.watersafety.org.nz](http://www.watersafety.org.nz)

## SAFEKIDS CAMPAIGN 2005/06



### Stopping Distance Message A Success

A series of road safety stopping distance demonstrations held across the Nelson and Tasman District in November to highlight the Campaign focus on child pedestrian safety was an overwhelming success with over 6000 children and 700 parents, teachers and residents taking part say organisers.

The message to drivers to 'kill your speed not a child' and to children that "the road is no playground" was well received. Many children said they would remind their parents to slow down around 50 km/h areas because of the distance it took to stop when cars exceeded the speed limit.

The \$20,000 five day campaign jointly organised by Nelson City and Tasman District Councils, Road Sense, Police and ACC demonstrated how travelling at 60 km/h more than doubled the distance for a car to stop and how speeding could make the difference between life and death when the unexpected happened.

"People might not notice they are going too fast, or

might think that travelling a few kilometres over the speed limit doesn't matter, but these demonstrations have shown that it makes a huge difference and people have constantly commented on how much this has surprised them" says Nelson City Council Road Safety Co-ordinator, Margaret Parfitt.



Many parents wanted young people and drivers of the future to witness the demonstration "I wish my 13 year old daughter had a chance to see this" said one parent from Brightwater School while others asked when more demonstrations would be held so more people would get the message.

The impact on many young people was also clear with one young Golden Bay High School student commenting that "the demo only lasted 20 minutes, but I will remember it for the rest of my life".

Ms Parfitt says the response to the demonstrations was fantastic and more demonstrations will be considered for 2006 – run at a time and venue to capture a more adult audience.

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## Dunedin Launch Leads to Child Pedestrian Forum

The Dunedin launch of the Safekids Campaign on October 14 was used to highlight child pedestrian injury, and led to a child pedestrian safety forum being held in the city.

Dunedin Mayor Peter Chin in conjunction with Dunedin Safekids Campaign Chair Andy Redfearn, announced the hosting of the child pedestrian forum during the launch at St Joseph's Cathedral School, where 120 students released 120 balloons to represent the 120 children injured and three kids killed on Dunedin City roads in the last ten years.

Two weeks later representatives from Land Transport New Zealand, ACC, the New Zealand Police, the education and health sector, local sports trust, the community and Dunedin City Council met to discuss the issue of child pedestrian injury. Local MP the honourable Pete Hodgson, attended the Campaign launch, while David Benson-Pope, another local MP, attended the forum.



*St Joseph's Cathedral School pupils read their safety messages to Dunedin City Mayor Peter Chin, former Transport Minister the Honourable Pete Hodgson and invited guests, during the local launch of the Safekids Campaign.*

Child pedestrian issues for the city centred around the 'chaos at the school gate' issue, with concern that a child may be killed near the school gate. Speed around schools, and the fact that peaks in child pedestrian injuries occur during times when the walk to or from school was being undertaken by children, were also identified as concerns. A stock-take of current programmes, including walking buses, was made.

During the forum it was agreed the option of introducing school travel plans to the city be investigated and a working group established to further develop strategies to benefit the city's child pedestrians.

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## Safekids Campaign Activity in Ashburton

Ashburton proved to be a 'hot spot' as far as Safekids Campaign activity went in the lead up to and just following the programme's official launch.

On October 14, four children from Allenton School presented local mayor Bede O'Malley with a wreath, to represent a child pedestrian killed on the roads as part of the 'Black Friday' launch of the Campaign. The presentation was made at the Allenton Shopping Centre, the busiest area near a school.

The city's annual Youth Forum, held by the Ashburton District Council, focused on the Campaign's safety themes and pupils from throughout the area were invited to share their ideas.

*Senior students from Allenton School show their younger peers how to stay safe on playground equipment.*



Senior pupils from Allenton School attended the forum and shared their playground safety initiative. The initiative involved senior pupils testing the school's playground equipment and ensuring other students were using it correctly. During their testing students found there were 29 falls from playground equipment in 2005. Most of those who fell were in the junior classes.

Students also looked at the type of equipment where falls occurred. Using this information they created a playground safety manual aimed at the junior classes, and produced it using instructions and photographs. Deputy Principal Noel Batty says the manual is used within the junior classrooms.

The local coalition also held safety checks outside the school gate with local police, St John and Plunket held a first aid morning for caregivers and the the ACC speed trailer was utilised outside local schools. The group also had a stand at the annual A & P Show.

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## Auckland Marks 'Black Friday'

A one metre long cake in the shape of a foot isn't something you see every day. But, for children attending the launch of the Safekids Campaign in Auckland, eating it was one of the high points!

On Friday October 14, Auckland-based Coalitions marked the launch of the Safekids Campaign with a 'Black Friday' event at Glen Innes Playcentre.

The launch involved children from the Glen Innes Primary walking school bus, who were joined on the day by Campaign Ambassador Suzy Cato. Children from Tamaki Intermediate presented poetry they'd written about road safety while preschoolers from the Te Kohanga Reo O Te Taurere took part in songs and dance to mark the event.

The children presented Glen Innes community board member Jan Welch with a wreath in memory of child pedestrians killed in New Zealand this year and cards citing statistics on child pedestrian injury in Auckland City. Bright yellow cards, with suggestions about ways the council can help improve the safety of child pedestrians in the city, were also presented.

Following this the one-metre long cake was cut and shared by everyone!

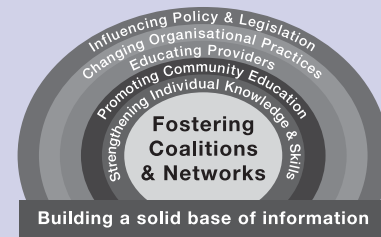


# SAFEKIDS CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2006

With the support of ACC, Safekids New Zealand will be holding a two day conference for Coalition Co-ordinators and members on March 9 & 10, 2006. The conference theme is the "Spectrum of Prevention in Action". The Spectrum is the action model used to develop, implement and evaluate the Safekids Campaign. Workshops and open sessions will include topics such as working with specific communities and groups on child safety projects, funding, event management, and evaluation. There is no registration fee for this conference. However, the cost of travel and accommodation is the responsibility of each participant. If you would like

more information or a registration form please contact Joy Gunn on (03) 455 4242 or email [joygunn@adhb.govt.nz](mailto:joygunn@adhb.govt.nz)

## SPECTRUM OF PREVENTION



## INFO CENTRE UPDATE

### Teddy Bears and Sparkling Christmas Trees



No-one wants a holiday or family celebration over Christmas and the New Year to be spoiled by injuries – but unfortunately that's what happens to many New Zealanders every year. And some of the things that bring us joy, like presents and pretty lights, can also bring us sorrow when they hurt our children.

Some basic safety messages

- *Toys need to be right for the age of the child. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs has produced a 2005 fact sheet Choosing the right toys for their age, a simple check list that also includes toys that are good choices at different ages and stages. (Contact the Info Centre for a copy – see box below)*
- *In general the younger the child, the more carefully we need to select toys – children under three can easily choke or inhale small toys, or parts of toys, and children under 18 months should not be exposed to noisy toys. Toys with strings, sharp parts and suffocation hazards also pose dangers for younger children. Young children should not have access to toys intended for the older children.*
- *A very comprehensive guide to children's toy safety was published by the U.S. Consumer Product safety Commission. It is called Age determination guidelines: relating children's ages to toy characteristics and play behaviour. This guide lists very many categories of toys and discusses the safety of each. Want to know how old a child should be to play safely on a powered wheeled toy? Or what type of doll or stuffed toy is most appealing to a two-year-old? This guide has the answers. (Contact the Info Centre for a copy – see box below)*
- *If you're buying bikes, skates or other wheeled toys such as*

*scooters then safety gear, especially helmets, could also be included in the present – and, depending on the toy, maybe wrist and knee guards are also a good idea.*

- *As well as matching the type of toy to the age of the child we need to be aware that the age of the toy may also be an important factor. Toys that have been stored in the cupboards one year to the next may have long passed the 'safety date'. We need to check to see if they are broken or torn, painted with poisonous coatings, or have parts worn loose? Are they, in fact, still safe?*
- *Christmas trees and lights, decorations and candles all need to be handled with care to prevent burns and fires. Light up your Christmas safely is a fact sheet that tells you how (Contact the Info Centre for a copy – see box below)*

Safekids Information & Resource Centre has many articles and fact sheets about toys and Christmas lights and decorations. Here are a few examples:

*Age determination guidelines: relating children's ages to toy characteristics and play behaviour – Record number 8420*

*Choosing the right toys for their age – Record number 3567 (This can also be downloaded from the publications section of the Ministry's website: [www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz/publications/index.html#safety](http://www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz/publications/index.html#safety))*

*Light up your Christmas safely – Record number 7095 A word of advice: how loud is too loud? Ministry of Consumer Affairs – Record number 4406*

*Important safety information: The product safety standard for children's toys. Commerce Commission – Record number 6577*

*Christmas wheels. Kidsafe Australia – Record number 4583*

If you would like to see any of these items please contact the Safekids Information & Resource Centre on (09) 631 0724 or email [info@safekids.org.nz](mailto:info@safekids.org.nz) and tell us the Record number(s).