

July 2010

**come
grow
with us**
INFORMATION for CHILD CARE PROVIDERS
HEALTH EDUCATION and RESOURCE



A New Look for Come Grow With Us!

Our updated look matches our updated access to current health information for child care providers. We want to provide current, quality information to the community in an environmentally friendly way - so we will no longer distribute paper copy revisions to the Come Grow With Us manual. Instead, we encourage everyone in the child care community to visit www.york.ca/comegrowwithus for annual updates to our Come Grow With Us information.

Boost Me Up. Keep Me Safe.

New research suggests that the use of booster seats in cars is alarmingly low despite the introduction of booster seat legislation in Ontario in 2005. Only 34 per cent of Canadian children aged four to eight are correctly seated in booster seats. Given that four to eight year-olds experience about 10 times more deaths and injuries during car crashes than babies and toddlers, the use of booster seats must be promoted to parents/caregivers. Child care providers are in an excellent position to promote car seat and booster seat safety when parents/caregivers are dropping off and picking up their children. Ontario law also requires all child care providers to use car seats and booster seats when travelling with babies and children.

Approximately 100 children in Canada under the age of 10 die in vehicle collisions every year. In 80 per cent of cases, it is seatbelts causing harm because children ages four to eight don't fit in them properly without a belt-positioning booster seat.

Adult seat belt systems are not designed to fit a child. A child's hipbones are not developed enough to keep a seat belt properly in place. During a collision the lap belt can ride up onto a child's abdomen instead

of sitting low across their hips. This can cause serious internal injuries. Children also often tuck the shoulder belt under their arm or behind their back because the shoulder belt touches their face or neck. This is very dangerous because the upper body is not restrained, which can lead to a severe spinal cord or head injury.

A booster seat can significantly reduce these risks. A booster seat works with the existing seat belt system to raise a child so that the seat belt fits correctly across the shoulder, chest and hip bones. Booster seats provide 60 per cent more protection than seat belts alone and they substantially reduce the risk of serious injury.

For more information on booster seats, please see Chapter 4 of the Come Grow With Us online manual or call York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653, TTY 1-866-252-9933.

For more health information related to child care, refer to www.york.ca/comegrowwithus.



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Bike and Helmet Safety

Child care providers are well positioned to provide supportive promotional messaging to children and parents about bicycle and helmet safety.

Consider these facts:

- Head injuries are the leading cause of serious injury and death to children on bikes
- A fall from 60cm (2 feet) can cause permanent brain damage; a fall at a speed of 20 km/hour can result in death
- Wearing a bicycle helmet reduces the risk of head injury by 85% and the risk of brain injury by 88%
- Children (under 18) are required by law to wear a helmet when bicycling
- The helmet must fit and be worn properly to protect the child's head

Promoting safe practices can help prevent injuries. It is very important to:

- **Wear a helmet.** Make sure children wear certified, properly fitted bicycle helmets (refer to manufacturer's instructions) every time they ride their bike. Hockey, baseball helmets etc. are not designed to absorb the type of impact that may occur in a cycling crash or fall. Helmets should not be worn when playing on playground equipment.

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) have bicycle helmet standards for children under the age of five. Helmets that meet this requirement have a permanent yellow label informing purchasers if it is designed for this age group.

- **Remember the 2V1 Shake, Shake, Shake Rule!**

- 2:** The helmet should cover the top of the child's head and sit two finger widths above their eyebrows
- V:** Adjust the side straps so that they form a V-shape under their ears
- 1:** Only 1 finger should fit between their chin and the fastened straps

Shake, Shake, Shake: Have them shake their head up and down and side to side to make sure the helmet is snug.

- **Ensure supervised riding:** For the preschool cyclist, learning to control a bike while beginning to understand the ways to be careful is the most important lesson a child this age can grasp. Most do not have the skills to cycle safely without supervision.
- **Make sure the bike fits:** A bike that is too big or small is unsafe. How to check: when a child sits on their bike, their toes should touch the ground on both sides.

