



PREVENTING ACCIDENTS

THE IDEA

In some places, school children die each year because of accidents. Many more will be injured. These accidents need not happen. Children can help to reduce the number and seriousness of accidents by practising safety at home, in the outdoors and on the road. Children can learn to spot the most common dangers, and understand how these dangers can be avoided or prevented. They should always watch out for the safety of others, particularly smaller children.

Children can also be prepared to help when an accident happens.

Children can talk about the accidents which they have seen happen most often in their community. Different sorts of accidents happen to children who live in different places – in towns, in villages, in rural areas. Identify accidents which have happened in the last six months at home, on the road, in the outdoors and discuss why they happened.

At home

- **burns** from fires, stoves, ovens, cooking pots, hot foods, boiling water, steam, hot fats, paraffin lamps, irons and electrical appliances.
- **cuts** from broken glass, knives, scissors or axes.
- **choking** on small objects such as coins, buttons or nuts.
- **poisoning** from paraffin (kerosene), insecticide, bleach or detergents.
- **internal (inside) bleeding** from swallowing sharp objects such as razor blades.
- **electric shock** from touching a broken electrical appliance or electrical wire or poking sticks or knives into electric outlets.
- **falls** from cots, windows, tables and stairs.



Where and how these activities have been used

This sheet and the accompanying Child-to-Child reader **Accidents** are very widely used round the world (particularly in areas where there are special dangers to children from people living very close together). In fact, this activity is usually among the first introduced in new Child-to-Child programmes because accidents are a very common cause of death and injury among children world-wide.

Activities are easy to introduce (campaigns, surveys, drama, one-to-one responsibility for younger children, safety committees, etc.) and fun for children to take part in. There are few problems in adapting content to different countries, and no difficulty in anyone accepting the message, which is one of recognising and avoiding danger for oneself and others. Many accidents can, in fact, be avoided with a little care and foresight and the children soon learn to recognise danger, especially for the younger ones.

On the road

- **death** or injuries like heavy **bleeding**, **broken bones** and damage to **main organs** of the body (liver, lungs, brain) (see Activity Sheet 4.2 **Road Safety**).

In the playground or out-of-doors

- **burns**, **cuts** and **broken bones**.
- **poisoning** from eating certain plants and berries.
- **bites** from animals and snakes and stings from bees and other insects.
- **drowning** in open water or wells.

Preventing accidents from happening

At home

Danger from burns Burns are a major cause of injury in the home. Accidents at home often involve fire, and children can be badly burned. If their hands are burned, they may never be able to hold a pencil or a tool; if their feet are burned they may not be able to walk properly. There are many ways to prevent burns at home:

- Watch babies and young children very carefully. Do not let them go near the fire.
- Raise the family cooking stove, or make an open cooking fire on a raised mound of clay instead of directly on the ground.
- Use a thick cloth when touching hot pots.
- Be very careful that the handles of cooking pots are out of reach of babies, and turned so that they are not easily knocked over.
- Keep petrol, paraffin, lamps, matches, candles, lighters, hot irons and electric cords out of the reach of young children.



Danger from poison Young children are also often injured or even killed when they eat or drink dangerous things.

- Never put dangerous products (e.g. bleach, plant poison, paraffin or petrol) in a coca-cola or other soft drink bottle. Children can drink them by mistake.
- Keep all medicine and poisons out of reach of children (lock them in a cupboard or trunk, or put them on a high shelf). Label all poisons and medicine carefully. Medicines are particularly dangerous because little children often eat tablets thinking they are sweets.
- Teach young children not to drink out of strange bottles, or eat strange fruits and plants which may not be safe.

Danger from sharp things Many cuts can be easily prevented.

- Keep the floor clear of broken glass and nails.
- Get rid of nails or splinters which stick out.
- Keep sharp knives and razors out of the reach of young children.

Older children can identify other common accidents which happen at home. How can they be prevented?

Danger from falls Falls can lead to injury, e.g. fractures, head injury. Falls through glass, out of windows, from trees, or onto sharp or hot objects such as fires can be especially dangerous. Many falls can be avoided.

- Keep young children from climbing, e.g. don't put beds or chairs in front of windows.
- Keep floors clear of objects people can trip over.
- Never put a baby or young child high up, e.g. on a table, and leave them on their own.
- Make wells and latrines safe so that young children cannot fall in.

In the neighbourhood

Danger from snakes Children can protect themselves from snake bites.

- Recognise which snakes are dangerous and where they live.
- Learn to remain very still if you are close to a snake. Move away from the snake very slowly.

- Clear grass and weeds from the paths most commonly used by children.

Danger when playing Children are active and need safe places to play.

- Know the neighbourhood, and avoid dangerous places where there may be machinery, animals, snakes, glass or sharp metal.
- Make wells safe so no one can fall in.
- Play safely. **DON'T:**
 - climb in dead trees.
 - throw stones and other sharp things.
 - swim in swift-flowing rivers.
 - run while chewing a stick.
 - eat fruits and berries which may be poisonous.
 - play with fire.
 - make animals angry, especially when they have young ones with them.

On the road

Many children are injured or killed each year by vehicles on the road, especially when they are walking along the road, or when they are trying to cross the road. The special rules for safety on the road are discussed fully in Activity Sheet 4.2 **Road Safety**.

Activities

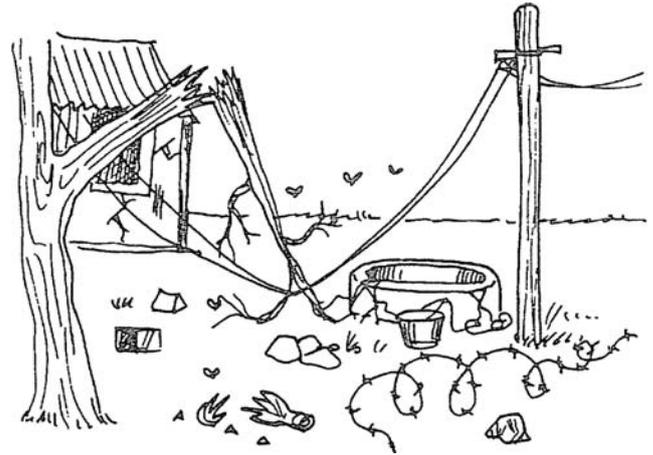
Be aware of danger

Children can record accidents that have happened to members of their families. Make three lists or graphs of accidents which happened at home, on the road, out-of-doors, and decide which kind of accidents happen most often in the community.

Why do you think these accidents happen? If you can discover why they happen, you can also find out how. Discuss which accidents are most common for children at different ages (and why) – under two years, from two to six years, after six years.

Contact the health centre and ask if children can be given details of all accidents to children over the last six months. Make charts or graphs of the accidents that are reported.

WHAT'S WRONG IN THIS PICTURE?



Make pictures which show different dangers at home, in a playground, or at school. Put the good ones on a wall. Let the other children discuss them to prevent them from happening so often.

Make a series of drawings to show how an accident might happen:

- 1 Mother is filling the cooking stove with kerosene.
- 2 A visitor comes to the house and mother goes to talk to the visitor.
- 3 A small child, left by himself, picks up the kerosene bottle and drinks from it.

First Aid if an accident happens

Children can learn and practise **First Aid**. Often schools or youth groups give special first aid classes. However, here are some simple measures to practise and remember (see also Activity Sheet 4.3 **First Aid**).

Get help quickly

If someone has a bad fall from a tree, or gets badly hurt in a car accident, do not move them. Cover them with a blanket to keep them warm, and **GET HELP QUICKLY**.

If someone gets a poisonous bite, do not move the limb which has been bitten. That will only spread the poison around the body. Carry the child and **GET HELP QUICKLY**. Do not try to treat the bite yourself. It must be done by the health worker.

Cuts and wounds

With clean hands, wash the wound with soap and boiled water, or hot salt water.

ACTIVITY SHEET 4.1

CHILD-TO-CHILD TRUST

Clean out all the dirt because wounds that are left dirty can become bad ulcers.

Most small wounds do not need bandages. It is better to leave them to dry in the air so they heal more quickly. If you do use a bandage, make sure it is very clean.

Keeping the wound clean is better than using things like mud or iodine.

If the wound is really deep, take the person to the health clinic for treatment.

Burns

Put the burned part **AT ONCE** into cool, clean water for at least ten minutes. If the burn is small, probably no other treatment will be needed.

If the burn is very deep or covers a large part of the body, loosely cover it using a clean cloth with a little Vaseline on it, and get medical help as soon as possible.

- DON'T break the blisters.
- DON'T remove any clothing sticking to the burned area.
- DON'T put grease, oil, herbs or faeces on the burn.

Remember: If a person's clothes are on fire, you can put out the flames by rolling them in a mat or throwing a blanket over them. Then treat for burns.



Preventing and avoiding accidents

At school

- Look around the classroom; outside the school; around the playground outside. Look for dangers which might cause accidents. Make a list of anything that is not safe, or which might cause an injury. Discuss it with the teacher.

- Have a safety competition or campaign. Organise a project to remove or correct the dangers on the list. The children can help to:

- mend broken chairs or desks.
- clear the ground of nails, glass and other sharp objects.
- cut down tall grass and weeds.
- explain to younger children the rules of safe play.

- Form groups or teams to be responsible for looking after different parts of the school and playground. Elect a 'Safety Scout' who will lead these groups or teams.

Discuss the school rules. Which ones have been made to prevent accidents and injury? Are there any rules that should be added?

At home

Watch over younger children to make sure they understand simple safety rules. Keep them away from fires. Prevent them from putting things in their mouths, ears or noses. Teach them not to touch medicines or poisons. What else should they know about?

In the neighbourhood

- Organise a campaign with the theme 'Play Safely'. Make posters. Talk to people. Make up plays and songs for people to see and listen to in the market, outside the health clinic.
- Identify places where it is dangerous to play and discuss how these can be made safer. Take action in a group.
- Encourage the local council to put up warning signs in places which are obviously dangerous.

On the road

- Children can draw a map. Make it very simple. Show the main roads and footpaths which children use when they come to school. The children can discuss:
 - where they cross the roads.
 - why they cross the roads (is it really necessary?)
 - where accidents have happened.

- which places have most accidents and why.
- which places need extra care.

General

- Organise a safety campaign at school, or in the community. Have a campaign for two weeks against burns, then later have a campaign about safety at play, or road safety.
- Use a variety of different ways to pass the safety message to others, especially younger children.
- Write and act plays, or make a puppet play about why accidents happen, and what can be done to reduce them. Act them at school, or at clinics, or in the market.

USING THIS SHEET

Teachers in school and out of school, Red Cross workers, health workers, Scout and Guide leaders, Young Farmers and other youth leaders, writers in newspapers, comics and magazines can all help to encourage the idea of safety for children wherever they are.

This Activity Sheet should be used together with 4.2 **Road Safety** and 4.3 **First Aid**.



- Make posters which show hazards in different places, and warn of the accidents which might result. Put them in classrooms or at the clinic, or in the market. (Perhaps the children could have a poster competition.)
- Make up a song about road safety and teach the song to younger brothers and sisters.

Follow-up

Have the children carried out a safety campaign? Compare the number of accidents before and after the campaign.

Check to find out if the children remember and practise the road safety rules.

Is the school a safe place for children to work and play?



ROAD SAFETY

THE IDEA

Many children are injured or killed because they don't follow the 'rules of the road' when they are walking, or riding a bicycle, especially at night. By being more aware of the dangers on the road, and by following the important rules of the road, children can prevent these accidents from happening, and make sure their young brothers and sisters are safer too.

Why do road accidents happen?

Talk about why accidents happen on the road before reading any further.

Accidents can happen to children:

When they are walking

- Not looking before they run out into the road: maybe they are chasing a ball, a friend or an animal.
- Not watching for traffic because the road seems empty.
- Taking risks like jumping onto the backs of buses or running beside cars.
- Walking or playing near busy roads and not being careful to watch for cars and trucks using the road.
- Not taking special care when walking on roads at night.

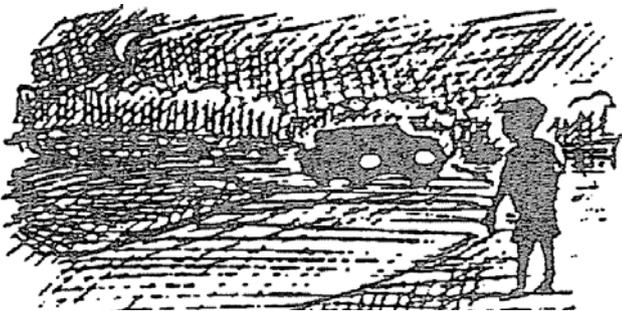


When they are riding bicycles

- When the bicycles are too big or have poor brakes.
- When they put too many people or parcels on the bicycle.



- When they ride too fast, or fail to signal a turn.
- When they try to show off to their friends by taking their hands off the handlebars, or riding in the middle of the road, or even zig-zagging along.
- When they don't use hand signals.
- When they ride bicycles at night without proper lights.

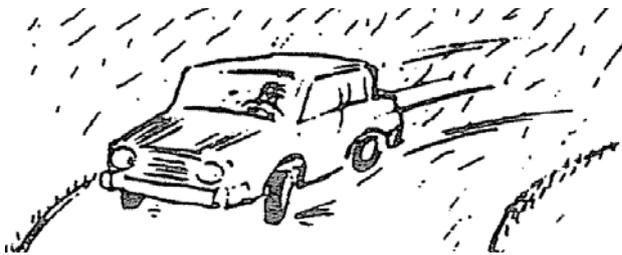


Where and how these activities have been used

Road safety programmes are very important for children. Children can not only be responsible for their own safety but can contribute to the safety of others in their schools, homes and communities. Programmes using Child-to-Child approaches in countries like Pakistan, Uganda and Lebanon have helped to emphasise children's responsibility by encouraging the setting up of Safety Committees to develop and teach safety rules to other children.

Sometimes drivers of vehicles cause accidents:

- When they have been drinking alcohol, or are very tired.
- Because they drive too fast, or fail to signal a turn.
- Because their vehicle is overloaded.
- Because the vehicle is not in good mechanical order, or the tyres are smooth so that the brakes cannot stop the car in time, or the headlamps do not work.



Roads may be wet and slippery in the rain so that drivers cannot steer properly or stop in time to prevent an accident.

Animals can cause accidents

A chicken or a goat may run into the road, so that the car brakes and swerves, injuring or killing a child.



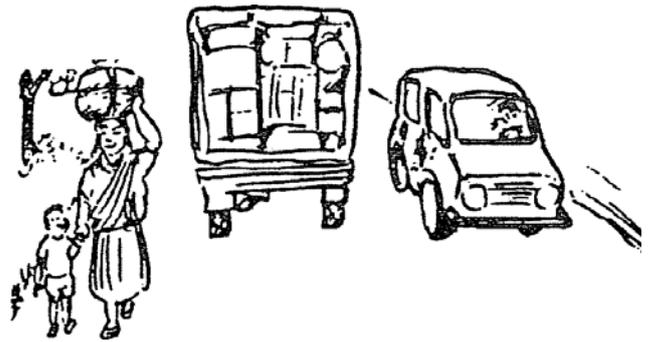
Road accidents can be prevented

Every child should know about the most important rules of the road in their own neighbourhood.

On the road

Roads aren't playgrounds.

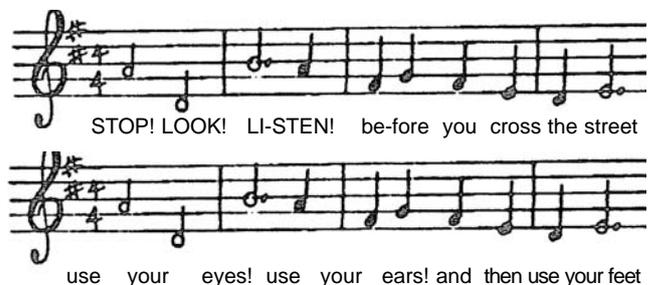
- Don't play on or near any road where there is traffic.
- If there is no sidewalk, keep to one side of the road. Face the traffic when you are walking.



- When you are on or near the road, always look AND listen for cars and trucks. Don't forget to pay attention to what's going on around you.
- Stay away from heavy machinery, road works, large holes in the road and trenches beside the road. Railway lines are dangerous too.
- Look after younger children on the road. Small children have great difficulty in assessing speed and distance.
- Follow the road safety rules, and teach them to other children.

Crossing the road

Look, listen and then walk.

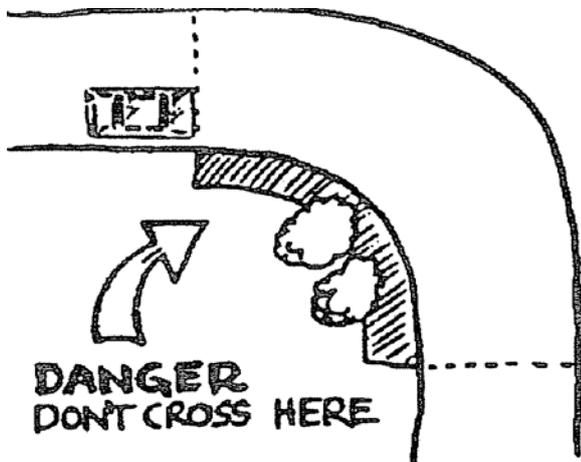


- First, find a safe place to cross – at a corner, at traffic lights or a clear place on the road. Always cross where you can see for a long distance in both directions, and where drivers can see you. It is dangerous to cross between or near parked vehicles, at the top of a hill, near thick bushes, or at a curve in the road.
- Stop at the edge of the road. Using eyes and ears, look for traffic coming, and listen as well. Keep looking and listening until you are sure the road is clear of traffic.

ACTIVITY SHEET 4.2

CHILD-TO-CHILD TRUST

- When no cars are coming, walk, don't run, straight across the road. Keep looking and listening while you are crossing.



- Always wear white clothing or something light-coloured when you are walking or riding along a road at night, so that cars and trucks can see you.

Riding a bicycle

Concentrate, look around, signal clearly.

- Make sure the bicycle is in good working order, and pay special attention to the brakes, reflectors and lights.
- You must have control of your bicycle at all times.
 - Is the bicycle too big for you?
 - Do you have too many passengers?
Are you carrying too many parcels?
 - Do you show off, or take risks?
- Ride at the side of the road, not in the middle.
- While you are riding, concentrate, with both eyes and ears on traffic and people around you. Pay attention to where the other vehicles are, especially if they are turning.
- Signal to other vehicles if you are turning right or left.



Traffic lights

The rules about traffic lights are different in each place.

REMEMBER

Don't always trust the lights. When crossing at lights, wait until the traffic has stopped before you cross, and always look out for drivers turning.

Activities

Why accidents happen

- Have any children in the group been injured in an accident on the road? Do they know anyone who has? Talk about how the accident happened and how it could have been prevented.
- Talk about what causes accidents on the road. Why do they happen?

Dangers on the road

- Show that things move at different speeds on the road. One child can be a person walking on a road, others a donkey, a bicycle, a motorbike, a car, a lorry. One at a time, they can move from one line drawn on the ground to a second, some distance away. Who is slowest? Who is fastest? Observe and remember the different speeds. Which ones are the most dangerous?
- Use the school playground to learn about dangers on the road, and to practise road safety. Draw 'roadways' on the ground similar to those in the neighbourhood. Create 'dangerous' situations by putting a bend in one road, and an intersection in another. Some children can pretend to be bushes or parked vehicles. Other children can be car or bus drivers, or people riding bicycles along the road. They could drive carefully some of the time, but at others pretend to be bad drivers, speeding up or failing to stop at a light. Children can take turns showing how they would walk along the road, or try to cross the road safely.

Traffic lights

Find out what:

- traffic lights are used for.
- the colours mean.
- the rules are for crossing at a traffic light.

Help each other

Take special care of younger children at accident black spots. Make sure that they know about the dangers at these spots. Older children can 'adopt' younger children to see that they use the road safely on the way to and from school.

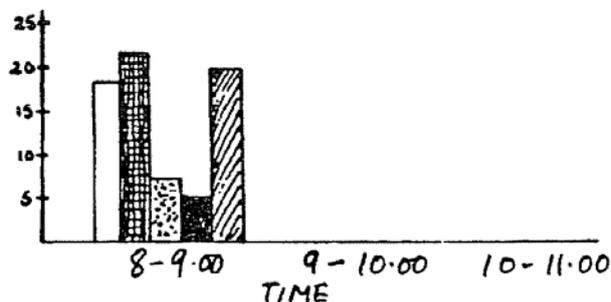
Apply the rules of the road

- Ask someone, perhaps a member of the police force, to come to talk about road safety, and especially about dangerous places in the neighbourhood. Ask if they can bring copies of any road safety materials with them.
- Make roadways in the school playground again. Is there a difference in the way the children behave?

Traffic survey

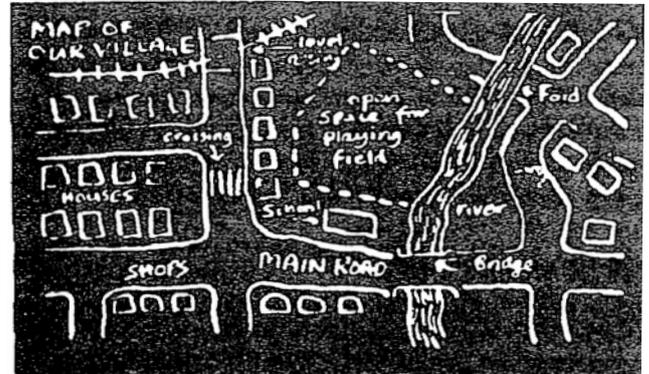
Older children can carry out a survey of traffic movement. Make a chart showing how many people, carts, cars, bikes, donkeys and lorries have passed a certain place over a certain period of time – one hour, for example. Divide the children into teams, so they can survey several different places. Or they could survey the same place at different times. Discuss and compare the charts.

		TIME			
		8-9.00	9-10.00	10-11.00	11-2.00
	PEDESTRIANS	18	25	14	7
	BIKES	22	24	21	23
	CARS	7	7	3	8
	BUSES	5	2	1	3
	TRUCKS & LORRIES	20	15	18	11



Neighbourhood safety

- Draw a map of the neighbourhood on the board or a large piece of paper, or in the sand in the playground.



Children can discuss:

- which places they use to cross the roads, on the way to school, on the way to market, on the way to meetings, at other times.
- where accidents have happened; which places are accident black spots.
- speed limits on the roads, as well as road signs; which places need extra care.
- which places are the safest places to cross; how they can help each other, especially the young ones, when walking.

If possible, use information from the survey of traffic movement to help the discussion.

- Discuss road safety around the school
 - Is the school near a main road?
 - Is there a fence around the school?
 - What are the dangers from fast-moving traffic?
 - What are the dangers of playing on or near the main road?
 - Is there anyone to help young children to cross the road before and after school?

Pass the message

- Write to newspapers and other authorities about the worst accident black spots for children.
- Make posters or wall charts showing different safety rules, especially for walking near roads, crossing the road, and moving on the road at night. Use the posters for discussion and writing about

ACTIVITY SHEET 4.2

CHILD-TO-CHILD TRUST

road safety. Or make up songs, dances and plays to tell the story. Can some of the posters be put up at the health clinic or the market?

Remember: Always pass on the message to younger boys and girls at home, and teach them about road safety as soon as they begin to walk.

Follow-up

Review the rules:

- for crossing roads.
- for walking on the road at night.
- for riding a bicycle.

After a few months, draw roads on the school playground again. Are children using the 'road' more safely?

Do the children think that other children are crossing roads at safer places, and that they are looking, listening and walking across carefully? Is anyone looking after young children on or near the road? Or has there been no change at all? What do they think?

USING THIS SHEET

All children should know the basic rules of road safety. **Teachers and head teachers** can set aside time for road safety activities. Include map-making activities in geography, and letter writing in language lessons.

Youth group leaders and religious leaders can help children outside school to understand and pass on the message to others.

Health workers and police can help children to understand dangers on the road by talking to groups of children.

Most of all, **children** can help other children by passing on the message to others, and helping younger ones to use the roads safely.