



Department of
Education



SmartSteps

A ROAD SAFETY PROGRAM FOR EDUCATORS
WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN THE EARLY YEARS

PASSENGER SAFETY

**Smart Steps: Making safer choices –
Taking smarter steps**



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Contact details

Department of Education

Road Safety and Drug Education

Statewide Services

33 Giles Avenue, Padbury, WA 6025

rsde.rfa@education.wa.edu.au

(08) 9402 6415



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SMART STEPS: MAKING SAFER CHOICES – TAKING SMARTER STEPS

WHY TEACH PASSENGER SAFETY?

Injury is a leading cause of child deaths and major cause of hospitalisation. The most common cause of injury or death of children aged 0–14 is land transport accidents. Of children who died because of a road transport accident, 59% were passengers (AIHW, 2019).

A child wearing an appropriate restraint has a 30–96% lower risk of serious injury in the event of a motor vehicle crash (Waddell, McKenna & Skarin, 2017).

For detailed information on car restraints, view [Kidsafe WA](#) Child Restraint Guidelines.

ABOUT THE RESOURCE

Smart Steps explores:

- Child car restraints and general passenger safety
- Safe pedestrian practices
- Safe places to play
- Safety on wheels
- Strategies to embed road safety education into the curriculum.

Smart Steps aims to:

- Enhance educators' understanding of the developmental capabilities of young children in the traffic environment.
- Focus on the key messages to teach children so that they can remain safe in the traffic environment.
- Provide a range of teaching and learning strategies educators can use with children to build their road safety knowledge and skills.

The resource includes activities that are suitable for children in the early years. They can be used in a variety of environments including:

- Within a classroom environment
- In an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) centre with individual children or a small group of children
- As activities for a playgroup
- By parents and carers in the home.

The activities can be adapted for age-appropriateness and also to meet varying developmental needs.



Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2019). Australia's children: Injuries. Retrieved July 25, 2025, from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/australias-children/contents/health/injuries>

Waddell, G., McKenna, J., & Skarin, D. (2017, June). Kidsafe WA childhood injury bulletin research report: Road injuries. Perth, WA: Kidsafe WA.



KEY MESSAGES AND LEARNING INTENTIONS

The back seat is the safest place to sit.

Use the safety door to enter and exit the vehicle.

Keep all body parts inside the car.

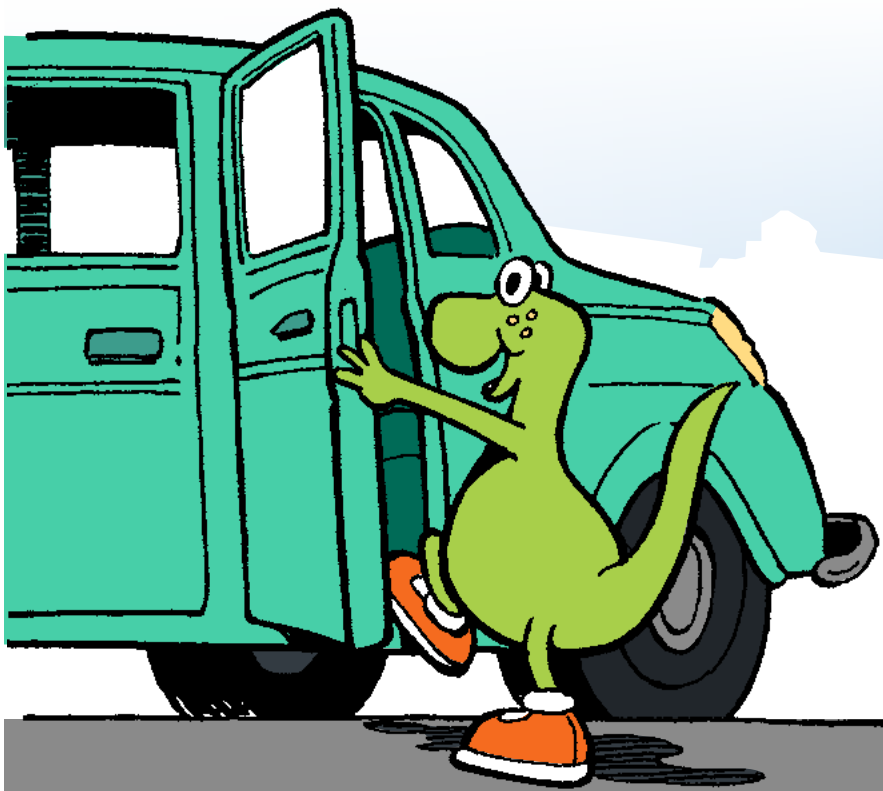
Buckle up, every child, every trip.

Choose quiet activities that won't distract the driver.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

We are learning to:

- demonstrate the use of seatbelts and restraints through play activities
- choose quiet activities that we can do in the car so we do not distract the driver
- identify and demonstrate using the safety door through role play and construction activities.





WEARING RESTRAINTS

Activity

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

Passenger safety songs

- Encourage children to listen, sing and join in the actions to the following passenger safety songs:
 - *Click clack*
 - *A ride in the car*
 - *The seatbelt song*
- Educators/adults can mime putting on their seatbelts and then driving the car, and children can mime putting on their seatbelts and then doing a safe passenger activity in the back seat such as 'reading' a book.
- Encourage children to move their bodies to the music.
- Provide musical instruments (e.g. tapping sticks) or noise making items (e.g. rice in ice cream containers, cardboard tubes and lids and wooden spoons to bang) for children to play while listening to the song.
- **Ask the children**, *why do we need to make sure we are always buckled up?*

Buckle up tight

(To the tune of *The wheels on the bus*)

*We sit in the car and buckle up tight,
Buckle up tight, buckle up tight,
We sit in the car and buckle up tight,
Every trip in the car.*

New verses can be sung by changing the name of the vehicle (e.g. truck, van, ute). For example:

*We sit in the ute and buckle up tight ...
We sit in the truck and buckle up tight ...*

Resources

Passenger safety songs:

- Click clack (p.g. 13)
- A ride in the car (p.g. 14)
- The seatbelt song (p.g. 15)
- Musical instruments or other noise-making items



WEARING RESTRAINTS

Activity

INDOOR PLAY

Car building

- Help children to build a car (bus, taxi, truck etc.) from boxes, chairs, crates or other materials available that are big enough for them to sit in.
- Help the children to strap in their toys and themselves using items such as ribbons or stockings. When they are strapping their toys and themselves into their 'vehicle' talk to them about why they need to be strapped in.

Questions to ask

Where are you going to sit?

Are you buckled up tight?

Is your dolly or teddy buckled up tight?

Why do we need to buckle up tight?

Toy cars

- Encourage children to place their toys (e.g. teddy or a doll) inside a toy car or truck.
- As they are playing talk to them about what will happen if they bump the car or truck into a wall or into another toy vehicle.
- Ask them how they could make sure teddy or the doll stay in the vehicle.
- Use ribbon, tape or stocking to tie teddy or a doll into the vehicle to simulate a restraint.
- Discuss the importance of using a restraint every trip.

Questions to ask

What keeps you safe in the car?

Why do we need to wear a restraint?

Who can help you put your restraint on?

Resources

- Boxes, crates, chairs, other equipment
- Teddy, soft toys and/or dolls
- Ribbon, elastic, tape or stockings



WEARING RESTRAINTS

Activity

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Izzy on Holiday

- Read [Izzy on Holiday](#).
- Use the pictures to discuss the key messages from the book.
- Use the questions in the back of the book to discuss key safety messages.

Picture talk

- Show *Discussion photo: Seatbelts and restraints* and talk about the need for children to be in a restraint that fits them properly and is correctly fastened.

Questions to ask

Why do you need to wear your seatbelt or restraint?

Why is it important that you sit correctly in your restraint?

Who can help you put on your restraint correctly?

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

Passenger safety songs

- Encourage children to listen to *A ride in the car* and mime actions to the different words in the song (i.e. 'get in the car', 'close the doors' and 'put our seatbelts on').
- Use vocabulary such as kerbside, safety door, seatbelt, restraint and buckled up when talking about the meaning of the songs.

Questions to ask

What do you do when you go for a ride in the car?

Which door do you get in?

What do you need to do before mum or dad starts the car?

When the car stops what door do you get out of?

Resources

- Izzy on Holiday
Hard copy – order through rsde.rfa@education.wa.edu.au
- Discussion photo: Seatbelts and restraints

Passenger safety songs:

- A ride in the car (p.g. 14)



USING THE SAFETY DOOR

Activity

INDOOR PLAY

Traffic mat

- Let children play with toy cars or trucks on a *Smart Steps Traffic mat*.
- During the play time, ask children to 'park' the car in different locations and show you where the safety door is on the car.

Questions to ask

Who is in your car?

Where do they get in/out of the car?

Who helps them get in/out of the car?

Why do they get in/out of this door?

Making cars

- Give children a collection of recycled construction materials (e.g. boxes of different sizes, cardboard tubes, ice cream containers and paper plates) and other craft supplies (e.g. sticky tape, or blunt-nosed scissors and Blu-tack) to make a vehicle (e.g. car, taxi, bus, truck, ute, tractor etc).
- Discuss the need to have restraints in the car and how they could make them (e.g. with ribbon, or tape etc).
- Ask children to show you where the safety door is on their car before attaching a safety door sticker.
- Reinforce why this is the safest door to get in and out of the car with an adult's help.

Resources

- Smart Steps Traffic mat –order through rsde.rfa@education.wa.edu.au
- Toy cars
- Collection of recycled construction materials and craft supplies
- Safety door stickers – order through rsde.rfa@education.wa.edu.au



USING THE SAFETY DOOR

Activity

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Picture talk

- Use *Discussion photo: Safety door* to talk to children about getting in and out of cars safely.
- Ensure that children understand the importance of using the safety door (which is the rear passenger door closest to the footpath or kerb).
- Use the key messages and questions on the rear of the photo to guide discussion.

No footpath

- Discuss what children might do when they get out of the car and there isn't a footpath or kerb to stand on (e.g. in a car park at the supermarket or park or on rural roads).

Blocked safety door

- Talk about how sometimes there may be things on the seat next to the safety door (e.g. shopping or sibling's baby capsule) blocking the child's exit.
- Make sure children understand that they may need to wait while parents remove these items to get out of the safety door.

Ask the children to imagine the following scenario:

*You are sitting in a car, wearing your seatbelt or restraint correctly .
Mum or dad has asked you to get out of the car but there's a big bag of shopping near the safety door.
How would you get out of the car, remembering you have to stay safe?*

Talk about their responses guiding their answers as required.

Izzy videos (all ages)

- Watch the Izzy videos that relate to your context and discuss key safety messages.
- [Izzy's guide to getting on and off the school bus safely](#)
- [Izzy's guide to the kiss and drop](#)

Resources

- Discussion photo: Safety door

- Full list of Izzy videos available on [Education Resources](#)



NOT DISTRACTING THE DRIVER

Activity

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

Passenger safety songs

- Sing the following songs with the children.
- Select actions to match the lyrics (e.g. fingers to lips for 'sit quiet and still').
- New verses can be created to reinforce other safer passenger behaviours (e.g. *If you're riding in the truck read a book; If you're riding in the car have a sleep*).

The children on the bus

(To the tune of *The wheels on the bus*)

*The children on the bus sit in their seats,
in their seats, in their seats,
The children on the bus sit in their seats,
All the way to town.*

If you're riding in the car

(To the tune of *If you're happy and you know it*)

*If you're riding in the car sit quiet and still,
If you're riding in the car sit quiet and still,
If you're riding in the car,
Or on a trip both near and far
If you're riding in the car, sit quiet and still.*

Resources

- Musical instruments or other noise-making items



NOT DISTRACTING THE DRIVER

Activity

INDOOR PLAY

Toys for the car

- Set up a variety of activities suitable for playing in the car according to the developmental abilities of the group (e.g. magnetic boards with shapes and letters, felt story books, puppets, colouring-in, search-an-object books).
- Show children how to use each of the activities.
- Remind children that they need to keep busy while travelling in the car, especially on long trips, so they do not distract whoever is driving.
- Suggest to children that they could make up a travel bag to keep in the car (e.g. soft toy, puppet, book or colouring book) and change the items regularly. These items can be used to relieve boredom when travelling in the car. This is a good start for them assuming some responsibility over their behaviour in the car.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Picture talk

- Show children *Discussion photo: Safer journeys – Driver distractions*.
- Talk about activities children can do while travelling in the car that will not distract the driver.
- Use the key messages and questions on the rear of the photo to guide discussion.

Resources

- Selection of games, toys and activities suitable to play in the car

- Discussion photo: Safer journeys – Driver distractions



PASSENGER SAFETY SONG: CLICK CLACK

Click clack

Words and music by
FRANCISCUS HENRI

What's that noise? Click. Clack. Where does it come from? Front and back.

How do you make that 'click clack' noise? You put your seat - belt on.

Verse 2. Sing it again.
Click. Clack.
Where do you sing it?
Front and back.
How do you make that 'click clack' noise?
You put your seatbelt on.

Verse 3. Boys and girls.
Click. Clack.
Mums and Dads.
Front and back.
How do they make that 'click clack' noise?
They put their seatbelts on.

Verse 4. Sing it again.
Click. Clack.
Where do we sing it?
Front and back.
How do you make that 'click clack' noise?
You put your seatbelt on.
You put your seatbelt on.

Click clack has been reproduced with kind permission of Origin Network Pty Ltd, Franciscus Henri (lyricist/composer) and the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority.



PASSENGER SAFETY SONG: A RIDE IN THE CAR

A ride in the car

Words and music by
MELISSA PERRIN

Swing ♩ = 132

F C7

Vroom, vroom, vroom. Vroom, vroom, vroom. We're go-ing to get in the car. —

3rd time to CODA ⊕ C7

F — Broom, broom, broom. Broom, broom, broom. We're go-ing to drive — ve-ry far. —

F Gm7 C7 Gm7

— We get in the car on the kerb — side. — We don't ev-en step on the street. —

C7 Gm7 C7 1. Gm7

— We all hop in and close the doors — and set-tle in - to our seats. —

C7 2. Gm7 C7

— ev - 'ry - bo - dy's feel - ing — hap - py and bright! —

⊕ CODA F G7 F G7 F

— We're as happy as we — can — be. — We're as happy as we — can — be. —

2. Click, click, click.
Click, click, click.
We all put our seatbelts on.
Tug, tug, tug.
Tug, tug, tug.
Now it fits just where it belongs.

'Has ev'rybody buckled up in the car?' asks Mum.
'Have you all got your seatbelts tight?' (Aha)
Let's start that engine and begin our trip,
While ev'rybody's feeling happy and bright!

3. Beep, beep, beep.
Beep, beep, beep.
Let's wave to all the people we see.
Zoom, zoom, zoom.
Zoom, zoom, zoom.
We're as happy as we can be.
We're as happy as we can be.
We're as happy as we can be.

A ride in the car has been reproduced with kind permission of Roads Corporation t/as VicRoads 2001 and Melissa Perrin.



PASSENGER SAFETY SONG: THE SEATBELT SONG

The seatbelt song

Words and music by
FRANCISCUS HENRI

G Bm C D G

Dad-dy's got to put his seat-belt on ___ when he's driv - ing down the road.

Bm C D

Mum-my's got to put her seat - belt on ___ when she's driv - ing down the road.

Am Am(maj7) Am7 D

Me, I'm in the back - seat, strapped in nice and neat. I

G Bm C D G

al - ways put my seat - belt on ___ when I'm driv - ing down the street.

Verse 2. Grandpa's got to put his seatbelt on,
When he's driving down the road.
Grandma's got to put her seatbelt on,
When she's driving down the road.
Me I'm in the back seat,
Strapped in nice and neat.
I always put my seatbelt on,
When I'm driving down the street.

Verse 3. I look out of the window,
And what do I see?
People in other cars
Looking back at me.
They're all sitting in their seats,
Strapped in nice and neat.
They all put their seatbelts on,
When they're driving down the street.

Verse 4. When I'm old enough to steer,
When I'm driving down the street.
I'll always put my seatbelt on,
When I'm driving down the street.
I'll be in the front seat,
Strapped in nice and neat.
I'll always put my seatbelt on,
When I'm driving down the street.

Repeat verse 1

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