

Protecting Our Children

Talking About Safety Is Not Enough

(NAPSA)—Millions of children each year suffer from injuries that could have been prevented. Unfortunately, most parents don't realize that an effective way to prevent accidental injury is to role model safe behavior for their kids. New research shows that children are more likely to buckle up, wear a bike helmet, cross the street correctly and wear a life jacket when their parents follow the same safety rules.

That means to raise safe children, parents themselves must proactively role model safe behavior—something they're not consistently doing.

New research unveiled by the National SAFE KIDS Campaign and Johnson & Johnson found that while 98 percent of parents agree it is important that they are role models for safe behavior for their children, the percentage of parents who report actually practicing safe behaviors is often lower. In addition, children with parents whose actions reinforce their words appear more likely to practice safe behaviors.

Parents cannot expect their children to adopt safe behaviors if they do not follow their own rules. For example, while 78 percent of parents say it is extremely or very important that their child always wears a bike helmet, only 25 percent of parents do. This may be why only 40 percent of children say they wear a helmet.

In addition, while 86 percent of parents say it is extremely or very important that their child always wears a life jacket when boating, only 39 percent of parents say they always do so themselves. The result? Only 57 per-



Parents should model safe behavior for their kids to prevent accidental injury.

cent of children say they always wear a life jacket, which may be due to this do-as-I-say-not-as-I-do parenting.

The research was released recently at a National SAFE KIDS Campaign press conference featuring U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Richard Carmona and pediatric trauma surgeon Dr. Martin Eichelberger to launch National SAFE KIDS Week (April 30 to May 7, 2005), a nationwide public education campaign. This year's theme is "Follow The Leader: Safety Starts With You."

Children also notice when their parents are not following their own rules. Seventeen percent of children say they have had to remind their parents to wear a bicycle helmet and 24 percent of children say they are more likely to cross a busy street in the middle of a block if they are with their mother or father.

For more information or for a copy of SAFE KIDS/Johnson & Johnson *Follow the Leader: A National Study of Safety Role Modeling Among Parents and Children*, contact the National SAFE KIDS Campaign at (202) 662-0600 or visit www.safekids.org.