

**GUIDE TO
INVOLVING
PARENTS IN
CHILDREN'S ROAD
SAFETY EDUCATION**



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INTRODUCTION

Although the importance of involving parents in children's road safety education is often highlighted [1, 2], engaging with parents can represent a major challenge for many embarking on this task. Researchers at University College London along with the Child Accident Prevention Trust consequently carried out a study to identify effective ways of engaging parents of children under 11 years-old in road safety education. The project evaluated three road safety education initiatives from across England and Wales that demonstrated consistently effective parent engagement. Based on this research project they have developed this manual to advise practitioners how to effectively engage parents in their young children's road safety education.

Why do we need to engage parents?

Road safety is a vital life skill for children as they are highly vulnerable on the roads, especially those from deprived backgrounds [3, 4]. However, a survey by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) found that less than half of all primary school children have received road safety education [5].

Road safety education involving parents is therefore essential because...

- **Children are vulnerable**
children are still developing the cognitive and motor skills they need to safely and independently cross the road [6].
- **Parents have the greatest opportunity to teach children**
parents are the ones who most often accompany their children on the roads and can support their children to develop these skills early on [7, 8].
- **Children need consistent teaching of correct road safety messages**
parents often behave inconsistently on the roads and teach their children out of date messages [9, 10].
- **Parents are role models**
children will imitate their parent's behaviour on the roads [11].
- **Road safety education has an impact**
road safety education targeting parents has a positive effect on parent and child knowledge and behaviour [2].

Who is this guide for?

This guide has been developed for those looking to engage parents of children under 11 years-old with road safety education.

The aim of the guide is to provide a starting point for developing/adapting road safety education initiatives that engage with parents. The manual provides advice on and examples of how to effectively recruit parents, engage parents during education initiatives, and support parents to continue their children's road safety education. This manual also discusses engaging parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) who may be especially vulnerable on the roads.

Although this guide has been designed for those looking to develop a new parent focused initiative or who may be facing challenges engaging parents, it may also be relevant to practitioners currently carrying out parent road safety work.

This guide refers to parents, but this term is used to encompass all those within a caregiving role.

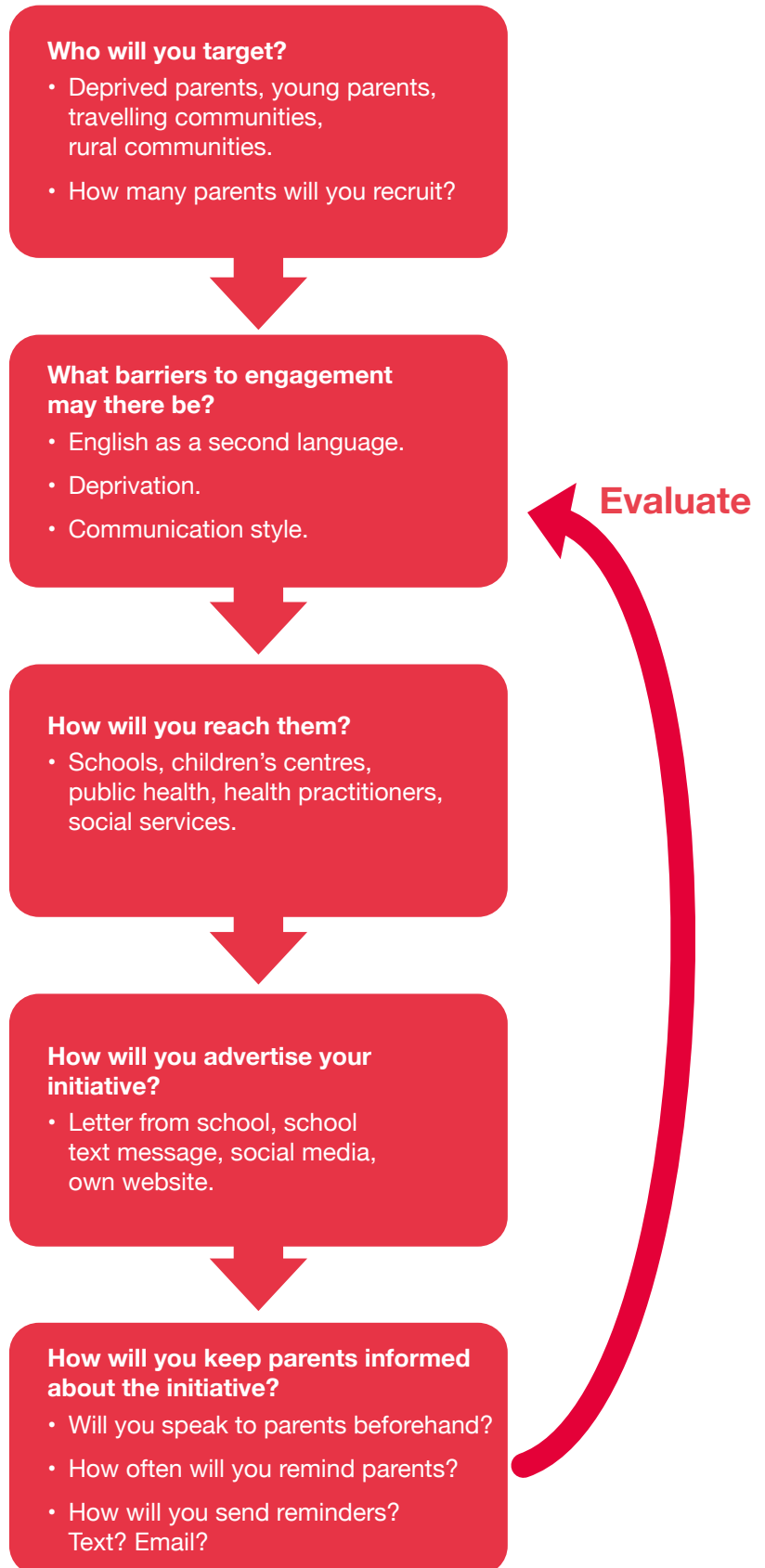
STEPS TO RECRUITING PARENTS

Whether your education initiative is targeting parents of babies or pre-adolescents or whether it is focused on pedestrian, bike, or in car safety, recruiting parents can be challenging. This is especially true for initiatives attempting to recruit parents from communities that are hard to engage with, such as families from deprived backgrounds or ethnic minorities.

The first step to a successful parent road safety education programme is therefore to ensure that your recruitment efforts are effective.

Before embarking on recruiting parents to your initiative you need to develop a recruitment plan. Experiment with different recruitment techniques and evaluate which ones are the most successful for your target audience.

This section will outline 10 recommendations for practitioners to increase parent engagement with road safety education initiatives.



Identify your target audience and tailor your recruitment efforts

A one size fits all approach to recruitment may not be effective. Your first step should be to identify the parents you want to target (e.g. child age, special educational needs (SEN), urban or rural location, deprived, ethnic minorities) and their preferred methods of communication. For example, some parents may be particularly active on social media. Recruitment strategies, however, should target multiple avenues (e.g. social media, recruitment letter, website advert).

Work collaboratively to recruit parents

Working with organisations/individuals that already have established networks with families (see box opposite) facilitates parent engagement, especially when working with marginalised communities. Identifying and engaging service providers who are already working with the target audience is beneficial as they have established networks, built trust, and understand more about the community and the context of their everyday lives. This may be a particularly effective technique when working with families that are challenging to engage with.

Working with schools is particularly beneficial, especially where a member of school staff takes on the responsibility of recruiting parents. Further, parents will often attend programmes held at schools as they view them as school activities. Establishing partnerships with schools in the first instance can be challenging. Techniques that have been found to be effective include emailing schools across the locality and meeting with the head teacher to discuss the initiative. For initiatives targeting parents of children with SEN, contacting Special Education Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) has been found to be most effective. Once a partnership with a school has been established they are often willing to participate in future years.

ORGANISATIONS THAT WORK WITH PARENTS

- Schools
- Children's Centres
- Public Health
- Health Visitors
- Social Services – social workers who work with 'at risk' families as well as foster carers and adoptive parents
- Children's clubs
- Children's/parent charities

WAYS OF REACHING PARENTS

- Letter from school/organisation
- School/organisation text message/ email service
- School parents evening
- Social media
- Websites
- Forums
- Individuals working with families e.g. health visitor, support group organiser
- Speaking to parents at child activities e.g. soft play

Raise awareness of the role parents play in children's road safety education

Parents may not feel they need to focus on road safety or may not feel competent to do so. Highlighting to parents the importance of road safety and the central role they play in teaching their children road safety may raise awareness of this issue and facilitate engagement.

Another decision to make is whether to make parent attendance mandatory in order for the child to participate. This highlights the importance of the topic to parents, but may result in disengagement from some parents who feel forced to attend or are unable to attend. To overcome this you could give the option to nominate a trusted adult to attend in the parent's place.

Provide letters that partners can distribute to recruit parents

Working collaboratively to recruit parents can be challenging as schools and other organisations often have limited resources. It is therefore helpful to provide a template letter for those recruiting parents. Letters to parents should be concise and around one page in length. The letter should include: the aim of the course, a brief course itinerary, requirements of parent's involvement, and contact details of those leading the course. See example recruitment letters on pages 8 and 9.

Clear course objectives may encourage greater participation

Ensure that parents have a clear and complete understanding of the aims and objectives of the road safety education. For longer courses, providing a course programme that outlines what the course will involve and what is needed for each session enables parents to come prepared. Course information provided to parents should be as clear and concise as possible – lengthy information may deter parents from reading it. It is also important to think about the preferred communication style of your target parents – are there a high number of parents with English as a second language? If so is there someone in your department or partner organisations that could translate parent letters/programmes?

Include brief quotes from parents who have attended – highlight what parents gained from the initiative.

'If you are all on the same page, it helps [the children], rather than [the instructors] telling them one thing and me doing it another way.'

Provide information on the number of parents who have already attended the road safety education session.

'So far 100 parents from the county have attended the road safety education.'

Provide facts or figures on road traffic injury in the group/area you are targeting.

'Our child road safety audit revealed that nearly 60 children were injured on the roads in 2016.'

Build a relationship with parents

Where possible introduce yourself (in person or over the phone) to parents before the start of the course in order to build a relationship. This may be especially important when delivering road safety education to children with SEN as more information on their individual learning styles may be required.

A recruitment approach that combines contacting families via partner organisations and introducing yourself prior to the course may be particularly effective when recruiting families who are challenging to engage with. Parents may be more willing to attend if they have established a relationship with those leading the initiative.

Making contact with parents prior to the course to confirm their attendance can increase the likelihood of parents attending. Building a relationship with families in their community and working in partnership with parents can facilitate continued engagement. Take time to get to know parents and talk to them about other aspects of their life outside of road safety.

Ensure that road safety education is accessible

Road safety education should be delivered at a convenient location (school, children's centre) that is easily accessible for parents and should be informal and welcoming in nature. Education initiatives that are too formal can result in reduced parent engagement.

Road safety education initiatives held over multiple days may need to consider:

Timing – holding your initiatives during the school holidays and advertising it as a school holiday activity may facilitate parent engagement.

Keep in touch – keep in contact with parents via phone or email prior and during the course to help keep track of parent attendance.

Parent session – parents may only be required to attend certain parts of the course, but could be given the option to attend the complete course.

Flexibility – if parents are unable to attend on a certain day you could provide them with information on when the next session that they missed is being held.

Short session road safety education initiatives may need to consider:

Timing – holding sessions during the school day may be beneficial for parents. Morning sessions, after parents have dropped children off, are often preferred. Before school pick up should be avoided if including a road safety walk as the local area may be congested with traffic.

Nominated adult - parents who work may be excluded from school time initiatives – giving parents the option to nominate a trusted adult to attend in their place may help address this.

Flexibility – If multiple sessions are being held during the day, parents could be given the option to pick their preferred session time. This though will be dependent on the setting of the initiative.

Road safety education could be embedded in parent's regular activities

In order to make road safety education easily accessible to parents it may be beneficial to include it in activities that parents regularly attend, such as child-parent groups. Parents are already attending these sessions and have established relationships and trust with those facilitating. This may be a more approachable way to introduce these topics and parents may be more open to receiving these messages, especially parents from deprived backgrounds.

Siblings should be encouraged to attend road safety education

Supporting parents to bring their child's siblings means they do not have to find childcare. Siblings can be beneficial in supporting continued road safety education as they may serve as role models of road safety behaviour and may support the learning of their younger siblings, especially where a child has special educational needs.

Siblings may prove a distraction for parents and siblings in prams may mean parents cannot hold their child's hand when on the road.

Instead children may be encouraged to hold the prams. Young siblings may be encouraged to join in. Older siblings may be involved by supporting their younger sibling to cross the road.

Involve the wider family in road safety education

Make provisions for other members of the family, such as grandparents, to attend when parents are unable. Ensuring the whole family is aware of how to teach road safety to children may engage the wider family in this activity and mean the child is exposed to more consistent road safety education.

It is important to consider how the road safety messages will be passed from grandparents to parents.

Providing take home resources may thus be beneficial in spreading road safety information.



Road Safety Walk

Dear Parents

The Reception classes are to be given a road safety session by the _____ in order to educate them about keeping safe near roads.

This is an informative and educational session for both parents and their children. It will take the form of a walk around the locality, pointing out hazards and heightening awareness of keeping safe.

The classes will be split into groups and the walks will take place as follows:

(Please amend in accordance with the arrangements for your school)

Date:	09:00-10:00 am	10:00-11:00 am	11:00 am-12:00
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3

Your child is in Group _____

We would like each child to be accompanied by an adult, either a parent/carer, grandparent, childminder, so that we can go safely on our walk, and for the Road Safety Officer, to talk to both you and your child.

Yours sincerely



Road Safety Walk

To: Class Teacher

ChildClass

My child will be accompanied on the Road Safety Walk by:

.....Parent/grandparent/guardian/childminder/other

Please indicate

Signed.....(parent)

Contact

Telephone

Facsimile

Email



Parents / Carers

12th July 2017

Main number

Independent Travel Course

Dear Parents / Carers

We are very pleased to be able to invite you and your child / children to a 4 session Independent travel workshop, including the Independent Travel bus (Tuesday 25th July). Parents / carers are asked to attend for at least the first 2 sessions.

The course provides a pathway for children from year 5 & above, to gain more confidence in Independent Travel, with a focus on safe road crossing.

Venue:

Dates:

Offering support for those considered to be less confident transport users.

Please contact me using the details above to discuss in more detail, book a place and get help with travel routes.

Yours sincerely

Road Safety Officer



ENGAGING PARENTS IN ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION

This section will focus on how to engage parents of children of different age groups during road safety education. This section provides information on age appropriate road safety messages and resources, tips on how to engage parents, and examples of road safety education for parents of children of different ages.

If you are new to road safety education contact your local authority road safety team to see what they are offering and find out more about key age-appropriate road safety messages.

Preschool Children (0-3 years-old)

Setting

Holding road safety education for parents and their young children at places they regularly attend increases engagement e.g. children's centres, parent-child groups. Where possible try to incorporate the education into parent's regular activities (parent-child stay and play session).

Delivering multiple sessions at different times of the day across the local authority increases engagement.

Informal drop-in sessions work well with parents of young children. This means they can attend and leave when suits their schedule.

Lessons

Road safety can be linked to the Healthy Child Programme:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-child-programme-pregnancy-and-the-first-5-years-of-life

Information on what to teach under 3s can be found on the following web pages:

www.brake.org.uk/info-and-resources/resources/guide-to-teaching-road-safety#earlyyears

www.think.gov.uk/education-resources/explore-education-resources/?age%5B0%5D=3-to-6&resource_type%5B%5D=lesson-plan

This literature mainly focuses on children two years and older. For younger children you can still focus on some of the key messages e.g. awareness of traffic, stop and go, hand holding, but lessons may need to be adapted.

Resources

Invite partners to provide road safety advice to parents such as bike store owners, fire service, and crossing patrol officers. They may also be able to bring resources with them such as bike helmets or a fire engine.

There are road safety resources available for young children:

www.brake.org.uk/what-s-happening/1276-road-safety-resources-for-educators

www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/early-years-personal-social-and-emotional-development/early-years-safety/early-years-road-safety

www.think.gov.uk/education-resources/explore-education-resources/?age%5B0%5D=3-to-6&resource_type%5B%5D=game

<https://roadsafety.scot/learning-zone/early-years>

Resources for the under twos may be limited. You can always look online and in the high street for resources that can be used for teaching road safety e.g. PELICAN crossing, road safety puzzles.

INFORMAL SESSIONS

Theming sessions around play rather than structured lessons creates an informal atmosphere. This is more appealing to parents, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

PLAY

Parents are more engaged in road safety if their children are engaged in play activities. Engaging children in different activities offers a route to discussing road safety with parents.

PARTNER UP

Partners (e.g. police, fire service, bike safety) can provide road safety advice and information to parents. Partners provide a novel source of education for parents.

Preschool Road Safety Education Example

Child age:	0 – 2 years-old.
Setting:	Northumberland County Council Children's Centres North http://northchildrenscentres.org.uk
Led by:	One children's centre practitioner.
Session length:	1.5 hours.
Recruitment:	The children's centres advertised their parent-child play sessions via their website and social media. The session was an informal drop-in and parents were not required to sign up beforehand. The topic of the session was not always told to parents beforehand.

Drop in parent-child play sessions were held each week (mornings and afternoons) at children's centres and focused on a different theme. During road safety week the theme was road safety.

A range of age appropriate play activities were set out before the session began. Parents could then come along with their children and join in the activities.

The aim of the activities was to introduce parents to ways they could start to teach their children simple road safety messages.

Activities included:

- Traffic light colour jelly for messy play
- Traffic light colour balls/ball pool
- PELICAN crossing and road safety dress-up (e.g. crossing patrol, police)
- Ride on bikes and cars
- Toy road scene with people and cars
- Road safety/traffic themed puzzles
- Rolling toy cars in paint and making tyre track pictures

During the session the practitioner engaged the children and parents in the activities, spoke to the parents about road safety, and answered any questions parents had. This was done in an informal manner as children were playing.

Information boards displayed road safety advice for parents and road safety information leaflets available for parents to take away were provided.

Some of the sessions were attended by fire and rescue service, crossing patrol officers, and bike store owners to provide advice and information on road safety to parents.

A road safety themed snack was provided which included fruit and vegetables that were traffic light coloured.

Resources

Children were provided with a road safety book (*Stepping Out Together: A Lesson for Life*) and a high-vis jacket to take home. Parents were provided with information on road safety. The children's centre staff had adapted information from BRAKE and THINK to make it more engaging for parents.



Primary School Children (4–11 years-old)

Setting

Holding road safety education for primary school children at their school during the school day increases parent engagement.

Working with the school to recruit parents increases parent attendance as schools have relationships with parents and means of communicating with them e.g. school text messaging service.

Framing the road safety education as a school activity can increase parent engagement.

Lessons

Information on what to teach 4–11 year-olds can be found on the following web pages:

www.brake.org.uk/info-and-resources/resources/guide-to-teaching-road-safety#earlyyears

www.think.gov.uk/education-resources/explore-education-resources/?age%5B%5D%27=3-to-6&age%5B%5D%27=7-to-12&resource_type%5B%5D%27=lesson-plan

www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/road-safety-calendars-2018-2019

Lessons for 4-11 year-olds need to be age-appropriate. Encouraging parents to reinforce the road safety messages is important, especially for younger children, as they will not necessarily remember the lessons they have been taught during the education.

If you are planning a road safety walk make sure you first carry out a risk assessment.

Resources

There are lots of free online resources available for use with 4–11 year-olds:

www.brake.org.uk/what-s-happening/1276-road-safety-resources-for-educators

www.think.gov.uk/education-resources/

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/road-safety-education-resources/road-safety-primary-school-children>

<http://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/free-resources-made-available-to-primary-schools/>

<http://brakezebras.org/index.php/activities>

You will need to supply young children and parents with a hi-vis jacket if going out on a road safety walk.

You may also want to consider leaving resources with the school to continue children's road safety education or providing children and parents with resources they can take away (see Takeaway Resources). However, this will be dependent on budget.

DAILY ROUTINES

Provide practical and simple activities that parents can embed into their daily routines with children e.g. simple road crossing steps or how to identify if a car is reversing.

INVOLVE CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Parents and children should be encouraged to participate as much as possible to keep them engaged – ask children questions, get children involved in demonstrations and get children and parents practicing crossing the road.

SMALL GROUPS

Road safety education should be delivered in small groups. A maximum of ten children and their parents means all the children can participate. Larger groups can be more difficult to engage.

Primary School Road Safety Education Example

Child age:	4 – 5 years-old.
Setting:	Primary schools across the county.
Led by:	One road safety officer.
Session length:	50 minutes.
Group size:	Maximum of ten children and their parents. Multiple sessions were held during the school day.
Recruitment:	Road Safety officers contacted schools via email and phone across the county inviting them to participate. Participating schools then recruited parents. Schools took responsibility for assigning parents to timeslots, either by parent choice or school choice. A template letter was sent to schools by the practitioners and the school sent this on to parents. The letter stated that a parent needed to attend for the child to participate. However, if parents were unable to attend with written parent approval a nominated adult could attend instead. Siblings, including babies in prams, were allowed to attend with their parent.

Parent Talk

The first part of the session was for parents only and lasted approximately 10 minutes. The practitioner talked to parents about in car safety, including car-seats and the dangers of lose items in the car. Road safety (e.g. children's developing cognitive and perceptual skills) and the objectives of the session were also covered.

Road Safety Walk

Parents and children participated in a road safety walk around the area outside the school lasting approximately 30 minutes.

The walk was led by the practitioner. Parents were instructed to hold their children's hands and for the children to walk on their inside away from the road. For parents with pushchairs, they were instructed to have their children hold onto the pram.

During the walk the following aspects of road safety were covered:

- The importance of holding an adults hand.
- The dangers of standing on/near the kerb. Children were asked what the kerb was called and what could happen if you played by the kerb.
- The dangers of driveways and cars reversing. Children were asked how you know if a car is reversing and where possible cars reversing were watched. A demonstration of the height of a child behind a car was carried out. The practitioner asked a child to stand behind a parked car and asked the children about whether the driver could see them.
- The dangers of carparks were covered, typically using the school carpark as an example. The need to stand by their parent's car was highlighted.

Safely crossing the road was also included in the walk. If there were crossings in the local area then children practiced using the crossing. The practitioner first demonstrated how to safely cross the road by having the children count their steps when crossing straight (safely) or diagonally (unsafely) across the road. During the unsafe crossing the practitioner placed their hands in their pockets and did not keep looking while crossing. Children were then asked to identify which was the safest way to cross the road.

After the demonstration children were asked to 'help' their parents cross the road. The group was split in half so five children and parents crossed at a time. Children and parents were encouraged to follow the steps to safely cross the road e.g. looking, listening, walking not running.

Q & A Session

The final 10 minutes of the session was held back at the school, with children and parents still present. This section involved showing children a series of pictures and asking them questions related to road safety (e.g. crossings/people who can help us cross the road) and safe places to play (e.g. parks). The session concluded with a road safety song that had accompanying actions.

Resources

Parents were provided with the Good Egg guide on car seats.

Children were provided with the CAPT road safety book 'It's fun to go out but...'



Be prepared for some young children to be upset when they have to leave their parents and return to class.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Setting

Road safety education for children with SEN will likely need to be a more intensive training. Short sessions over multiple days is an effective approach.

Working with schools (mainstream and special educational), especially special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) is an effective way to recruit children and parents. They can target the children and parents who will benefit most from the education.

School holidays are a good time to hold multi-session road safety education initiatives. Advertising the initiative as an activity parents and children can do over the school holidays may increase engagement.

Lessons

It is important to understand the SEN, developmental age, and preferred learning style of those participating. You may want to speak to parents about how their child learns beforehand.

The objectives of the session will depend on the developmental age and SEN diagnoses of the group you are targeting.

You may need to adapt sessions to meet the needs of children. Some children may need to focus on one aspect more than other children or may achieve only one course objective.

Information on road safety education for children with SEN can be found here:

www.brake.org.uk/educators#SEN

Children working at a younger developmental age may need to focus on the basics of road safety e.g. identifying traffic, crossing the road. Activities for children approaching the secondary school transition (7–11 years-old) may need to focus on road safety as part of independent travel.

Road safety education for children with SEN may need to be broader and include aspects of personal safety (safe strangers, dog safety, bus safety).

Resources

There are less resources available that have been developed for children with SEN. Some resources can be found here:

www.brake.org.uk/educators/21-facts-a-resources/resources/567-road-safety-resources-for-children-and-adults-with-sen

You may be able to use/adapt resources, but it is important to keep in mind the impact developmental age and SEN characteristics may have on their use.

To understand how children with SEN learn you could talk to SENCOs or organisations that work with SEN. You could also attend training on SEN.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Delivering road safety education during the school holidays means the course does not interfere with children's education and that parents may be more available to attend.

FLEXIBILITY

For longer courses you may only require parents to attend some of the sessions. Make allowances if parents are late or unable to attend sessions. Keep in contact with parents via email/phone.

COLLABORATE

Parents feel it is beneficial for their children with SEN to receive information from a range of professionals as it is more novel.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

Introduce yourself to families beforehand, even if it is just a phone call, as this builds parents trust and they are more committed to the road safety education.

Special Educational Needs Road Safety Education Example

Child age:	9 years-old +.
Setting:	Held at a venue in the Royal Borough of Greenwich – usually a school. www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200264/road_safety/829/road_safety_education
Led by:	Three or four road safety officers, two police community support officers, and two Transport for London travel trainers.
Session length:	Four mornings. Each session lasting 2 hours.
Group size:	Maximum of 18 children and their parents. Courses were held twice during the year – Easter and summer holidays.
Recruitment:	Recruitment was a joint effort between practitioners and schools. Practitioners contacted schools, in particular SENCOs, to discuss the initiative. SENCOs then invited students who they thought would benefit from the initiative and their parents. Practitioners provided a template letter inviting parents to attend. The lead practitioner would then contact parents prior to the start of the course to discuss their child's specific needs over the phone.

The course focused on independent travel, which included road safety.

Day 1

This was an introductory session to settle children into the course. Children and their parents worked in small groups to complete a series of workshops. This included:

- An interactive PELICAN crossing, with cardboard cars, buses and bikes, and costumes (e.g. crossing patrol) which allowed children to practice safely crossing the road and identifying traffic.
- Safer stranger activity where children saw a series of pictures of strangers and had to identify who was a safe stranger.
- Road safety computer game where children had to answer road safety questions.
- Table top road scene where children had to identify unsafe behaviours.
- Magnetic boards where children had to complete road safety puzzles.
- Dog safety where children learnt about what to do when you encounter a dog and practiced this with a real dog (or a soft toy dog if a real one was not available).

Day 2

The second day involved a trip on an independent travel training bus. This bus was used only for the education and ran twice. Parents were allowed to select their preferred bus time. This session covered reading bus timetables and safe behaviour at the bus stop. Role play activities using police community support officers (PCSOs) were carried out where one of the practitioner's phones was stolen at the bus stop. Children and parents then travelled on the bus and learnt about how to behave safely on the bus and received a talk from ticket inspectors. Role play activities were also carried out on the bus using PCSOs e.g. what to do if you witness drunken behaviour on the bus and to not take selfies on the bus as other passengers may get upset if they think they are in the photo.

The bus stopped off and children and parents practiced crossing the road. During the time off the bus, parents were asked to wait in a different location to their children (though still within view) and a 'stranger' (a PCSO) approached the children and asked them for information and to come with them.

Day 3 & 4

On the third and fourth days children and their parents practiced crossing the roads in the local area in small groups. This also involved buying something from the shop and making a phone call to a PCSO at the school to tell them where they were and when they would be back.

Resources

Road safety workbooks were laid out on the tables for children to complete. Children were able to take these workbooks home with them to continue to complete them with their parents.

Children could make badges at the start of the session.

Children were also provided with £1 to purchase an item from the shop.



HOW TO WORK WITH DISENGAGED PARENTS

How do you engage with parents who really need to be there?

When trying to engage with parents who would benefit most from road safety education (e.g. parents from deprived or ethnic minority backgrounds) it is effective to work in partnership with others that already have established relationships with them. This may include schools, support groups, health practitioners, or children's centres. These individuals will have established trust with these parents and understand how to effectively engage with them. Where possible holding your road safety education in partnership with these individuals/organisations may increase engagement. For example, you may hold road safety education sessions at children's centres during Road Safety Week:

www.roadsafetyweek.org.uk/

Building relationships with parents and community leaders may also increase engagement. Spend time getting to know these parents, so that you are not an 'outside face'. You could try attending parent's evenings/ school events, groups that parents attend, or child activity centres to introduce yourself to parents. If parents have expressed an interest in attending, try to speak to them on the phone beforehand so that they know who is delivering the education. Parents may be more likely to attend or show sustained engagement if they know who is delivering the education and have established trust and built a relationship with this individual.

In your recruitment adverts and letters you could provide comments and feedback from other parents, to highlight the benefits of attending according to their peers.

How do you manage working with parents and children together?

A concern for many practitioners embarking on parent road safety work is managing parents and children together. Depending on where you are holding your education (e.g. school) and the availability of other practitioners to assist with managing children, you may want to consider including a parent only session as part of the course. This will allow you to pass on road safety messages to parents without the distraction of children.

Managing parents and children may be more manageable with smaller groups. For example, you may want to hold a session for a maximum of 10 parents and young children, but perhaps 16–18 parents and older children. This will allow you to be able to direct your attention to all participants and for them all to be involved.

Keep children and parents involved. Provide activities (e.g. traffic light coloured messy play, road safety walks) that require children and their parents to participate. Encourage children to involve their parents. For example, ask children to 'help' their parents cross the road.



How do you deliver road safety education to parents without being patronising?

Parents often become disengaged if they feel they are being lectured at. An effective way of delivering road safety education to parents is to do so via their children. Targeting your road safety education at children, while involving parents, means that parents will also pick up on these messages. Children will often 'police' their parents as well.

Engage parents in a conversation about road safety. For example, while children and parents are involved in road safety play activities, speak to them about road safety. Try to involve partners, such as crossing patrol officers or the fire service, to provide road safety advice to parents.

When working with parents, especially those with a child with special educational needs, be sympathetic to their concerns. Parents may be worried about their children taking steps towards crossing the road/traveling independently. Encourage them to see the progress their child is making.

Look out for training courses on working with parents. These may be available via the local authority, charities, or other training organisations. These courses may not be related to road safety, but will provide useful information and advice on how to work with parents that you can apply to your training.

How do you manage parents who are not listening/being disruptive?

There are times when parents may be disruptive or disengaged from road safety education. Road safety practitioners often advise that they try to avoid directly confronting parents. Instead they work to involve the child to engage the parent. For example, if the parent is not holding the child's hand on the road side you may ask the child to hold their parents hand. Keep children and parents involved in the session by including practical, hands-on activities.

If working in a school or with another partner organisation (e.g. children's centre) you may be able to request a member of staff (e.g. teaching assistant/centre practitioner) to attend the education. These individuals are often known to parents and may role model how to support children's road safety to parents.





TAKEAWAY ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION RESOURCES

Providing road safety resources that parents can take home with them following road safety education can increase their continued involvement in road safety. Parents can refer back to resources and share them with the wider family to encourage other family members to educate children about road safety when they are out together.

For children...

Road safety books promote continued parent engagement in road safety. Children can enjoy these books as a bedtime story, embedding road safety into family's daily routines. These books can also be shared with the wider family to encourage everyone to support children's road safety.

Examples of road safety books that children enjoy are:

It's Fun to Go Out, But... (CAPT)

<https://www.capt.org.uk/shop/its-fun-to-go-out-but-40-copies>

Stepping Out Together: A Lesson for Life

www.amazon.co.uk/Stepping-Out-Together-Lesson-Life/dp/1857950488

If resources are limited, you could instead provide worksheets for children to take away. Though, ensure that you combine this with information for parents that highlights correct road safety messages.

<http://brakezebras.org/index.php/activities>

www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/early-years-personal-social-and-emotional-development/early-years-safety/early-years-road-safety

For parents...

A resource that promoted continued road safety engagement included *Road Safety Guides for Parents*, including:

Good Egg guide On Car Safety

www.goodeggcarsafety.com

Road Safety Great Britain Guide

<http://roadsafetygb.org.uk/resources-services/pre-school/get-ready-for-the-road-booklet-1/>

Providing take away information allowed parents to check they were following correct road safety procedures, such as using the correct car seat for their child's height and weight.

If resources are limited, you may wish to consider developing takeaway information for parents. You can find advice on websites such as:

www.brake.org.uk/parents

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/road-safety-seven-11-year-olds

If developing leaflets for parents, try to make them as engaging as possible. Keep the information clear and concise. You may also wish to refer parents to websites where they can find further information and access resources (e.g. <http://brakezebras.org/index.php/families>).

EVALUATING PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Evaluation refers to finding the value of your initiative.

Evaluation allows you to critically assess the delivery and outcomes of your initiative, which will inform decisions regarding the initiative and improve its effectiveness.

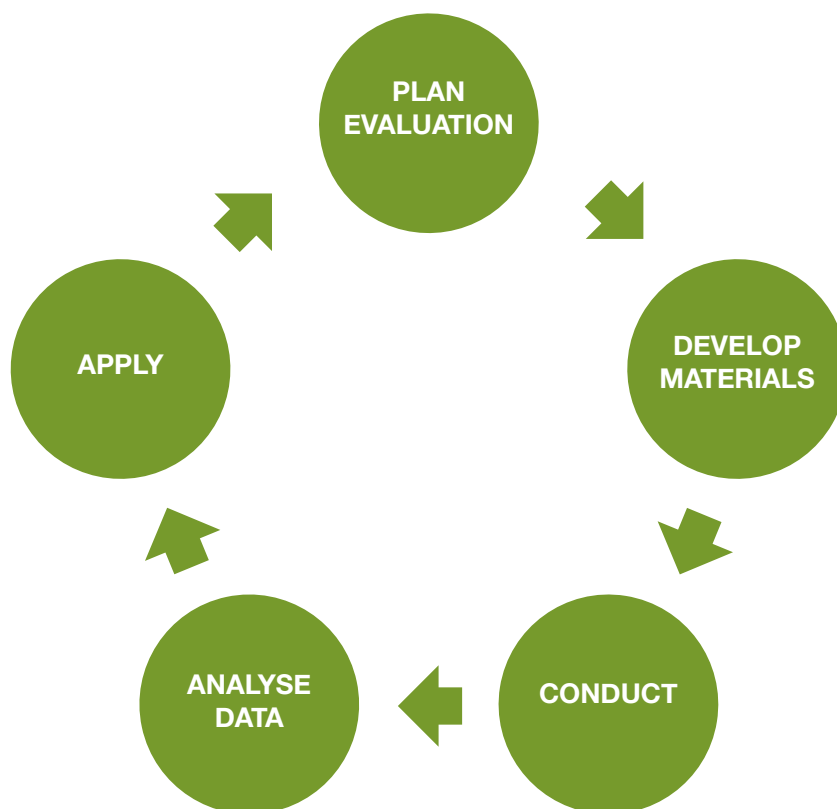
Evaluating whether your initiative has effectively engaged with the parents you were targeting and whether this engagement has led to increased parent involvement in road safety education is essential to identifying whether your recruitment and initiative have been successful and may highlight areas for improvement.

Parent recruitment can be a challenge and the most effective method may vary according to the type of initiative, area, and characteristics of parents. Testing different methods for recruiting parents and evaluating their effectiveness may therefore be a good starting point.

Survey parent's views on the methods that work best for them, the information they would like to know about an initiative beforehand, and what would make them want to attend.

If it is possible you may also want to survey parents who do not engage to better understand the barriers to participation that they face. When thinking about parent engagement you may also want to consider gaining some background information on parents who attend / do not attend (e.g. ethnicity, deprivation) to identify whether certain groups are engaging more than others.

Evaluations can be labour intensive for both participants and those analysing the results, so identifying what is achievable within your resources is important.



Although evaluation can seem daunting to begin with, once you have embedded it into your initiative it will become second nature. Your evaluation plan should be developed at the outset. When designing your evaluation it may be helpful to consider the following:

WHY EVALUATE?

- To identify effective ways of advertising your initiatives and getting in touch with parents.
- To identify which recruitment methods are most successful in boosting parent engagement.
- To understand how to promote parent involvement during and after the initiative.
- To identify barriers and facilitators of engagement.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS?

- What questions do you want to ask?
- Parent recruitment – Why parents attended? How did they find out about the initiative? Was the initiative easy for them to attend? Why do some parents not attend?
- Parent involvement – Did they engage in the training? Was it useful for them? Did it meet the objectives?
- Continued parent involvement – What did parents take away? Have they continued to teach road safety? Have they engaged with resources?

HOW WILL YOU DO IT?

- Think about who is completing the analysis and how you will analyse the data.
- Will your evaluation be a paper questionnaire or online?
- Will you gather quantitative (numbers) or qualitative (words) data?
- What may impact parents ability to complete the questionnaire e.g. English as a second language?

WHEN WILL YOU DO IT?

- Will you assess parent knowledge/behaviour before and after?
- Will you ask parents to complete the evaluation at the end of the initiative?
- Will you follow up with participants after a period of time to see if there has been lasting change?

HOW WILL YOU CONTACT PARTICIPANTS?

- Will you provide hard copies?
- Will you contact participants via email, text, phone, the partner organisation?
- Who will be responsible for managing the evaluation?

WHAT NEXT?

- How will you analyse the results? Change in behaviour? Participants thoughts?
- How can you apply this to your initiative?
- Do you need to make any changes to the evaluation for next time?

It is important to remember that evaluation is not a onetime activity. Evaluation should be regularly undertaken, to ensure that your recruitment and parent engagement techniques are still meeting your objectives. Parent engagement techniques may need to be adapted over time, which you can monitor with regular evaluation.

TOP TIPS: DESIGNING A SURVEY

1. Ensure the survey addresses the questions you want answered.
2. Make sure every question is necessary.
3. Use language that participants will understand – avoid technical jargon.
4. Use closed ended questions whenever possible – multiple choice or rating scale questions are easier for participants to complete.
5. Make sure your questions are in a logical order – topics should be grouped together.
6. Keep it short – lengthy surveys can be off-putting.
7. Think about how you will distribute the survey – would online or paper work best for your participants?
8. Get a sample of your target audience to sense check the survey.

See an example of a parent survey on Page 29.

Reception Parent's Road Safety Survey

School:

Date:

Time you attended:

1 Did you learn something new from the talk?

Yes	Please state something new that you learnt:
No	
A little	

2 Did you find the session interesting?

Yes	Which bit was most interesting?
No	
A bit	

3 Was there an opportunity to ask questions?

Yes
No

4 Were any questions asked?

Yes
No

5 If yes, were they suitably answered?

Yes
No

6 If a leaflet was produced covering the information, would you prefer the information to be in a leaflet format, instead of the talk and walk?

Yes
No

7 If such a leaflet was provided, would you put the information into practice with your child?

Yes
No

8 Was it easy for you to attend today?

Yes	Please state any difficulties:
No	

9 If just a talk was offered to parents (no outside session-walk), would you prefer this?

Yes
No

10 Do you feel you can put into practice what you and your child gained from the session?

Yes	If not, please state why:
No	
Maybe	

11 Do you feel your child benefited from taking part in today's session with you?

Yes	
No	
Maybe	

12 What do you feel was the most important part of today's session?

The indoor discussion
The outside session
Both of the above

Please add anything you feel could be added/changed to enhance the Road Safety session for others?

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Many thanks for your time

FUNDING

Potential funding sources for road safety education include:

Road Safety Trust Small Grants Scheme
www.roadsafetytrust.org.uk/small-grants-2019

National Lottery Awards for All
www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-england#section-3

GEM Motoring Assist
www.motoringassist.com/the-gem-story/road-safety-charity

FIA Road Safety Grant Programme
www.roadsafety.fia-grants.com

Co-Op Foundation
www.coopfoundation.org.uk/funding_support

Sainsbury Family Charitable Trust
www.sfct.org.uk/how_to_apply.html#

In addition to making formal grant applications, you may be able to raise funds by contacting local companies for sponsorship, resources, or project promotion. It is also worth reaching out to venues and companies to explain the purpose of your initiative as they may be able to grant you a discount on venues or resources.



HOW TO MANAGE COMMON CHALLENGES

There are some common challenges to delivering road safety education involving parents of children under 11 years-old. These challenges and how to address them are outlined below.

How do we get parents to attend road safety education?

If you are finding it challenging to get parents interested in attending road safety education, consider working in collaboration with schools and other professionals that already have established relationships with parents. Consider the pros and cons of making it mandatory for parents to attend if they want their child to attend.

Depending on the nature of your road safety education think about the timing of your session. If it is a longer session consider holding it during school holidays so that parents and children may be more easily able to attend.

Evaluate your road safety recruitment methods to find out the barriers to parents attending. Survey parents who do not engage to find out the reasons behind this and identify ways that may engage them.

How do we prevent high parent drop-out?

Introduce yourself to parents beforehand where possible either by email or phone. This will enable you to start building a relationship with parents before the road safety education commences. This may be particularly beneficial for parents of children with SEN or from deprived backgrounds.

Send out regular reminders to parents that the road safety education is coming up. Encourage parents to let you know if they are unable to attend so that someone else can be given their place.

Encourage parents to still attend the session even if they are running late. If your session is shorter perhaps allow parents to attend a later session instead.

Where do we hold road safety education?

You should hold your road safety education in a venue that is easily accessible for parents. Consider the fact that some parents may not drive and may be coming via public transport. Holding road safety education in schools is beneficial as parents and children attend the school during the week and know the venue.

If you are planning to go into the local community as part of your road safety education, ensure that the venue is in an appropriate area. Is there a place where children can practice crossing the road, is the environment safe for parents and children to walk along, and is the local area too noisy for parents and children to hear instructions? A risk assessment should be carried out of the local environment to ensure that it is safe for parents and children to participate in the planned activities.

What is the best way to organise a venue?

Organising venue requirements can be challenging, especially when working within a school. When contacting the venue/school to arrange the road safety education be specific about the requirements that you need. Outline what the road safety education will involve, what type of space is needed, and for how long you will require the space in your contact/invitation letter to the venue/school. If working in a school environment having a member of staff take the lead on organising the road safety education facilitates this process.

Be prepared to adapt if venue options change. This particularly applies to working within schools. If the room you are working in is no longer available see if there is an alternative (e.g. library, outside space) where you can continue working.

What do we do if the weather is bad?

If your road safety education involves an outdoor element the weather may present a challenge. Ensure that in the invite to parents the inclusion of an outdoor element is explained to parents so that they can prepare themselves and their children for this (e.g. bringing appropriate clothing). However, where weather prevents the outdoor element from taking place an alternative plan needs to be in place that provides the same road safety messages to children and their parents. Resources may need to be developed (e.g. pretend crossings, computer images) so that the session can be adapted to indoors.

How do you manage parents that have become disengaged and disruptive?

During the road safety education some parents may become disengaged and disruptive in the session. Working with small groups is thought to reduce the likelihood of parents becoming disengaged. A maximum of 10 children and their parents means that the practitioner can divide their attention between all the families and that the families can more easily hear and see what is going on.

When parents become disengaged from the road safety education it is best to avoid telling parents what to do. Instead it is thought to be effective to engage with the children. If the children are engaged and showing an interest this has been found to increase parent involvement.

It has also been suggested that inviting a teaching assistant or teacher to attend the walk may also increase parent and child engagement. Teachers and teaching assistants are known to parents and therefore they may be more engaged in the session and focused on involving their child.

What if parents say they have not learnt anything?

If parents do not feel they have learnt anything from the road safety education do not be discouraged. It may be worth finding out more information on the types of parents attending the road safety education – are these parents already focused on teaching their children road safety? This could form part of your evaluation to assess whether the initiative is meeting its objectives. You could also consider assessing parent knowledge before and after the road safety education to identify whether there was a change in parent road safety knowledge.

How do you teach road safety to young children?

Providing road safety education to young children can be challenging as their attention spans and processing ability is more limited than that of older children. Ensure that your resources are developmentally appropriate. For preschool children, for example, your education may need to be more play centred. Whereas for school aged children you can include road crossing practice. It is also important to ensure that parents are aware of how you are conveying road safety messages to children so that they have a clear understanding of the session aims and can more readily continue teaching their children road safety in a developmentally appropriate way.

Where can we find road safety resources?

Road safety lesson plans and resources are freely available (see section on engaging parents). Further advice can be obtained by contacting your local authority road safety team.

There are limited road safety resources for young children (<2 years-old) available. When developing road safety education for young children you may therefore have to adapt currently available resources or create your own resources. You may need to search for available resources in shops or online that can be used to teach younger children road safety.

How can we manage with limited funding for road safety education resources?

Delivering road safety education within a limited budget can be a challenge. Where resources are limited you may need to develop creative solutions. You could consider making your own resources or adapting existing online resources. For example, instead of travelling on a private bus, role play could be used. Chairs could be set up like a bus and a pretend bus stop could be set up. Take inspiration from other initiatives.

Work in partnership with others. For instance, invite school crossing patrol officers or bike store owners to attend road safety education and speak to parents. They may then have resources (e.g. helmets/bike seats) that they can bring with them to assist in delivering road safety education.

If you explain the purpose of your initiative you may be able to secure discounted rates for venues or other resources from local companies.

How do you increase staff confidence in working with parents?

Staff may not always feel confident or equipped to deliver road safety education to parents. Think about the training needs of staff. Explore the different course options available. It may be that there are courses on working with parents that are available that may not necessarily be road safety focused. However, the knowledge gained on the training can be applied to the context of road safety.

It may also be beneficial to speak with others already involved in providing road safety education or education more broadly to parents. Speaking to someone who has experience in this area may allow tips and experiences to be shared and improve the delivery of road safety education.

How do you encourage parents to continue to work on road safety after the initiative?

Assessing what happens when parents leave the road safety education is a major challenge. If you are concerned that parents may not continue to teach their children about road safety, you may want to think about providing parents with resources to support them to do so (see takeaway resources). In particular, providing books children can read with their parents has been found to be effective in increasing continued parent involvement in road safety education.

Another avenue you could think about is working with schools to continue children's road safety education. Leaving schools with information/ideas on how to follow up with road safety work or lending schools road safety resources may support continued road safety education.

Including a long-term follow up in your evaluation of your road safety education initiative will allow you to identify the extent to which parents continue to be involved in their children's road safety. Further, you can identify facilitators and barriers to this.

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Centre for Transport Studies
Department for Civil, Environmental, and Geomatic Engineering
University College London
Gower Street
London
WC1E 6BT