



The Statistics

“Nearly one-fourth of children between the ages of five and nine killed in traffic crashes in 2002 were pedestrians.”

Source: NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts, 2002.

The first reported pedestrian vehicle fatality occurred in the United Kingdom in 1896. Katherine Driscoll died as a result of being struck by a vehicle while at the Crystal Palace. The maximum speed of the vehicle was four miles per hour at the time of impact.

Source: Pedestrian Accident Reconstruction, Jerry J. Eubanks, ACTAR.

The pedestrian-motor vehicle death rate among children is declining. One contributing factor is the fact that children are walking less. In spite of this, pedestrian injury remains the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths among children. Not all pedestrian injury or deaths are traffic related. Children under the age of two are more likely to suffer injuries in driveways, parking lots and on sidewalks. Most of these injuries are severe.

In 2001, the most recent statistics for Texas, a total of 8 children ages five through nine were killed in pedestrian-motor vehicle crashes. In addition, 11 children ages zero through four were killed in pedestrian-motor vehicle crashes. For ages zero through nine, the highest number of fatalities occurred when crossing the street not at an intersection or crosswalk!

Source: Texas Department of Public Safety, 2004.

GET THE FACTS

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Developmental Skills

Elementary age children are at greatest risk because of their limited developmental skills. Characteristics of this age group:

- field of vision 1/3 narrower than an adult's
- unable to determine the direction of sounds

- cannot accurately judge the speed or distance of moving vehicles
- lack ability to understand how much time and distance is needed for a vehicle to stop
- overestimate their own abilities
- are easily distracted and tend to focus on one thing at a time like a ball or friend
- are easily hidden by bushes, parked cars, etc.



View taken at eye height of a 6-year-old pedestrian



View taken at eye height of a 10-year-old pedestrian

*Above photos taken from **Pedestrian Accident Reconstruction**, Jerry J. Eubanks, Lawyers & Judges Publishing Co., copyright 1994, Tuscon, AZ.*

Other Contributing Factors

Children are not experienced when it come to being exposed to traffic threats that are beyond their cognitive, developmental, behavioral, physical and sensory abilities. Parents oftentimes overestimate children's pedestrian skills and overlook the key ingredient of training children to cross a street correctly and respect the vehicle.

Most young children are struck near their homes in streets or drive-ways when they:

- run out between parked cars
- walk along the edge of the road
- cross in the middle of the block or in front of a turning car

Children think that because they can see the vehicle and the driver, the driver can see them. Not in every case. They also tend to be impulsive and have no frame of reference for judging the speed of a vehicle. Auditory and visual acuity, depth perception and proper scanning ability develop gradually and do not fully mature until at least age ten.



Some of the Facts

- Most child pedestrian deaths occur between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.
- Death rates are twice as high in urban areas as in rural areas.
- Toddlers (ages 1 to 2) sustain the highest number of pedestrian injuries due to small size and limited traffic experience.
- More than half of all toddler pedestrian injuries occur when a vehicle is backing up.
- Most pedestrian injuries occur more often in residential areas and on local roads that are straight, paved and dry.
- Sadly, nearly 13 percent of motor vehicle traffic related childhood pedestrian deaths are a result of a hit and run incident.

Tips for Parents

Parents and care givers should never allow a child under age 10 to cross a street alone. When children are going to and from school they need to:

- Learn and obey traffic signals and signs.
- Cross at corners using traffic signals and crosswalks.
- Stop at the curb, or at the edge of the road if there is no curb, before crossing the street.
- Look left-right-and left again before crossing the street, cross when the street is clear and keep looking both ways while crossing.
- Walk, do not run across the street.
- Walk facing traffic, on sidewalks or paths.
- Walk as far to the left as possible if there are no sidewalks.
- Watch for cars that are turning and backing up.
- Try to make eye contact with drivers before crossing in front of them; the child may see the driver, but the driver might not see the child.
- Always hold a grownup's hand in parking lots.
- Wear bright clothing in the daytime and retro reflective clothing or tape from dusk to dawn.

When children are at play, follow these easy steps:

- Watch the child at all times.
- Make sure child plays in safe places, such as yards, parks and playgrounds — never, ever in the street.
- Fence off play areas from the driveway and street.
- Teach your child never to run or dart out into a street for a ball, pet or any other reason.

Additional Resources

National SAFE KIDS Coalition
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Passenger Safety

Video: *Bee A Safe Ped* (English and Spanish)
4-H After School Program Theme Week: Pedestrian and Bicycle Helmet Safety



NOTE TO DRIVERS...

The ultimate responsibility lies with drivers. Drivers should slow down in residential and school areas and always remember that children are impulsive and tend not to think before they act.

Pedestrian Tips

- ✓ Learn and obey traffic signals and signs.
- ✓ Cross at corners using traffic signals and crosswalks.
- ✓ Stop at the curb or at the edge of the road, if there is no curb, before crossing the street.
- ✓ Look left-right-and left again before crossing the street.
- ✓ Walk, do not run across the street.

Pedestrian Tips

- ✓ Watch for cars that are turning and backing up.
- ✓ Try to make eye contact with drivers before crossing in front of them.
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