Effective Ways of Engaging Parents/Caregivers in their Children’s Road Safety Education

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Introduction

- Parents worry about how to teach their children road safety (Alexander, Bartley, & Davern, 2017; Pfeffer & Tabibi, 2016).

- Nearly half of all primary school children (6-11 years-old) had not received road safety education in 2019 (RoSPA, 2019).

- Parents feel they are best suited to teach their children road safety (Muir et al., 2017; Pfeffer & Tabibi, 2016).

- Few initiatives are directed at parents, despite evidence which shows parents are significant role models of road safety behaviour - CAPT.

- Road safety initiatives targeting parents have a positive impact on road safety knowledge and behaviour (O'Toole & Christie, 2018).

- The role of parents in children’s pedestrian safety education has been neglected, even though children are most vulnerable as pedestrians (O’Toole & Christie, 2018).
Study

• **Aim:** to identify effective methods of engaging with parents, especially parents from deprived and ethnic minority backgrounds.

• Online survey of road safety initiatives across the UK:
  • 50 respondents representing 41 different local authorities.
  • 10 initiatives were followed-up with via a phone, resulting in the selection of 3 initiatives.
Study

- **Initiative One:**
  - Children with SEN – primary and secondary school.
  - Four mornings (2 hours each).
  - Independent Travel - children and parents practice crossing the road, travelling on the bus, stranger danger and dog safety.

- **Initiative Two:**
  - Children in reception (4-5 years-old).
  - Carried out at school and lasts 50 minutes.
  - A parent talk on road safety and car seats, a short road safety walk and a child talk at the end.

- **Initiative Three:**
  - Parent-child play sessions (birth – 2 years-old).
  - Child activities themed around road safety.
  - Attended by fire service, bike store owners, and crossing patrol officers.
Study

• 35 parents/caregivers were interviewed (35% response rate):
  • 7 from I1
  • 25 from I2
  • 6 from I3

• 9 practitioners were interviewed:
  • 2 from I1
  • 3 from I2
  • 4 from I3

• Thematic analysis of interviews were carried out.
Recommendations

• Work *collaboratively* to recruit parents.

• *Clear* course objectives may encourage greater participation.

• Build a *relationship* with parents.

• *Siblings* should be encouraged to attend road safety education.

• Ensure that road safety education is *accessible*.

• Road safety education could be *embedded* in parent’s regular activities.
Recommendations

• Involve the *wider family* in road safety education.

• Deliver road safety education in *collaboration* with a range of partners.

• *Engage* children to *engage* parents.

• Incorporate activities that parents can *embed* into their routines with children.

• Practitioners delivering road safety education need to be *flexible* and *adaptive* in their approach.

• Providing *resources* encourages continued parent engagement in road safety education.