

Child-Friendly Areas

Make your community safe for kids

Children are at risk of unintentional injuries everywhere they go. That means that the places they live and play, such as houses, roads and cities, can be dangerous.

Governments and companies are working to set this right by strengthening policies and laws, and improving infrastructure. Children can also learn to make safe choices when going about their daily activities, so that they prevent these injuries.

With some collective resources, shared willpower and plenty of imagination, communities can also take the initiative to eliminate the negative elements in children's environments, and make their cities, suburbs and villages more **child-friendly**.

Safe Routes to Schools

WHAT

- Start a Malaysian 'Safe Routes to Schools' Campaign to keep children safe while walking and cycling in the community.

WHO

- Your local community organisation, such as the Parent-Teachers' Association in your child's school or your residents' association.
- Uniformed clubs and other associations in your child's school.
- Local school bus drivers ("Uncle Bus") and drivers of other forms of transportation.
- The local municipal council, housing developer, relevant government ministries and religious bodies in your area.

HOW

- Provide children with proper **training** on how to ride a bicycle properly, choose the right bicycle and helmet, wear safety equipment and navigate traffic on the road.
- Start **cycling/walking groups**, where children who live near each other can cycle/walk home in small groups of twos and threes, with an older child as the designated leader.
- Petition your local municipal council to **upgrade side lanes** and back lanes in your housing area, so that they can be special paths for bicycles and pedestrians.
- Organise an **art competition** in the local school to encourage children to design their own reflector jackets or sleeve bands that the children can wear while cycling/walking, or design car stickers that can be placed in cars that support the campaign.



Image credit: 'Have Fun, Be Safe!' Companion to the World Report on Child Injury Prevention, WHO-UNICEF, 2008

Mobile Mums and Uncle Bus

WHAT

- Start a campaign or project to increase the safety of child passengers who ride in cars, school buses or vans to school.

WHO

- Mothers who serve as family chauffeurs to take their children to school and back.
- Schoolbus drivers (“Uncle” or “Auntie Bus”) and other providers of school transportation.

HOW

- Start **Mobile Mum’s Clubs**, where mothers who chauffeur their children to school can get together and create opportunities for education and awareness. They can share carpool duties, organise meetings and workshops, and sensitise other drivers to be extra aware of child cyclists and pedestrians.
- Start a **Safe Driver Project** with school buses. The children who are passengers on school buses can rate their buses in terms of road as well as passenger courtesy, safe driving tendency and dependability of their bus drivers. The results can be tallied and at the end of each school term, the bus drivers can be presented with a number of stars that represent how well they scored amongst children. Parents will choose to send their children on the buses with the most stars!

Child-Friendly Play Areas

WHAT

- Create safe and child-friendly play areas for children so that they can have fun without getting injured.

WHO

- Neighbours in the community, residents’ associations and the local Parent-Teacher Association.
- Local municipal council, local authorities such as Indah Water Consortium, local police personnel, school authorities and housing developers.

HOW

- Organise periodic **“gotong-royongs”** (community-based activity) to clean up the neighbourhood playgrounds and parks, plant new flower shrubs and fruit trees, and fix broken play apparatus.
- Organise **Chaperone groups** where parents, grandparents and other guardians can take turns to supervise children at the park during playtime.
- Have the children in the community work together with the local municipal council and **erecT signages in parks** about the rules and regulations on the proper usage of the facilities. Have the children themselves come up with these rules, as well as an innovative way to enforce it.
- Work with the local authorities and housing developers to keep children **safe from water**. Ensure that mining pools and water treatment ponds are fenced (and the fences checked periodically by local municipalities) with proper signages, that monsoon drains have proper covers and fences, and that children do not play near rivers, even small streams.