

Making Wisconsin kids SAFE KIDS

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The unintentional injury-related death rate among children ages 14 and under nationwide declined more than 40 percent from 1987 to 2001. But the bad news is that unintentional injury remains the leading cause of death for this age group. More children die from what people call “accidents” (motor vehicle crashes, fires, drowning, and other injuries) than from any other cause.

The good news is that up to 90 percent of these so-called “accidental” injuries are preventable. To aid in this prevention, SAFE KIDS Wisconsin supports 14 community-based coalitions and chapters across the state. These local coalitions and chapters combine the expertise of community agencies and individuals to prevent childhood injuries. Through the educational programs and activities of its coalitions and chapters, SAFE KIDS Wisconsin stimulates changes in attitudes, behavior, and the environment to promote safety. SAFE KIDS Wisconsin is a member of the National SAFE KIDS Campaign. Its lead agency is Children’s Health Education Center, a member of Children’s Hospital and Health System.

The coalitions and chapters focus on a multitude of unintentional injuries including, but not limited to,

motor vehicle safety, home safety, bicycle/sports safety, pedestrian safety, and fire safety. Educational programs that reach out to caregivers, children, and the community help raise awareness about unintentional injury prevention. All coalitions and chapters have programs to provide car seats and bicycle helmets to low-income families. Combining this with proper education makes safety a priority for families.

Wisconsin Works to Improve

In a recent National SAFE KIDS Campaign legislative review and grading, Wisconsin received an “F” for its current car seat laws. The state has been charged with making numerous improvements by

2006, not just to improve its grade but to create a safer environment for child passengers. SAFE KIDS Wisconsin is currently working with Representative Jerry Petrowski (Stevens Point) to once again introduce strong improvements for child passenger safety legislation.

Community members, parents, and professionals who are interested in working to prevent unintentional injuries are encouraged to get involved in their local SAFE KIDS coalitions/chapters. For more information on the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, SAFE KIDS Wisconsin, or your local SAFE KIDS coalition/chapter, contact the SAFE KIDS Wisconsin coordinator by phone at 866.228.5670 or by e-mail at bclementi@chw.org.

Ms Clementi is the coordinator of SAFE KIDS Wisconsin.

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