

Safe Kids Sonoma County

November, 2006

Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death and disability for children ages 14 and under. In Sonoma County, there were 195 hospitalizations and 7 deaths due to unintentional injuries among children ages 0-14 in 2004. Many people think that these injuries and deaths are "accidents", but most of these incidences could have been prevented with education, protective equipment, and/or environmental changes. Safe Kids Sonoma County's mission is to prevent unintentional deaths and injuries to children ages 14 and under in our county.

Falls and motor vehicle collisions (including bike and pedestrian) are the leading causes of hospitalized and fatal injuries. These are the focus areas for Safe Kids Sonoma County.

Falls Prevention: Falls are the leading cause of hospitalization for children ages 0-14. Fall risk depends on a child's stage of development. For infants and small children, parents can childproof their home to secure windows, block access to stairs, and create safer spaces for babies and children to play. Parents of older children can make sure that playgrounds have a soft ground covering and that children have the proper safety equipment for sports. Currently, the Falls Prevention Action Team is rotating four home safety displays in waiting rooms of community clinics throughout the county. The group is also partnering with the Health Source @ KidSake to distribute a falls prevention kits to childcare providers.

Bike and Pedestrian Safety: Safe Kids Sonoma County operates a bicycle safety program that provides helmets to organizations serving children under 18 from low-income families. Anyone in the community can also apply to use the Safe Kids Bike Rodeo Kit to put on a top-notch bike rodeo at their school or organization. Application forms can be found on the Safe Kids website. Bicyclists who do not wear helmets are six and a half times more likely to have head injuries than those who do not wear helmets. Parents can help their children by requiring them to wear helmets as well as being a good role model and wearing a helmet themselves. Safe Kids also has a helmet bank for children from low-income families.

Child Passenger Safety: Safe Kids Sonoma County trains car seat technicians, holds car seat check-up events, and is creating a community car seat education class.

The California Parenting Institute provides car seat education classes in English and Spanish each month with funding support from the County of Sonoma Department of Health. Classes are free and low-cost car seats (including booster seats) are available for class participants from low-income households. Please call CPI, 585-6108, for more information. Additional information about child safety seat education programs and fitting stations may be found at the website listed below.

To learn more about Safe Kids Sonoma County, or to download program resources, please visit our website at www.safekidssonomacounty.org.

Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 13, 2006

Contact Person: Beth Dadko, Coordinator, at 565-6678