



Program Guide

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Safe Kids and Bell Sports Partnership.....	4
Conducting Research to Determine Program Strategies.....	5
Building a Wheel Safety Committee.....	6
Wheel Safety Education.....	7
Creating Safer Riding Environments.....	13
Advocacy and Public Policy.....	14
Media Outreach.....	17
Evaluation of Safe Kids Ready to Roll.....	20

Introduction

The Problem

Bicycles are a classic symbol of childhood recreation, transportation and health. More than 70 percent of children ages 5 to 14 (27.7 million) ride bicycles. In addition, child participation in other wheel-based sports, such as skateboarding and inline skating, has grown exponentially over the past decade. Participation in wheeled sports helps children develop the habit of healthy physical activity, and also contributes to a sense of independence and responsibility.

Unfortunately, bicycles are associated with more childhood injuries than any other consumer product except the automobile. Each year approximately 140 children ages 14 and under are killed as bicyclists and a total of 251,366 child bicycle injuries were recorded in 2005. Additionally, more than 109,000 children sustained injuries related to skates and skateboarding.

Head injury is the leading cause of death in bicycle crashes and is the most important determinant of bicycle-related death and permanent disability. Helmets have been shown to reduce the risk of head injury by as much as 85 percent and the risk of brain injury by as much as 88 percent. Unfortunately, National estimates report that bicycle helmet use among child bicyclists ranges from 15 percent to 25 percent.

Since 1989, Safe Kids has partnered with Bell Sports to change these facts. The Safe Kids Ready to Roll program guide and bike rodeo kit will provide your coalition with the essential tools you need to improve the safety of children riding on wheels in your community.

The Solution

Safe Kids Ready to Roll is a comprehensive program that includes a step-by-step guide to conducting a community-based wheel safety program. The goal of Safe Kids Ready to Roll is to reduce the incidence and severity of wheel-related injuries by:

- Increasing helmet use
- Promoting safe wheel-riding behaviors
- Creating safer wheel-riding environments

As a member of the National Bike Safety Network, Safe Kids provides this guide to its coalitions in support of the National Strategies for Advancing Bicycle Safety, which outlines five key goals for improving cycling for all:

- Motorists will share the road
- Bicyclists will ride safely
- Bicyclists will wear helmets
- The legal system will support safe bicycling
- Roads and paths will safely accommodate bicyclists

The Safe Kids and Bell Sports Partnership

For more than 15 years, Bell Sports has committed its expertise and funding to Safe Kids coalitions across the country to keep kids safe from bicycle- and other wheel-related injury and death.

More than 2.5 million helmets have been distributed to kids in need nationwide through Safe Kids coalitions, courtesy of Bell's discount helmet program. The discount helmet program offers access to numerous Bell products, including ski helmets and multi-sport helmets, which can be used for inline skating, skateboarding and scooter riding.

Bell is also a firm believer in reinforcing wheeled sport safety skills and helmet use through hands-on activity. Bell's history of support in this area ranged from supporting the first-ever Safe Kids Safety Contest – where 2,000 child essay writers each received a free bike helmet – to donating \$1 million worth of helmets for children in need for Safe Kids Week 2002.

On the legislative front, Bell Sports supports the annual Safe Kids helmet legislative and enforcement grant program. Through these grants, coalitions are able to conduct advocacy efforts to enact or enforce helmet-use legislation for bike riding or other wheeled sports. Numerous coalitions have been able to make strides in the legislative arena and encourage more kids to wear helmets through Bell's support.

Bell Sports, the world's leading supplier of bicycle helmets, has been keeping riders safe for over 50 years. Thanks in part to Bell's generous support of Safe Kids, the bicycle injury death rate among children ages 14 and under declined by 69 percent from 1987 to 2001. Universal use of bicycle helmets by children ages 4 to 15 could prevent between 135 and 155 deaths, between 39,000 and 45,000 head injuries, and between 18,000 and 55,000 scalp and face injuries annually. As kids enjoy more and varied recreational activities, such as skateboarding and riding scooters, Safe Kids will continue to work with Bell Sports to keep them safe.

Conducting Research to Determine Program Strategies

Step 1: Collect injury-related data and determine trends.

Prior to starting your program, you should determine for your community the number of children treated for wheel-related injuries in emergency rooms and hospitals, the severity of the treated injuries and the number of deaths resulting from wheel-related injuries. Determine the percentages of deaths and injuries that occurred when children were wearing the proper gear, especially helmets. Determine patterns of injuries by examining how, when and where injuries happen, age and socioeconomic groups affected, extent of injuries, length of stay in the hospital, cost of treatment and geographic distribution of injuries.

Step 2: Determine existing programs and environmental factors that contribute to safe riding.

Explore the information and safety programs that already exist in your community for child cyclists and other wheel-riders.

Are there bike helmet giveaway programs through the local police?

Are children educated about bicycle safety through the schools?

Do laws exist for mandatory helmet use?

Are there safe environments (shared-use paths, bicycle-friendly road designs, skate parks, etc.) where children can ride?

The answers to these questions will help you to determine where you need to begin, whether wheel safety messages are new to this audience or ignored, and if the environment enables safe riding.

Step 3: Determine current perceptions and behaviors.

Once you know where the injuries occur and the factors that contribute to these injuries, it's time to measure the perceptions and behaviors of the community. What are the attitudes of your target audiences – children, parents and other community members? Do they know the right gear to wear when riding a wheeled vehicle? Do they take safety precautions when riding on a shared road or multi-use path?

Now watch those riders and their parents. Conduct observations of helmet use, traffic laws, riding skills, etc. Measuring actual behaviors in the beginning of the program will help you to evaluate your success throughout implementation.

Building a Wheel Safety Committee

As you know, a coalition is made up of many types of people and organizations. Recruit members of your coalition and community to be a part of a “wheels committee.” Sometimes, this committee works closely or paired with the pedestrian committee. Who would be interested in joining this committee?

Bicycle shop owners	Traffic engineers
Cycling enthusiasts	Urban planners
Environmental and conservation advocates	Smart growth advocates
Police	Physical fitness advocates
Neighborhood leaders	Educators
Head injury specialists	Local businesses
Skate park owners or employees	Insurers
Nurses, doctors and other emergency responders	Elected officials
Parents, grandparents and other caregivers	University students
Media	Kids

Although these people may not be able to join you for every meeting, keep them informed of your efforts. Send them agendas, e-mail them meeting minutes or publish a mini-update to e-mail to these potential supporters. When the time comes to advocate for a traffic-calming device, host a wheel safety event or conduct research, one of these people could be very helpful.

Another person to contact is your state’s bicycle/pedestrian coordinator. Invite him or her to a wheels committee meeting as a guest speaker to provide input on your objectives and strategies. The state bicycle/pedestrian coordinator can link your committee to other groups working on similar issues.

Engaging Committee Members

As a coalition coordinator, you mobilize people on a daily basis. Here are some reminders for keeping committee members motivated and on track.

1. Disseminate agendas prior to each meeting.
2. Mail or e-mail meeting minutes to all members of the committee, whether active or not.
3. Host online discussions or conference calls when calendars do not allow a face-to-face meeting.
4. Share articles, research, new resources and other tools with your members to add to their knowledge of bikes, scooters, skateboards and inline skates.
5. Develop an action plan and a timeline for the committee, and assign specific items to each member. Consider their talents and expertise when asking for help.
6. Designate someone else to lead the wheels committee, and hold him or her accountable for following all of the above tips. Parents make excellent leaders!

The best way to keep a volunteer is to thank him or her whenever a task is taken on or completed! Be sure you provide incentives and gratitude for his or her efforts.

Wheel Safety Education

Educating both adults and children about safety related to bicycles and other wheeled vehicles is important. Education programs work to influence the cognitive and behavioral factors that may lead to injury and death.

The most common crashes among children are:

1. Ride-out – This occurs when, without stopping, a child rides into a street from a driveway, sidewalk or curb. Often the child does not look before riding out and is not visible to the driver.
2. Left turn or swerve – This occurs when a child moves left without yielding to other traffic, often without looking behind for traffic.
3. Stop sign ride-out – This occurs when a child does not obey a stop sign. Children often run stop signs, not realizing that they have to follow the same rules as drivers.
4. Wrong-way riding – Children riding against the flow of traffic are hit in a variety of situations, commonly when a right-turning car pulls around a corner, hitting an oncoming wrong-way rider. Seeing cars coming head-on gives a false sense of security to the rider, because the rider often cannot be seen and drivers do not expect a rider to be there.

It's important to teach children the safest ways to avoid these dangers. A Safe Kids Ready to Roll event can be the first step to introducing new information about cycling and riding to kids and their parents. Learn how to plan and set up a Safe Kids Ready to Roll event below.

Step 1: Target a location

Your research will reveal areas where children and parents need wheel safety education or safer riding environments. Work with local police to prioritize locations to target. The police will also be helpful in promoting the event to the community.

Step 2: Invite police neighbors, parents, educators, and other in the community to join you as you plan the event.

Once you target a location, determine community members who could help you to plan and promote the event. If it is a school, ask the physical education or health teacher for support. If it is a neighborhood, ask a traffic officer for the area to help you identify neighbors who are interested in keeping kids safe.

Step 3: Determine an event date, time, location and rain plans.

If you are working with a school or a children's organization, such as the Scouts, ask them for suggestions about the best time and place. For communitywide events, choose a parking lot that can be vacated and is near a playground. In case of rain, reserve a school gym, or promote an alternate date in advance. Keep the event to four hours, and offer two shifts to volunteers. A typical event runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Step 4: Seek in-kind sponsors to provide incentives, helmets, refreshments and entertainment.

Local businesses like their customers to believe they are involved in the community. There are many in-kind donations you can seek for this event. Some examples are:

- A fast-food chain can donate certificates for fries or ice cream to kids that complete the program
- A local grocery store can provide drinks and snacks for volunteers
- A radio station can provide music and live coverage
- An insurance company can donate funding to purchase the helmets through the Bell discount program

How do you ask for these donations? At least two months in advance, send a letter making a specific request (e.g., 30 bottles of water for volunteers). Be sure to let the potential sponsor know what they will get as a result. For example, you may want to include their logos on all promotion and mention them in the news release.

Step 5: Promote the event.

Safe Kids provides template tools in the media section of this guide that you can use to promote your event locally. Promotion is critical to the success of this event, because it determines the number of participants.

Step 6: Order helmets and other materials.

Be sure you have enough helmets for the maximum number of children that could attend. In addition to the contents of the Ready to Roll kit, other supplies to consider having on hand are:

- Tables for registration, refreshments and educational materials
- Chairs
- Name tags for volunteers
- Markers and pens
- First aid kit
- Public address system
- Basic tools for bike repairs and a tire pump
- Additional traffic cones, colored masking tape, sidewalk chalk or sponges to mark courses
- 100-foot tape measure
- Cooler for soft drinks, water or ice
- Prizes for participants
- Provision for a shaded area, such as a tent
- Sunscreen, in case children do not have any
- Extra bicycles in proper working order
- Surgical hats (for children to wear if they are borrowing helmets)
- Reflective stickers

Step 7: Recruit volunteers.

Volunteers make up your coalition. Besides the wheels committee, you can recruit local police officers who patrol the targeted neighborhood, bicycle shop employees, paramedics, educators, health and fitness advocates, parents and teenagers seeking public service credits. These volunteers should be trained to fit helmets, teach safe riding skills and engage children.

Step 8: Set up the stations.

Things that you will want to consider having are: a banner, flag ropes, cones, report cards, and signs to indicate each station, including:

- Helmet Check
- Wheel Fit
- Wheel Shop
- Ride Right
- Following Rules
- Safe Places to Wheel

Station 1: Helmet Check

Before a child participates in this event, you want to be sure he or she has a helmet that fits and meets the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's standards (indicated by presence of a CPSC label). The wheels committee should determine in advance the policies for providing free or low-cost helmets and replacing helmets that have been outgrown or damaged. No child should participate in this program without a helmet.

Once the child has a CPSC-approved helmet that is the proper size, teach the easy three-step Eyes-Ears-Mouth process to make sure the helmet fits and is worn correctly every time.

Eyes: Look up, and you should see the rim of the helmet. The rim should be one to two fingers above your eyebrows and level on your head.

Ears: Adjust the straps of the helmet so that they form a "V" right under each ear lobe. Make a "V" to measure with your index and middle fingers.

Mouth: Once the straps are adjusted in a "V," buckle them. They should be snug, but not too tight. Adjust until you can put one finger between the strap and your chin. Now, open your mouth as wide as you can. You should feel the helmet hug your head and the strap snug to your chin. If you do, you're ready to fit the bike!

Station 2: Wheel Fit

The next step is to check if the bike, scooter, skateboard or inline skates the child is using are properly fitted. Invite bicycle shop employees to help you!

For a bike, a child should be able to sit on the seat and touch both feet to the ground. As the child develops more confidence, the seat can be raised so that he or she can just touch the toes of both feet or only one foot to the ground.

Station 3: Wheel Shop

Here, children learn to adjust their bicycles or scooters and to make simple repairs. Teach children how to:

- Fill tires with air
- Tighten all spokes and replace broken spokes
- Adjust the handlebars and the seat
- Replace flat tires
- Replace worn brake pads
- Tighten all screws, nuts and bolts on the bike frame
- Check the chain to be sure it is secure
- Secure and clean the reflectors, mirrors and lights

Station 4: Following Rules

So far, children may have only been passengers or pedestrians. At this stop, it is important to explain to kids how traffic works. Talk to them about what different signs mean, showing examples of each sign (stop, yield, etc.). Teach them about yielding, passing, predicting traffic flow and the traffic laws that relate to cyclists. Bicycle riders have to obey the same rules as cars and buses. Be sure to mention the importance of riding with traffic.

Teach children the hand signals they should use to alert drivers to their actions:

- Left turn – extend your left arm out straight from your side
- Right turn – extend your left arm out from your side, bent at a 90-degree angle at the elbow, hand pointing upward and the palm of your hand facing forward. Another option is to put your right arm out straight from your side.
- Stopping or slowing – extend your left arm out from your side, bent at a 90-degree angle at the elbow, hand pointing downward and the palm of your hand facing backward

Once you tell children about all of these rules, quiz them orally. To further teach these lessons, set up a mini-road using masking tape, traffic cones or sidewalk chalk. Ask children to volunteer to serve as “signage” or obstacles, such as parked cars. Have each cyclist ride through the course as a volunteer calls out directions to him or her, such as “turn left,” “slow down,” “turn right.” The child cyclist should also remember to comply with the directions of all “signage.”

Station 5: Ride Right

At this stop, children learn how to balance, start and stop, ride straight, ride slowly and scan and signal. Set up a mini-road and have each child practice these skills on the road.

1. Balance

Have children practice riding in circles as well as a straight line
Show them how to use the brakes; get them to skid the rear wheels
Have them ride as slowly as possible without touching the ground

2. Starting and stopping

Children should learn to stop before entering a roadway
Teach them to look left, then right, then left again before proceeding
Remind them that driveways, sidewalks and crosswalks are potential danger zones
Practice starting and stopping over and over until it seems easy

3. Riding straight

Have children ride on a painted line in a parking lot
Teach them that straight-line riding will allow drivers to predict what they will do
Remind them that predictability is important in any traffic situation; kids don't know

4. Scanning and signaling

Have children ride straight and look back at you without swerving
Teach them that they must scan for traffic in front of and behind them before signaling
Have them incorporate the signals they learned at Station 3

Bike control skills may also include the following activities:

Zig-zag – use sponges or traffic cones to set up a pattern that children must weave through
Slow race – mark start and finish lines. You may need a stopwatch. Children are challenged to ride as slowly as possible from the start to the finish line without touching a foot to the ground. The slowest rider wins.

Figure 8 – use sidewalk chalk or tape to outline a figure 8 that children must follow with their bikes. Make it large enough to allow children to safely make turns.

Driveway ride-out – use cones to create a “driveway” with a fence or bush as a sight obstruction at the end. Create cardboard cars and ask for children to volunteer to “drive.” Instruct children on bicycles to enter the roadway from the driveway. Be sure they stop and look both ways, check again before going and take off smoothly, with good pedal position (front pedal higher than rear pedal).

Scanning – teach children to look behind for traffic and be aware of their surroundings. Draw a straight line between two cones. Children on bicycles will ride straight along the line. Volunteers holding cardboard cars act as traffic. Cyclists should be able to look behind without veering left or right.

Station 6: Safe Places to Wheel

“I didn’t see him.” That is one of the most frequent excuses a driver gives after crashing into a cyclist, and often the driver is telling the truth. That’s why children should know what they can do to see and be seen.

First, be sure parents and children know how to incorporate the right gear for visibility.

- Incorporate retroreflective material on their clothing, accessories and shoes when riding
- Equip the wheeled vehicle with reflectors on the front, the rear, the wheels and the pedals
- Add a front light to a scooter or bike
- Do not ride when it’s dark

Now, teach children about different types of things they need to watch for as drivers of wheeled vehicles. Be sure they understand the following types of hazards:

- Moving hazards – cars, pedestrians, dogs, other cyclists, trains, trucks, buses, motorcycles or anything else that could cross their paths
- Stationary hazards – parked cars, utility poles, park benches, fire hydrants, fences, parked bicycles or anything else that would be in the way
- Surface hazards – potholes, sand, rocks, drain grates, concrete joints, raised manhole covers, broken glass, cans, other roadway litter and anything else that could cause a fall or loss of control
- Visual hazards – bushes and shrubs, fences, parked cars, buildings, large or flashing signs and other things that either block the view or distract attention

Now set up a course that is often referred to as the “Rock Dodge.” Use chalk or masking tape to create a narrow lane for bicyclists to remain in. Then, use soft sponges to serve as “obstacles” for children to avoid. Tell the riders to travel straight toward the “obstacles” and steer around them at the last minute. They must remain in the narrow space (3 to 6 feet for kids 10 or older and 6 to 12 feet for kids under 10). The children must steer by turning their handlebars one way (to avoid the object), turning back the other way (to keep from falling) and then turning straight ahead (to continue).

Step 9: Break down and clean up.

When using space at a school or in a neighborhood, be sure you clean the area so that it is in better condition than when you arrived. If necessary, schedule a shift of volunteers for this task, as many of the event volunteers will be tired.

Step 10: Say thank you!

Following the event, be sure to thank anyone who contributed ideas, time or products!

Creating Safer Riding Environments

Safe Kids coalitions can play a major role in creating bicycle-friendly communities that are safe for child cyclists. Proper facility design is the ultimate responsibility of the traffic engineer. The traffic engineer can do this most effectively by working with concerned citizens, such as Safe Kids coalitions.

The following should be considered when assessing whether an area is safe for child cyclists:

- Do children have safe access to commonly traveled locations near their homes, schools, recreation facilities, shopping and other residential areas?
- Is there a well-defined separation between bicycles and motor vehicles, such as a wide shoulder lane for cyclists?
- Do areas frequented by children, such as schools, neighborhoods and community centers, have low motor vehicle speed limits and other traffic-calming devices?

When done properly, traffic calming balances the needs of all users of a street: drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians and others. It often restores safety in neighborhoods that have been overwhelmed by speeding, cut-through traffic or both. Many traffic-calming enhancements bring the added benefits of:

- Decreased pedestrian and bicyclist injuries
- More space for children to play
- Less noise and pollution
- Improved scenery
- Neighborhood revitalization
- More eyes on the street, reducing crime

Most traffic-calming solutions decrease the volume and speed of cars by installing humps or tables or by forcing cars to maneuver around circles or curves, thus blocking a long view of the road ahead.

Funding for pedestrian- and bicycling-related infrastructure improvements was not available before the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. During the past decade, making traffic safety improvements for pedestrians and cyclists has become a higher priority for many government metropolitan planning agencies. Safe Kids is working with America Bikes (www.americabikes.org) and America Walks (www.americawalks.org) to promote funding for a national Safe Routes to School program.

Advocacy and Public Policy

Enacting a new law or improving your state or locality's existing mandate can be a key method for reducing the incidence and severity of unintentional injury. Whether you are pushing for a child bike helmet law or safer riding environments, advocacy begins with building mutually beneficial relationships. The steps to effective public policy advocacy are outlined below.

Step 1: Making friends in high places.

Contact key policymakers before you have a specific public policy request. Introduce them to the issue of childhood injury prevention and to your coalition's programs. This should be an ongoing process throughout the year. A policymaker who knows you and recognizes the importance of childhood injury prevention is more likely to be responsive when you need his or her assistance with a specific public policy issue.

Create a target list of key policymakers to focus your advocacy efforts. Examples of influential policymakers include:

- Governor
- Lieutenant governor
- Mayor or county executive
- Member of U.S. Congress
- County board or city council member
- Chairs or members of health, human services, transportation, consumer affairs or appropriations committees in the state legislature
- Administrators of health, human services, transportation or consumer affairs departments at the state and local levels
- State legislators who have some history of advocating for children or bike-related programs or who are known to have young children

Other influential people include the staff of any policymakers, the spouses of high-ranking state or local elected officials (governor, mayor, county executive, etc.) and the bicycle/pedestrian coordinators for the city, county or state.

Strategies for engaging policymakers and fostering friendly relationships:

Contact the policymakers and government officials on your target list. Send a letter of introduction and ask for an introductory meeting. Enclose coalition brochures containing bike, wheeled sport and general information. (See more under Step 4: Contact Public Policymakers.) Also, invite the policymaker to attend a community safety event or to visit a hospital emergency room. Take the policymaker on a tour of a hospital or local health clinic that has a history of innovative community education programs.

Add the policymaker and staff members to your coalition mailing list

Ask the policymaker to serve as your coalition's honorary chair or to serve on your board

Invite the policymaker to speak at a special event, luncheon or meeting

Step 2: Set priorities.

Ask for only one public policy intervention (for example, support for a bicycle helmet bill) at a time.

Use the following criteria to determine if your issue is a high priority for your coalition and your public policymakers:

- Have you done a needs assessment of the risk in your region? (For example, is there a high incidence of injuries related to this risk area?)
- Do you have good data/research supporting your request?
- Has there been media coverage of an event related to your issue? (For example, a bicycle crash in which a child was killed.)
- Are there allies in the community, as well as among public policymakers, for the issue?
- Is it a good legislative/political climate for that issue? (For example, is your state legislature or city council conservative, moderate or liberal regarding social policies? What is your governor's or mayor's position regarding the role of government in keeping children safe from injury?)
- Do you have the resources (volunteers, time and materials) to spend advocating for the issue?

Step 3: Organize yourself.

Develop an action plan with timelines and specific tasks, including:

- A strategy for developing a coalition of allied organizations
- A list of key public policymakers (allies and opponents), including both elected and appointed state/local government officials. (See Step 1 for more information.)
- A detailed strategy that incorporates the public schedule of relevant policymaking activities (for example, the state budget process or legislative calendar). The strategy should include a timeline for contacting key policymakers. Initially, focus on your established "friends," targeted in Step 1, particularly those on relevant committees of your legislature, city council or county board.
- A media strategy (see media section of this guide)
- A list of children and their families who can serve as advocates for the media, committee hearings or both

Step 4: Contact public policymakers.

Personal interaction with policymakers and their staff is critical to the success of your legislative effort.

- Call and make an appointment as far in advance as possible. Re-confirm your meeting by telephone a few days before your scheduled appointment.
- Respect their limited time – be brief in your request
- Don't be disappointed if you end up with a meeting with a staff member – they are key to a policymaker's decision-making process

Know your subject and tailor your conversation to your audience – refer to their background, past legislative efforts on behalf of children, etc. Provide anecdotes about children who have been injured (especially if they are constituents.)
Come prepared with succinct written information about your coalition, a written proposal of what you want, good local data and strong supporting arguments. Never leave without providing them with your request and supporting materials on paper!
Be specific in your request (for example, introduce a bill or vote for a bill). Always offer to “do the work for them” – for example, by providing draft legislation or local data.

Step 5: Follow up.

After the meeting, remember to:

- Send thank-you letters to the policymaker and appropriate staff members. In your letter, reiterate the key points that were discussed during your meeting and provide additional information in response to issues raised in the meeting.
- Encourage allies to write and visit the policymaker
- Invite the policymaker and staff members to an upcoming coalition event
- Keep the policymaker and staff informed as to the progress of your advocacy effort

Step 6: Evaluate the outcome.

Learn from your actions by answering the following questions:

- If the effort was successful, what were the keys to success?
- If the effort was not successful, what went wrong?
- Was it the wrong issue for the time?
- Did you start the advocacy process too late?
- Did you have enough data and a compelling story?
- Did you have a strong ally in public office or strong enough community allies? Both? Neither?

Media Outreach

Media outreach can be the fuel for your educational efforts. The news media provide a public forum to alert decision makers and their constituents about safety-related issues in the community. In addition, the media can help celebrate and inform the community of programs, safety improvements and the good work of Safe Kids.

Proactive Media Outreach

News is information that is timely and personally significant. News is more applicable when it impacts a large number of people. The media features information that is considered newsworthy—meaning it is timely, interesting and important.

When presenting newsworthy information to the media, be sure to develop key messages that summarize the problem and the solution. Use these statements when you or coalition members are communicating to the media.

Key Messages for SAFE KIDS Ready to Roll

It is estimated that more than 70 percent of kids ages 5-14 ride bicycles

Child participation in other sports such as skateboarding and inline skating has grown tremendously over the past decade

As a result, many children get injured. Children account for approximately one-quarter of all bicycle-related deaths and more than half of all bicycle-related injuries

Head injury is the leading cause of wheeled sports-related death and is the most important determinant of permanent disability after a crash

The single most effective way to reduce head injury from these types of crashes is to wear a helmet

Unfortunately, helmet use among child bicyclists is only 46 percent and is lowest among children ages 10 to 14, boys, residents of states with no bicycle helmet laws and riders on residential streets

That's why Safe Kids has teamed with longtime partner Bell Sports on a wheel safety program, Safe Kids Ready to Roll

As part of the program, Safe Kids will increase bicycle helmet use, promote safe bicycling behaviors and create safer bicycling environments

SAFE KIDS will also be hosting bike rodeos, interactive events that teach children wheel safety and the rules of the road

Thanks in part to Bell's generous support of Safe Kids, the bicycle injury death rate among children ages 14 and under declined by 60 percent from 1987 to 2001

Media Tools

Tools that you can use when seeking media attention for your bike and other wheel-related education efforts and successes include news releases, media advisories, letters to the editor, op-eds and pitch letters. Each can be targeted to specific broadcast or print media.

Media advisory – alerts the media about the “who, what, when, where and why” of an event. Use this tool when you are hosting a bike rodeo event open to the public or a news conference or other event addressing bike and wheel-related issues, including

advocacy efforts to improve or institute helmet laws.

News release – provides the media with comprehensive details to write or broadcast a story. Some examples of when to write a news release: after conducting research on helmet use or wheels-related injuries, when you’re hosting a bike rodeo or when a new law has been passed.

Feature pitch letter – invites media to do exclusive coverage of your issue. For example, invite a media person to come to your bike rodeo to witness firsthand kids participating in wheel-related activities.

Op-ed – educates the public about an issue in the community, such as the need for a new helmet law. This tool can be “authored” by a coalition coordinator, an elected official or a transportation engineer and should be arranged with the editorial board of a local newspaper.

Letter to the editor – responds to an article from a past edition of a publication. Use this tool as an educational moment to respond to a child’s death or injury and promote helmet safety.

Public service announcements – Public service advertising is commonly defined as "advertising that serves the public interest." The majority of public service advertisements (PSAs) run as a community service at no charge by the media. The objectives of these ads are education and awareness of significant social issues, in an effort to change the public's attitudes and behaviors and stimulate positive social change. Use print, radio or television PSAs to promote attendance at your bike rodeos, get children to wear helmets or educate parents and children about legislation.

The Media List

It is essential to send media materials to the right person. Compile and keep updated a media list of local television, radio and print outlets. Be sure to target the media list to include media that you are familiar with and that cover similar stories. Contact each media outlet and obtain contact person name, direct phone number, fax number and e-mail address. Make sure to keep a record of your growing list. It will be important for follow-up calls. Reporters to target include:

Traffic reporter	Transportation reporter
Investigative reporter	Metro reporters (local neighborhoods)
Education reporters	Health editor
Calendar editors (media advisory only)	Consumer reporter
Planning/futures editor (media advisory only)	Parenting/family editor
Assignment editor (media advisory only)	
Editorial editor (op-eds and letters to the editor only)	

Select a Spokesperson

When speaking to the media, it is very helpful to use a designated spokesperson. This gives the media effort a single source of information. A spokesperson should have the authority to speak on behalf of the coalition and should have good public speaking skills. This individual should also be trained to reinforce key messages.

Contact Reporters and Editors

Once you have updated the media list and selected a spokesperson, use this guide to begin contacting reporters and editors to introduce the story and schedule interviews.

Leaving Voice Mail

Generally, the best time to contact a media representative is during the hours between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Typically, after 2 p.m. reporters are on deadline, completing stories for daily newspapers or evening news broadcast segments. For radio, call even earlier! Many reporters finish their shifts around 10 a.m.

If you call a reporter during these core hours and reach voice mail, leave a brief, direct message.

- State your name, the coalition's name and your phone number at the beginning of the message
- Recite your 15- to 20-second opening statement, prepared from your already developed messages, and then repeat your name and phone number
- When you are preparing materials to send to a reporter, be sure to include a phone number with voice mail so that, if you are not available or are on another line, the reporter can leave a message
- Be sure to return reporters' calls in a timely fashion, so that you do not lose your opportunity of interest

Talking to a Reporter

Should you reach a live person, remember these tips:

- Keep the conversation focused and brief
- Reinforce the key points of your news
- Provide any new information that is relevant to the story
- Point out the story's impact on the community
- Invite the reporter to do an interview
- Provide background information, photographs or both that are related to your topic

Logo Use

In order for the Safe Kids Ready to Roll program to achieve "brand" identification, it's important to standardize our image on all printed materials. This helps Safe Kids and Bell to reflect a consistent image before important audiences.

Follow Up

Once a story appears in the news, you may want to follow up with the reporter to thank him or her for covering the story. You can phone or send a letter or an e-mail. This type of interaction helps to foster a growing relationship between the coalition and the reporter.

Capturing Media Impressions

Measuring the reach of your message is vital. Monitor local media by recording broadcasts and clipping articles. Be sure to send copies of the media hits for Safe Kids Ready to Roll to the Safe Kids as soon as possible.

Your lead organization may already contract with video and newspaper monitoring companies, such as Video Monitoring Service, Burrelle's, Lexis-Nexis or Bacon's. These companies can tabulate the number of media stories for Safe Kids Ready to Roll. .

Evaluation of Safe Kids Ready to Roll

It is essential that you plan your evaluation strategies and procedures before launching your program so that you will collect the appropriate baseline data before you start. This helps to prove your success and the need for this type of program. Your bicycle safety program should receive formative, process, impact and outcome evaluation.

- **Formative evaluation** tests program plans, messages and materials before they are put into place. Personal interviews or focus groups may help you to determine perceptions of vulnerability to injury and knowledge of safe behaviors and laws. They also serve as baseline measurements of safe behaviors and obeying of laws.
- **Process evaluation** determines if and how your bicycle safety program has been implemented and if the objectives have been achieved. For example, it examines who was reached by the educational presentations, the number of helmets distributed and fitted through discount helmet programs, the number of new partners, the number of attendees and the number of news stories placed. The results from process evaluation will be quantifiable.
- **Impact evaluation** indicates whether the program has had its intended effect on knowledge, behavior and the environment. It addresses such issues as the increase in the observed number of bicycle helmets being worn correctly, the enactment of mandatory helmet legislation, the changes in attitudes towards sharing the road and results from any traffic-calming improvements made for child cyclists.
- **Outcome evaluation** is a longer-term process that determines whether there has been a reduction in the incidence of targeted injury. It examines progress achieved toward your program's ultimate objective – a reduction in deaths and injuries among child cyclists and riders of other wheeled vehicles.