

Safekids Campaign 2010/11: Fire Safety/ Burns Prevention



Burns Prevention Toolkit

Practitioner's Guide

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Background

Safekids New Zealand is the injury prevention service of Starship Children's Health and a member of Safe Kids Worldwide. Safekids' mission is to reduce the incidence and severity of unintentional injury to New Zealand's children aged 0 to 14 years.

The Safekids Campaign is an annual child safety programme, nationally coordinated by Safekids in collaboration with government and non-government partners. Between 1 July 2010 and 31 June 2011 the Campaign will focus on **fire safety/ burns prevention**.

The *Loving Our Children: Safer Homes: Burns Prevention Toolkit* was first developed by Safe Waitakere Injury Prevention (SWIP), Waitakere City Council. Safekids extends thanks and acknowledgement to all members of the SWIP coalition who originally produced the resource.

Local and national child health and safety experts participated in a consultation process facilitated by SWIP during the development of the resource. Feedback strongly supported the *Toolkit's* modular design and the provision of burns prevention information aligned to ages

and developmental stages of children from birth to 5 years. Care has been taken to ensure that issues and messaging within each module are relevant to parents of children within the targeted age group.

A national burns Key Agency Group (KAG) has reproduced the original resource in support of the Safekids Campaign. Members of the burns KAG include SWIP, National Burns Centre, New Zealand Fire Service, National Burns Support Group Charitable Trust Inc. and Safekids New Zealand. Safekids extends thanks to members of the KAG for their support of the Safekids Campaign.

The *Hot Cup* magnets which accompany the toolkit were originally developed by Safekids in 2008.

Childhood Burn Injuries¹

Between 2002 and 2006, 28 New Zealand children died as a result of a burn injury, an average of more than 5 child fatalities each year. Exposure to fire and flame was the leading cause of fatality accounting for 23 deaths. However, children also died as a result of exposure to an electrical current, and to hot substances.

House fires in which children die are most commonly caused by unattended heaters or someone playing with matches, lighter or candles.

Each week, on average 5 to 6 children are hospitalised due to a burn injury (2004 to 2008). Burns from hot substances such as hot liquids, surfaces and objects result in fewer fatalities than burns from fire and flame but cause more than five times the number of hospitalisations.

A Safekids data analysis report found burn injuries are significantly higher for:

- Children living in higher levels of socio-economic deprivation;
- Maori and Pacific children;
- Male children;
- Children living in urban areas.

Preschool children have the highest incidence of burns of all types; with hot object and hot substance burn injuries happening most frequently. Over half of all children aged 1 to 2 years admitted to hospital for a burn are severely scalded by spilt hot drinks (such as tea and coffee) and other liquids (such as soups and noodles).

¹ Safekids Factsheet: Childhood Burn Injuries, April 2010

Excessively hot tap water in baths, showers and sinks is the next most frequent cause of hot liquid burn admissions. Almost 40% of New Zealand homes have tap water that is dangerously hot, and nearly 10% have water so hot that burns are almost inevitable.

Young skin is thinner than adult skin and can burn at lower temperatures. A hot cup of tea spilled over a baby is the equivalent to a bucket full of boiling water tipped over an adult.

Loving Our Children: Safer Homes: Burns Prevention Toolkit

Information for Practitioners

The Loving Our Children: Safer Homes: Burns Prevention Toolkit has been designed as a teaching tool for practitioners with the capacity to provide one-on-one/ face to face burns prevention information to families/ whanau with children aged from birth to five years.

Contents of the Toolkit

The Toolkit is made up of:

- 1 X flipchart booklet
- 50 X *Hot Cup* Magnets
- Practitioner's Guide

The flipchart is simple in design and largely self-explanatory; visual images are supported by safety tips intended to prompt the practitioner who is delivering messages. The information below provides a general overview of each module in the flipchart:

Facts and Safety Tips Pages: This page features essential burns prevention information that all families should receive regardless of the ages of the children or dynamics of the family.

6 Weeks – 3 Months Page: The arrival of a new baby brings great change to a family. First time parents may not be aware of the importance of making the home fire safe or the need to have a fire escape plan for themselves and the baby.

More experienced parents may need to be reminded and have messages repeated and reinforced.

It is extremely important that parents are aware of fire safety and burns prevention strategies and that a safety culture becomes embedded in their everyday practice right from the start.

5 Months Page: Babies at 5 months are starting to sit up, move around and become increasingly active. Busy parents may be tempted to momentarily leave babies sitting in the bath while they answer the phone/ door or attend to another child. Babies and young children should be supervised in the bath, always.

Plastic socket covers stop young children drilling into, or poking toys into electric sockets. Uncovered sockets/ multi-ways/ extension leads etc... can act as dust collectors becoming a fire hazard. Therefore, it is always best to cover unused sockets, even those blocked by furniture.

8 – 10 Months Page: At this age children are moving and reaching far more. Family life can be extremely hectic, especially at meal times and bath times; parents may get called away or distracted from what they are doing. Hot things such as cooking should always be attended and young children should never be left alone in the bath.

A rug in the living room can be used to define a 'safe area' for teaching young children to keep at least a metre from the heater or fire place.

15 – 24 Months Page: Children of this age are extremely able to reach, climb, move about quickly and are tirelessly investigative. Parents are not necessarily in the same room as the child all the time and therefore have less visual surveillance.

Burns prevention strategies such as stove guards, heater guards and hot tap stoppers (plastic bottle with X cut in the back) can protect children from burns. Best practice can also protect children, for example, never leaving hot things unattended (e.g. cooking, irons, hair curlers/ straighteners), even when they are cooling

3 Years Page: Children at 3 years are more independent and understand how things work and how to turn them on or operate them. At this age children can be secretive, for example taking a box of matches or lighter to play with in a quiet corner of the house.

4 - 5 Years Page: By the time a child reaches four or five years of age, there is a strong possibility that the family dynamic has undergone some change. For example, there may be new siblings in the family, or a move to a new house. This is a good time to repeat and reinforce fire safety messages.

At four to five years of age the child is old enough to understand about escape plans and learn skills to get out by themselves.

Children in this age group have a greater level of independence; the child may be a kitchen helper. If children are helping in the kitchen, ensure that cooking equipment is positioned so that the child is able to safely reach and carry warm food. For example use dishes/ containers with handles.

Children at five may not always be supervised so it important parents have information to pass onto children about heat, hot objects (such as BBQs, hangis, bonfires) and how to keep themselves safe.

Hot Cup Magnets: The magnets have been produced as a give-away reminder to leave with each family. Following a consultation such as a Well Child check, or PAFT visit, one magnet should be given to the family/ whanau to be placed in the home. Discuss the messaging on the magnet with the parent/ caregiver

Who should use the resource?

This resource can be used by anyone who delivers one-to-one education to families/ whanau of children under 5 years of age. Examples include:

- **DHB Professionals** including Midwives, B4 School Check and other Well Child/ Tamariki Ora practioners
- **Plunket** practioners and volunteers
- **Public Health Service** for example public health nurses, community nurses, community health workers, social workers or home visitors
- **Lead maternity carers** (midwives, general practice team for example practice nurses)
- **Practioners whom engage with Maori and Pacific Peoples** infants, their family/ whanau and communities
- **Injury prevention and health promotion** practioners
- **Early childhood educators** including Kohanga Reo and Pacific Language Nests

Recommendations for use

It is recommended that the toolkit be used by practitioners to deliver burns prevention education/ information to families and whanau of children under five years of age.

1. **Select page(s)** of relevance to family – relate this to the child(ren)'s age and developmental stage.
2. Invite family to **look at the pictures** – give prompts and encourage parents to talk about what they see and ask questions
3. **Use safety information prompts** on reverse of flip chart to provide education and information
4. **Relate this information to the family's/ whanau's home situation** – is their child(ren) safe from burn injuries?
5. At the end of the session give the family one **magnet** to place in their home as a reminder (e.g. in the kitchen close to the jug, stove or microwave).
6. **Discuss the messaging** on the sticker

Other Uses

The *Loving Our Children: Safer Homes: Burns Prevention Toolkit* has been produced specifically for the facilitation of one on one education; research shows that this is an effective way of raising awareness of best practice burns prevention with families. The *Toolkit* is not intended as a resource to be disseminated or given away.

However, Safekids acknowledges that there is great potential for the resource to be adapted for use in a variety of ways and settings. For example, pages and images from the *Toolkit* may be used to facilitate group education with parents, or with children in early childhood centres or in primary schools.

To facilitate this process the *Toolkit* is available on the Safekids website in the following formats:

- **Presentation format** for group seminars/ discussion
- **Printable A3 format** for group seminars/ discussions: Coalitions and community groups can produce their own A3 flipchart
- **Printable A4 colouring sheets:** Coalitions can print sheets and leave with children as a reminder of the information.

Further Information

For further information or assistance with the *Loving Our Children: Safer Homes: Burns Prevention Toolkit* please contact:

- Simone Randle, Safekids Injury Prevention Advisor at SimoneR@adhb.govt.nz , (09) 630 9955, or,
- Coral Timmins, Safe Waitakere at Coral.Timmins@waitakere.govt.nz , 09 8368000 x 8541

For more information on smoke alarms and escape plans contact the New Zealand Fire Service at www.fire.org.nz .

For more information on the prevention of childhood burns or other child injury prevention interventions visit the Safekids website at www.safekids.org.nz .