

Why was the *Kids and Traffic* 'Driveway Safety Display Kit' developed?



We know that cars and young children are a potentially fatal combination. However it may be surprising to know that many children, often toddlers, are run over in the driveway of their own home in Australia.

The vehicle is usually reversing slowly and is often being driven by a relative or friend. Many children are killed and many who survive are left with severe long-term injuries.

Children are naturally inquisitive and want to see what's going on. In the time it takes for a driver to say goodbye and start the car, a child can move from a 'safe' position and into the vehicle's path.

Small children can be impossible to see from inside a car especially if they are immediately behind it. Young children are also at risk whenever cars or other vehicles could be about – including off-road areas such as car parks, footpaths, private roads, caravan parks, farms, unfenced front yards and play areas.



Following concerns from the NSW Parliament's Child Death Review Team in 2000 about the incidence of driveway tragedies, the Motor Accidents Authority (MAA) established the 'Children Killed and Injured in Driveways Project Steering Committee'. The Committee took a multi-faceted approach, including improving behaviour, modifying driveway environments and changes to motor vehicles.

As an active member of this committee, *Kids and Traffic*, the NSW Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program, worked with the MAA and the City of Ryde to develop an interactive 'Driveway Safety Display Kit' to highlight the difficulty drivers have in seeing small children behind vehicles. The kit was designed to help raise family and community awareness of the dangers to children of vehicles moving in driveways. The kit was an addition to other driveway safety resources already produced for children's services by *Kids and Traffic*.

The National Roads and Motorists' Association (NRMA) was also committed to reducing the incidence of driveway tragedies and now considers reversing visibility as part of a standard range of tests when assessing new car performance. They have found that most vehicles have blind areas of around 3 metres, back and front, which can easily hide a child. NRMA Insurance, IAG, regularly updates tables showing the [Reversing Visibility Index](#) and the blind spot ratings of many popular vehicles.