



Walk Safe Program



Pedestrian and Bicycle
Information Center

Problem

Miami-Dade County needed a better pedestrian and driver education program that reached out to its diverse population. The county has the highest incidence of pedestrian injuries and fatalities in the State and is third in the U.S. Its rate of pediatric pedestrian injuries is also particularly high.

Background

Recognizing the safety problem they were experiencing and the costs associated with it, the Florida Department of Transportation partnered with the Ryder Trauma Center at University of Miami -- Miller School of Medicine to find the causes, effects, and possible solutions to the high pediatric pedestrian injury rate. Additional funding was provided by FedEx and The Children's Trust, a tax-payer funded county trust.

Solution

The first phase consisted of a 4-month retrospective data review of hospital records, crash scene visits, patients, families, and police interviews. Among other findings, it was learned that the majority of children hurt were boys, and 60 percent were African American. Many sites had problems including obstruction of view and long intervals between marked intersections, allowing for high vehicle acceleration. In 2001, there were a total of 293 injuries among pedestrians under the age of 14 in the county. The group used the results of the study to shape the educational injury prevention program.



Children help with a driver education program.

Between 2002 and 2005, the injury prevention program was implemented in 184 elementary schools in the county. Training was given to assistant principals and physical education teachers, who then were responsible for training the rest of the teachers in the school. The program included videos, workbooks, outside simulation activities, and two tests tailored to grades K-3 and 4-5 respectively. The program was conducted over a 4 week period, with one half-hour session per week. In the future, it will be conducted over a three day period each year.

Results

An evaluation in four pilot schools found that post-course scores were significantly higher than pre-test scores, and that these gains were maintained in a follow up test 3 months later.

Following the initial countywide implementation of the WalkSafe program several years ago, there has been a decrease in the number of pedestrian injuries of children seen/admitted to the two Level 1 trauma centers in Miami-Dade County and in the county overall. The total dropped from 93 in 2002-03 to only 52 in 2005-06.

Walk Safe Program — Miami-Dade County, FL

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For more information, please visit the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center Web site at www.walkinginfo.org.

