

World report on **child injury prevention**



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Foreword

Every day around the world the lives of more than 2000 families are torn apart by the loss of a child to an unintentional injury or so-called “accident” that could have been prevented. The grief that these families suffer – mothers, fathers, siblings, grandparents and friends – is immeasurable and often impacts entire communities. Such tragedy can change lives irrevocably.

Once children reach the age of five years, unintentional injuries are the biggest threat to their survival. Unintentional injuries are also a major cause of disabilities, which can have a long-lasting impact on all facets of children’s lives: relationships, learning and play. Among those children who live in poverty, the burden of injury is highest, as these children are less likely to benefit from the protective measures others may receive.

Child injuries have been neglected for many years, and are largely absent from child survival initiatives presently on the global agenda. Through this *World report on child injury prevention*, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children’s Fund and many partners have set out to elevate child injury to a priority for the global public health and development communities. The knowledge and experience of nearly two hundred experts from all continents and various sectors were invaluable in grounding the report in the realities faced in many countries.

Children’s maturity and their interests and needs differ from adults. Therefore, simply reproducing injury prevention strategies that are relevant to adults does not adequately protect children. There are proven interventions such as child car seats, cycling helmets, child-resistant packaging for medications, fencing around swimming pools, hot water tap temperature regulation and window guards, to name a few.

Ministries of Health can play a central role in prevention, advocacy and research and in the care and rehabilitation of children with disabilities. Other key sectors include education, transportation, environment and law enforcement.

This *World report on child injury prevention* should be seen as a complement to the *UN Secretary-General’s study on violence against children* released in late 2006. That report addressed violence-related or intentional injuries. Both reports suggest that child injury and violence prevention programmes need to be integrated into child survival and other broad strategies focused on improving the lives of children.

Evidence demonstrates the dramatic successes in child injury prevention in countries which have made a concerted effort. These results make a case for increasing investments in human resources and institutional capacities. This would permit the development, implementation and evaluation of programmes to stem the tide of child injury and enhance the health and well-being of children and their families the world over. Implementing proven interventions could save more than a thousand children’s lives a day.



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