

## Residential streets most dangerous to kids, says Safe Kids Canada

*Drivers need to slow down: a child hit by a car travelling at 50 km/h has an 80 per cent chance of being killed*

**Toronto, Ontario – May 26, 2008** – A new review of child pedestrian research from Safe Kids Canada demonstrates that our residential streets may be more dangerous for children than we think. More child pedestrian injuries take place on residential roads than anywhere else, and the danger is greatly increased as speed increases.

Child pedestrian incidents are a leading cause of injury-related death for Canadian children under the age of 14. A staggering 2,412 children are seriously injured each year and approximately 30 are killed. The average child pedestrian who is killed in Canada is male, between the ages of 10 and 14 and was crossing the street at an intersection within 5 kilometers of his home. Most incidents occur between 3 – 6 pm when many Canadians are driving home from work. This data was reviewed by Safe Kids Canada and its expert advisors, and unveiled today as part of the kickoff of Safe Kids Week.

### What's the rush?

Research demonstrates that a child hit by a car traveling at **50 km/h** has an **80 per cent** chance of being killed. Yet a child hit by a car traveling at **30 km/h**, has up to a **95 per cent** chance of surviving. According to a new Safe Kids Canada Harris/Decima survey released today, 14 per cent of Canadian drivers admit to driving at least 10km/hour or more over the speed limit in residential areas. Given the posted residential limits ranging between 40 and 50km/h, this translates into a speed of at least 50 or 60 km/h. Of those who admit to driving above the speed limit in residential neighbourhoods, 52 per cent are driving daily during the 3-6 pm time frame, potentially endangering children playing outdoors.

“We know that child pedestrian injuries are preventable.” says Pamela Fuselli, executive director of Safe Kids Canada, the national injury prevention program of The Hospital for Sick Children. “The fact is the majority of children are being hit at an intersection where adults have told them it is safe to cross the street. The evidence shows that drivers can yield to child pedestrians and avoid collisions if they drive the posted speed limit. We’re encouraging all drivers to be aware of their speed and drive the posted speed limit. It could mean the difference between life and death to a child.”

### Obey the law

Driving the posted speed limit is the law. While many residential speed limits are posted at 50 km/ h, research demonstrates that pedestrians and vehicles can co-exist in relative safety if the vehicle is traveling at 30 km/h or less. According to the Safe Kids Canada Harris/Decima survey,

- 74 per cent of drivers would support a law making 30 km/h the mandatory law in residential areas if they knew it could have a positive impact on child safety.
- 85 per cent of Atlantic Canadians and 81 per cent of Quebecers would support a new law, compared with only 66 per cent of Ontarians

More than a third of Canadians (34 per cent) believe that if a child is hit by a car, the driver is not responsible for the incident. However, the onus is on drivers to maintain and operate a motor vehicle in a responsible manner. It is unreasonable for adults to make children responsible for their own safety on the road. As children’s physical and mental capacities are still developing well into their teens, they are unable to make safe judgments about pedestrian safety and therefore cannot be held to the same standards as adults for their decisions.

### Slow your pace, it's not a race

Safe Kids Canada is urging Canadians to help make residential neighborhoods safe for pedestrians:

- An 11.6 km/h reduction in speed can reduce the chance of hitting a pedestrian by 50 per cent
- The *Community Pace Car* program allows Canadian drivers to pledge to stick to the speed limit in residential areas and receive a *Community Pace Car* “mobile speed bump” decal, available at [www.whatstherush.ca](http://www.whatstherush.ca).
- Concerned citizens can work for by-law changes to reduce residential speed limits and implement pedestrian-friendly urban planning. Walking is also a healthy, ‘green’ alternative that can be encouraged through urban planning and speed enforcement.

### According to Transport Canada

- Two million Canadians admit to often speeding up to get through a traffic light.
- More than half (58 per cent) of Canadians admit to having received a speeding ticket.
- Of those who admitted to speeding: 57 per cent didn't want to be late, 51 per cent believe the speed limits are set too low and 51 per cent weren't paying attention to their speed.

Today marks the start of the 2008 Safe Kids Week – *Safe Roads Safe Kids* – which runs from May 26 – June 1 and is sponsored by Johnson & Johnson. Safe Kids Canada is also pleased to partner with Honda Canada Foundation as the secondary sponsor for Safe Kids Week and reinforce our mutual commitments to safety and education.

### Spokespeople across Canada

Safe Kids Canada has local expert spokespeople in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver available for interviews.

**Attention broadcast outlets:** Pedestrian safety footage is available.

**Time of feed:** 11:00 - 11:30 and 14:00 – 14:30 EST

**Coordinates:** Anik F2C/1B @ 111.1 West, Vertical Polarization, D/L Freq. 3740MHz, Audio subcarriers 6.8 left, 6.2 right

**Trouble shoot:** 1-800-565-1471

### Attention photo editors:

**A photo from the event – 30 children's backpacks, representing the number of children who are killed each year in child pedestrian injuries – will be available on the CNW photo wire.**

### Safe Roads, Safe Kids Brochure:

Safe Kids Canada and Johnson & Johnson are offering a free *Safe Roads, Safe Kids* educational brochure for parents and caregivers. Log onto [www.safekidscanada.ca](http://www.safekidscanada.ca) to download your copy.

### About Safe Kids Canada:

Safe Kids Canada is a national leader in educating parents and promoting effective strategies to prevent unintentional injuries and deaths of children. Across Canada, Safe Kids Canada partners are conducting *Safe Roads, Safe Kids* events this week. Local partners will educate families on child pedestrian safety. Parents can check [www.safekidscanada.ca](http://www.safekidscanada.ca) to find out if there is an event in their area, or to learn more about safety and injury prevention. They can also call Safe Kids Canada at 1-888-SAFE-TIPS (723-3847). Safe Kids Canada is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network in 16 countries around the world dedicated to preventing unintentional injury to children and celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### About Johnson & Johnson:

Johnson & Johnson is the Founding Sponsor of Safe Kids in North America (Canada, U.S., and Puerto Rico), and in 16 other countries around the world. The company also sponsors Safe Kids Week, Safe Kids Canada's largest-scale annual public awareness program designed to help reduce the frequency and severity of preventable childhood injuries, the leading cause of death and disability of Canadian children. Johnson & Johnson, with approximately 110,600 employees, is the world's most comprehensive and broadly based manufacturer of health care products, as well as a provider of related services, for the consumer, pharmaceutical and medical devices and diagnostics markets. Johnson & Johnson has more than 200 operating companies in 57 countries around the world, selling products in more than 175 countries.

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*Harris/Decima Research Methodology: Decima Research surveyed 1,005 adult Canadians aged 18 and over about their driving and pedestrian safety behaviours. The national telephone survey was conducted between February 14 – 20, 2008, with a confidence level of +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20.*