

### Box 3.1

## How Save LIVES applies to children

The interventions in the Save LIVES technical package apply to all age groups, but a particular focus on children is required given their vulnerability in traffic. Over 500 children under the age of 18 years are killed on the world's roads each day and thousands more are injured. Road traffic injury is a leading killer of children in their second decade of life and the vast majority (95%) of child road traffic fatalities are in low- and middle-income countries (55).

Limited by their physical, cognitive and social development, children are more exposed to risk in road traffic than adults: physically, children tend to be more susceptible to serious head injury than adults; they may have difficulty interpreting images and sounds that may impact on judgement of proximity, speed and direction of moving vehicles; and as they grow older, adolescents may be more prone to take risks (55). While directly contributing to the SDG road safety targets, providing a safe journey to school also contributes to other key SDG priorities including access to education and eradicating poverty (56). This also makes protecting children on the roads a requirement in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (57).

A policy designed to protect children effectively on the roads should also strengthen protection for all vulnerable road users and indeed the wider population. Child-focused interventions should be a key feature of all six elements of the Save LIVES package:

### Speed management



Low-speed zones (30 km/h limits), particularly around schools, have proved effective in protecting children and reducing road traffic injury (58). This can involve applying road design solutions (road narrowing, traffic calming, speed bumps, signalized crossings, etc.) to locations in neighbourhoods, including around schools, where there are high volumes of child pedestrians. Enforcing speed limits with measures such as automatic speed cameras in areas with high volumes of child pedestrians and traffic is also effective.

### Leadership on road safety



Countries that have reduced road traffic injury among children have begun by improving data collection to develop effective policies and target interventions. Key activities include disaggregating data by age and collecting data to identify high-risk areas where children are exposed to high traffic speed and where safe infrastructure is lacking. Collaboration and coalition building among institutions and stakeholders, and between diverse sectors (e.g. education, health, local government, transport and police), to improve protection for children on the roads is also vital. One effective approach is to engage schools and students in road safety policy decision-making.

Supervision is of particular importance for protecting children on the roads, particularly in poorer communities and complex and risky road environments. Parents, teachers and caregivers can play an important role in this with education and supervision schemes, which are most effective when complementing other key interventions such as those related to speed and safe infrastructure. Partnerships between local communities, schools and the police to manage school crossing patrols and walking-bus initiatives can be effective, particularly when parents are at work and unable to supervise children.

### Infrastructure design and improvement



Safe infrastructure provision (sidewalks, safe crossings, traffic calming measures, speed bumps, etc.) should be a priority for protecting children on the school journey (59). The built environment in schools and densely populated neighbourhoods should be designed or reconfigured to prioritize pedestrians and cyclists as part of policies to promote child health and tackle obesity. Infrastructure for traffic calming, when linked to speed enforcement, can create effective low-speed zones around schools.

## Vehicle safety standards



To improve vehicle safety for child passengers, countries should apply the UN minimum safety regulations to new vehicles and include measures such as ISOFIX child restraint anchorage points. New Car Assessment Programmes can promote consumer awareness and demand for higher standards of safety for all car occupants including children.

## Enforcement of traffic laws



In many countries legislation to protect children on the roads requires strengthening and enforcement: laws addressing the use of child restraints need to be improved in many countries; where motorcycles are the main means of family transport, helmet legislation focused on child passengers as well as adults is required; laws and regulations to ensure seatbelts on school buses and the safety of school vehicles is often absent and needed; and enforcement of speeding and drink-driving legislation is vital. Communication and social marketing strategies focused on the need to protect children are often an effective means of promoting public support for road safety enforcement.

## Survival after a crash



Trauma response that can accommodate the needs of children is required. This ranges from training teacher and school transport drivers in safe immediate stabilization of injuries; equipping emergency vehicles with child-sized medical equipment and supplies; and improving paediatric-specific rehabilitation services for children (51).

