



## ROAD SAFETY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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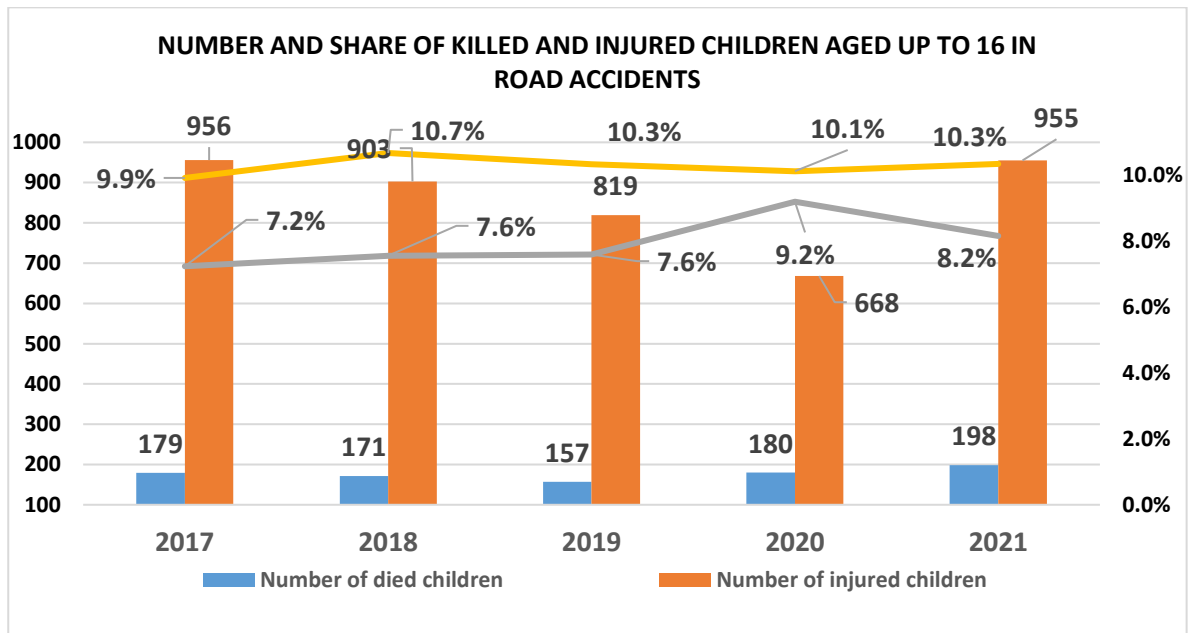
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<b>Received:</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> January 2024 <b>Accepted:</b> 21 <sup>st</sup> February 2024	The primary responsibility of adults is to ensure the safety of children, especially in addressing the serious social problem of child deaths and injuries in road traffic accidents, and this is fully consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which clearly calls on adults and various institutions to take responsibility for the welfare of children. This goal includes education and awareness of children and adults, improving children's behavior in road traffic and transport, as well as measures to actively and passively protect children in road traffic.

**Keywords:** AWARENESS of children

Traffic is the most challenging and demanding environment a child can encounter. As a result of physiological and mental development, a child's behavior is less predictable and differs significantly from the behavior of an adult. Therefore, to protect children participating in road traffic, all available active and passive safety measures must be applied. Because of their constitution and fragility, children are particularly vulnerable to road traffic injuries and the risk of long-term (permanent) disability, which can have a profound negative impact on children's quality of life. In order to reduce the number of deaths in road traffic accidents, a significant number of which occur among school-age children on their way to and from school and in the immediate vicinity of schools, authorities, parents and school administrators should

take all necessary measures to prevent such accidents and reducing the risks to which children are exposed. Absolute and relative indicators of road safety involving children in Uzbekistan are very high. Compared to the best performing countries where the percentage of children killed is less than 2.5%. The absolute number of people killed under the age of 16 has increased by 10% in 2021 compared to 2017. The mortality rate of children in the total number of deaths is about 7-8%. In the pandemic year of 2020, this figure rose to 9.2%. The injury rate for children is higher and is about 10%. See Figure 1. The first step to ensure the safety of school zones in Uzbekistan is the Government's decision to reduce speed limits in school zones to 30 km/h.

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Picture 1 . Number and proportion of children under 16 years of age killed and injured in road traffic accidents

**Recommendations regarding the safety of children on the way to and from school , recommended activities - authorities:**

- a) Develop educational programs for schoolchildren that should include aspects of safety on the way to and from school. It should include how to behave at the bus stop, when getting on and off the bus, and on the bus itself during the trip. Such training should include theoretical and practical training with practical training in real traffic conditions; Children should be taught how a pedestrian should behave (how to cross the road, how to walk along the edge of a road that does not have sidewalks, etc.). For high school students who are allowed to use bicycles in accordance with national legislation, special training should be provided on safe behavior as drivers.
- (b) Conduct information campaigns for drivers to raise awareness of the limitations in the perception of children who do not have the experience and necessary skills to respond adequately to road hazards;
- c) Preparation and adoption of national guidelines for the design and assessment of school zones. Where possible, implement active and passive safety measures for road infrastructure to protect children.
- d) Strengthen enforcement of traffic rules in school zones, especially during children's arrival and departure hours. Fixed speed/red light cameras should be installed in areas with a high number of accidents in the last five years.

- e) Develop educational programs for parents and children, broadcast in the media, aimed at improving the safety of children on their way to and from school. Promote special television programs on road safety for children on national television.
- f) Disseminate nationally statistics on all road traffic crashes involving children, take steps to improve the quality of data collected and, where possible, conduct in-depth analyzes of road traffic fatalities.
- g) Organize a transport system for children (for example, school buses), in particular for primary school students, and especially if the school is located far from their place of residence.

**Recommended Activities - Parents and School Administrators**

- a) Parents must be responsible for the safety of their children:
  - I ) through supervision - special encouragement should be given to the accompaniment of children, especially children in the lower grades, by their parents or other person, and to their gradual learning to walk unaccompanied.
  - ii ) through education - parents should be taught basic approaches to road safety and knowledge of safe behavior in road traffic. Adults should always lead by example and model safe and responsible road behavior for children.
- b) Parents may volunteer to participate in school patrols to ensure the safety of children at crosswalks in the immediate vicinity of schools.



c) Parents and school administrators should be informed of the importance of improving children's visibility through the use of brightly colored clothing or safety devices (reflective or fluorescent materials), particularly in low visibility conditions.

d) Parents with children who, in accordance with national legislation, can use bicycles should:

I ) teach them the basic rules of the road and behavior on the road.

ii ) emphasize the importance of proper bicycle equipment (steering, lighting, brakes, etc.

III ) train them in the correct use of protective devices (helmets, etc.).

IV ) explain the dangers that may arise when driving on the road (eg HGV, low visibility or icy conditions, etc.

#### **Recommended activities - collective transportation of children**

a) The position of children should not be tolerated. Whenever possible, children should wear seat belts.

b) the presence of an escort is strongly recommended. If the accompanying person is a student, it must be stated that he/she is at least 16 years old and that he/she has received special training.

c) Drivers must be fully informed about the specifics of transporting children.

d) Vehicles intended to carry children must be clearly marked, have forward-facing seats equipped with seat belts, and be fully equipped in accordance with the law for public transport vehicles.

e ) In case of daily/regular transportation of schoolchildren, training on safe evacuation should be provided.

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