

EUROPEAN CHILD SAFETY ALLIANCE

STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

2001 to 2003

INTRODUCTION

Injury is the leading cause of death and disability for children in Europe, and more children die of injuries than any other childhood diseases combined. For every child that dies, hundreds more are hospitalized and several thousand present to an emergency and accident department. Many of those children injured suffer permanent disability that creates an enormous burden both on families and on society, in social and economic terms. The leading causes of death and accidents to European children occur in the areas of transport accidents, poisonings, falls, burns and scalds, drowning, suffocation, and choking. Boys are at greater risk to die of an injury and also have higher injury rates in most injury areas.

All children are at risk, however some evidence indicates that the poorest in society can be at greater risks for certain injuries. A study in England and Wales showed children up to the age of 15 years from disadvantaged families were five times more likely to die from accidental injury than those from professional families.

Yet injury is a major health problem that is preventable. There are prevention strategies that have proven to be successful in injury prevention and reduction of morbidity and mortality. The most effective strategies tend to be those that adopt a combined approach, where enforcement and/or environmental change have been backed up by an effective program of education and training. This has occurred with child resistant packaging to reduce poisonings, lowered temperatures on water heaters to reduce scalds, window guards to reduce falls, smoke alarms to allow timely exits to reduce carbon dioxide inhalation and injuries from burns, traffic calming to reduce pedestrian injuries, and bicycle helmets to reduce head injuries. These safety technologies, that are simple to install and proven to be effective, need to be capitalized on.

It is through this strategic business plan that the EUROPEAN CHILD SAFETY ALLIANCE intends to identify its mandate, general operations and work focus for the next three years that will concentrate on the use of successful prevention strategies and a combined approach of environmental changes, enforcement and education.

VISION

Through the efforts of the European Child Safety Alliance, we will advocate to achieve safer daily living for children throughout Europe. This would include consistency of standards, policies, and legislation used throughout Europe that impacts on children's safety, as well as assisting parents and caregivers to be well informed consumers in order to make the right choices for children. Families would have a selection of child safety products that are accessible, affordable and easy to use. If all those making decisions and choices for children did use strategies of proven evidence and did make the interests of children their first priority, we would improve the lives of children throughout Europe.

EUROPEAN CHILD SAFETY ALLIANCE MISSION

To enhance the quality of children's lives through the power of reason, solidarity and compassion.

PROGRAM RATIONAL

Why a European Child Safety Alliance? We have already identified that injury is the greatest killer of children throughout Europe, and that something can be done to control and reduce injuries, if successful prevention strategies are well implemented. There are a number of national programs dedicated to child injury prevention throughout Europe that are making steady progress to enhance children's safety, yet injury is not restricted to geographic borders. Everyday Europe is becoming more of a global community, and this does have an effect on injury and the efforts to reduce injuries at the European level. Even though the burden of injuries has a different profile in each Member State and is influenced by various social, economic, political and cultural factors, a uniform program throughout Europe would have enhanced impact for all. This program must acknowledge and respect the differences among European Union (EU) countries and have the flexibility to be easily adjusted on a national level, but operates Europe wide. A coordinated approach to child injury prevention in Europe is needed for the following reasons:

- The need for the same level of safety standards for child products sold between countries. Consumers, currently make purchases expecting the same level of safety in all countries. All Europeans have a right to an equitable level of safety.
- The need for consistency of healthy public policies across Member States, as this would assist in reducing childhood injuries throughout Europe.
- The need for a coordinated plan of action among Member States to reduce child injury accidents, as this would create synergy and create the needed critical mass to move the issue forward.
- The desire and responsibility for an equitable status of safety for all European children that complies with the United Nations Charter of the Rights for Children.

THE SCOPE OF THE EUROPEAN CHILD SAFETY ALLIANCE

The Alliance will focus on strategies that will assist in the reduction of injury related deaths and disability amongst children 0 to 18 years of age in the European Union Member States.

As a starting point for this new entity, the focus will be on accidental injuries and deaths for the youngest children i.e. preschool children, and children in their early school years, from 2001 to 2003. We will concentrate on promoting the wider application of safety technologies that are simple to install and that are proven to be effective.

The scope of work will include the areas of:

- Accident and risk factor analysis
- Product safety and technology
- Standardization and enforcement
- Education and promotion

The work will be done in partnership with stakeholders from various disciplines involved in child injury prevention to promote a coordinated and consistent approach across Europe. The European Child Safety Alliance will operate using evidence-based research and best practice information to determine its priority issues and strategies. These global strategies will be flexible, so national stakeholders and partners in the Member States can adapt them in order to reach a diverse audience. Strategies will incorporate multi-faceted approaches to enhance the level of success in reducing injuries including:

1. Engineering
2. Enforcement
3. Education

The most successful prevention strategies use a combination of education with enforcement and/ or engineering strategies to make the greatest impact for injury reduction.

The Alliance will serve as the European catalyst through which national and international networks and activities are facilitated to advance advocacy for European legislative and funding changes, and an injury communications network to share best practices/successful programming, and information needs.

STRUCTURE

The European Child Safety Alliance is an initiative of the European Consumer Safety Association that is responsible for its delivery. Direction for the program is provided by a Steering Group (committee), composed of representatives of the 15 Member States of the EU (observers also participate from EU applicant countries) and affiliated child injury prevention organizations. The program is housed and operated out of the Consumer Safety Institute in the Netherlands, and is lead and managed by the European Child Safety Alliance Director. Core funding for the program is provided in partnership with the European Commission and the Consumer Safety Institute in the Netherlands. Corporate partnerships will be investigated to contribute to the program overall.

CRITERIA FOR PRIORITY SETTING

In developing goals and activities for the European Child Safety Alliance, a number of factors need to be considered to establish the priorities for the program, including the following:

- the identified needs of the Member States as to injury prevention, and their willingness to coordinate with the European Child Safety Alliance,
- the severity and frequency of injuries in Member States and Europe,
- the parental and societal attitudes and beliefs in Member States and Europe,
- evidence based research of an effective intervention and potential for success,
- opportunities for partnership and support resources.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The European Child Safety Alliance primary audience are European decision makers, leaders, and practitioners who can influence healthy public policy, standards, and product designs to reduce deaths and injuries of children 0 to 18 years of age. As a starting point and for this three year Strategic Business Plan, we will specifically concentrate on unintentional injury for young children in preschool years and the early years of school. In partnership with the national child safety agencies in each Member State, promotion information will also be communicated to parents, caregivers, and national media to increase awareness and knowledge of current childhood injury issues.

ACTIVITIES OF THE EUROPEAN CHILD SAFETY ALLIANCE

The Alliance will focus on three activities to accomplish the tasks outlined in this Strategic Business Plan for 2001 to 2003.

- Coordinate European promotions and advocacy work to increase the profile of child injury prevention and place it on the European political agenda.
- Organize a Communications Network of Child Injury Prevention advocates to share resources, best practice and develop partnerships.
- Operationalize the European Child Safety Alliance.

GOALS AND ACTIONS

GOAL 1 To influence key decision makers and leaders at the European level to enhance healthy public policies and funding for child injury prevention initiatives.

ACTIONS

- To develop a database of key influencers at the European Level who will be targeted to receive prepared materials on child injury prevention issues.
- To prepare a White Book on child injury to the European Commission, Parliament, and other key influencers to describe the magnitude and issues of child injury in Europe, with recommendations for action and a strategy to move these recommendations forward.
- To coordinate a communications launch of the White Book in Europe in partnership with the national partners and their community networks.
- To prepare a baseline survey of parents, practitioners and decision makers in the Member States on their attitudes and beliefs of child injury and prevention in Europe.
- To coordinate a communication package with the national partners and their community networks to release the results of the survey throughout Europe.

- To prepare four European statistic sheets each year that addresses a priority child injury issue that is disseminated to key influencers in Europe.
- To prepare each year one Alliance position statement that is fully researched on a priority issue that is controversial and requires a firm stance.
- To coordinate communications to promote the position of the European Child Safety Alliance on the prepared position statement in partnership with the national partners and their community networks.
- To pilot the concept of a Report Card or Score Card stating how safe Member States and Europe are for children.

OUTCOMES

- Recognition of name and purpose of the European Child Safety Alliance and its national partners by European political leaders and media.
- National plans for child safety promotions, based on measurable targets.
- Enhanced programs at the European level for child safety product standards and regulations.
- Increased funding at the European Union and national level for actions on child safety.

GOAL 2 To stimulate European level injury prevention awareness promotions to increase the profile of child injury prevention.

ACTIONS

- Determine common themes and issues for European level promotions for child injury prevention.
- Investigate various structures and frameworks, which European promotions could operate within to provide national partners and their community networks with flexibility, yet maximizing public impact of an injury prevention message.

- Partner and play a supportive role with participating national partners and community networks in the preparations of the promotions material.
- Enact the promotions plan in participating Member States with partner and sponsor involvement.
- Conduct an evaluation of the promotions to determine their level of impact, what aspect worked best, and general information to plan the next activities.

OUTCOMES

- Recognition by the European public that injury is the leading cause of death and disability for children.
- Increased requests by the European public for child injury prevention information.
- Increased demands by the European public for child safety products and regulations.

GOAL 3 To organize a European Child Injury Prevention Network to share resources, best practice and develop partnerships.

ACTIONS

- Develop a European database of child injury prevention practitioners, researchers and organizations in the Member States, and make it available as an electronic directory of the European Child Safety Network.
- Host a Child Injury Prevention Safety Fair as part of the 3rd European Convention on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion, to learn how child injury prevention is coordinated in each Member State and the resources available.
- Prepare a resource inventory of the materials shared by each Member State and their national structure at the Safety Fair and make an electronic listing.
- Investigate the development and support to create a link between academic researchers and practitioners, to determine bench marking criteria, comparison information, and best practice resources to share with injury practitioners.
- Distribute four statistic sheets each year to national partners with European and Member State information to provide consistent statements that can be used when preparing various communication pieces.

- Host a capacity building workshop in partnership with the national partners and their community networks to share best practices, programs successes, resources, skill building techniques, and networking.
- Prepare a “ User Friendly Summary” to child injury legislation and standards in Europe with case studies, for the European Child Safety Network and National partners to increase our advocates’ knowledge of the issues.

OUTCOMES

- Sharing of successful activities, best practice, data, policies etc, among Member States to enhance awareness and knowledge.
- Development of a European wide advocacy network for child injury prevention and extended partnerships at an international level that will serve as a stronger voice for child safety.

GOAL 4 To establish and operationalize the European Child Safety Alliance.

- Maintain core operations and activity funds for the European Child Safety Alliance through government, organization, corporation and private agencies for the years 2001 to 2003, and investigate funding for the years 2003 to 2006.
- Formalize a Steering Group with representatives of the EU 15 Member States and affiliated child safety organizations.
- Maintain continuity of staff and the funding required to direct and manage the program and its activities.
- Develop and enact a communications strategy that introduces the European Child Safety Alliance (i.e. website, corporate identity, general information package).
- Develop, implement, and evaluate the strategic business plan 2001 to 2003 for the European Child Safety Alliance.

OUTCOMES

- A strong central coordinating agency for child injury prevention at the European level.
- A collective focus for child injury prevention at the European level.

