Child accident prevention

Introduction
Unintentional injuries in and around the home are a leading cause of preventable death for children under 5 years and a major cause of injury and serious disability. Every year in England approximately 60 children and young people die, 450,000 attend AandE and 40,000 are admitted to hospital as an emergency as a result of an accident.

Risk factors and vulnerable groups
There is a persistent social gradient for child unintentional injuries, and inequalities have widened in recent years. Emergency hospital admission rates for unintentional injuries amongst the under-fives are 45% higher for children in the most deprived areas compared with children from the least deprived. Boys are at a greater risk of all types of injury, ranging from minor to fatal, within the first 5 years of life.

What is the evidence base?
NICE produced three pieces of guidance on how to prevent unintentional injuries among under-15s;
- Strategies to prevent unintentional injuries among the under 15s.
- Unintentional injuries on the road.
- Provision of home safety equipment and home risk assessments.

Public Health England has produced guidance on what works to prevent unintentional injuries which includes:
- Targeting deprived families and communities.
- Training early years’ workforce.
- Focussing on priority areas: choking, suffocation and strangulation, falls, poisoning, burns and scalds and drowning.

Health visitors and children centres are a trusted source of knowledge, advice and information for parents and are often the first point of contact for parents who are unsure on the best course of action when their child is unwell. As such they play an important role in the primary care team and can help to reduce the burden on busy GP surgeries and AandE departments.

Health visitors are able to provide help and support to new parents on a range of common minor childhood illness such as fever, cough and colds, vomiting and diarrhoea, building parental confidence and knowledge on self-management and when to seek help.

Local picture
Hospital admissions for accidental and deliberate injuries in children aged 0-4 years in Luton has gone down from 159 per 10,000 populations in 2011/12 to 125 per 10,000 in 2013/14 while admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in children aged (0-14 years) is fairly steady as shown in Figure 1 and and Figure 2.
The number of children aged 0-15 killed or seriously injured in road accident in Luton has increased from 25 per 100,000 in 2010 to 32 per 100,000 in 2012 (Figure 3). Also AandE attendances among children aged 0-4 went up from 206 per 1,000 population in 2011 to 259 attendances per 1,000 populations in 2012, but remains below the national average and statistical neighbour averages.

Figure 1: Hospital admissions for accidental and deliberate injuries and Figure 2: Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries

Figure 3: Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents and Figure 4: AandE attendances

What is being done locally?
Luton ‘Safe at Home’ is a child accident prevention programme delivered through a local multi-agency partnership, Luton Child Injury Prevention Group, led by the Pre-School Learning Alliance, the Council and Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue, and supported by local and national child accident specialists, Kid Rapt and RoSPA, the NHS and Bedfordshire Police.

The scheme provides an assessment service delivered by staff trained to identify accident risks in the home, educate families and provide safety equipment free to eligible families. This is installed by Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue service who as part of the programme fit smoke detectors and CO\textsuperscript{2} monitors. In addition, the scheme aims to raise awareness of nationally identified risks in the home, for example, choking from nappy sacks, ingestion of button cell batteries, E-cigarette refills, infant safe sleeping and accidental strangulation from blind cords, and every three months focuses on a local risk issue. An annual child safety event linking to CAPT (Child Accident Prevention Trust) Child Safety Week is run in June. The scheme has recently been reviewed by RoSPA and is an exemplar of good practice and has been incorporated into the Early Years Flying Start Strategy in addition to
which is one of the health visiting six high impact areas for development. The number of families accessing the scheme has increased year-on-year and in 2014/15, 730 families were assessed through the scheme.

Priorities
1. Review the impact of the current accident prevention scheme across Luton and link to the Better Together programme outcomes.
References


