

# Looking Out For Kids' Safety

## Child Safety Center Provides Tools And Education For Families

By HEATHER J. CHIN  
THE BULLETIN

**PHILADELPHIA** — While your family starts gearing up for a new school year, remember that some things stay in season all year — like keeping everyone safe and sound, whether out in the sun or racing from class to lacrosse practice. But where to go? What to look for?

This year, Kohl's Safety Center provides just that. Located within the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia gift shop, its mission is to reduce childhood injury by providing safety and health education along with safety products.

"The idea of a safety center is for families to get low cost products [as well as] safety education," said Marla Vanore, R.N., M.H.A., trauma program manager at Children's Hospital. "There is always a highly qualified safety educator in the store to offer guidance on product use, such as how to fit a helmet or install a child safety seat."

Parents, children and intrigued passersby are encouraged to come visit the Safety Center, a safe place where they are surrounded by everything from colorful — and sturdy — helmets, baby gates, power strip covers, cabinet locks, elbow and knee pads and child safety seats, as well as free literature on important safety topics and answers to any question about injury prevention.

The benefits of this are that the health educator can see the child[ren] and suggest supplies appropriate for the child's age



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Angela Sim-Laramee, Safety Center coordinator, and Marla L. Vanore, RN, are responsible for starting and running the Kohl's Safety Center inside the gift shop at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

and developmental level to families. Twenty-minute safety videos are also available to be watched in the center, and a car seat program available for qualifying low-income families.

There's even a life-size model car and different sized toy babies for parents to learn the proper way of strapping in car seats, booster seats, and their child.

"Kids love the car," said Angela Sim-Laramee, Safety Center Coordinator. "They also get excited to be fitted and measured for a new helmet. Parents are happy with the prices and to have their kids ... able to actually try [a helmet] on."

In addition to being a place for often-elusive answers and safety education from knowledgeable professionals, every product in the store is sold at-cost to anyone from the community who comes in. This means huge savings and high affordability, with \$8 bicycle helmets, \$3 outlet covers, \$1.30 window blind cord wind-ups, and car seats in varying sizes for \$13 to \$49.

While a Children's Hospital initiative, the Safety Center receives funding from the national retailer Kohl's, whose Kohl's Cares for Kids program helps support health education and services programs throughout the country. Under this program, the proceeds from selling stuffed animals at Kohl's department stores helps projects like this one.

The Safety Center is doing well, even with only a three-month run thus far.

"We've had a lot more people come in [than we expected], with around 30 people a day coming in asking questions about their own safety seats and bicycle helmets," said Ms. Sim-Laramee. "We've even had doctors coming in asking questions," added Ms. Vanore.

As a Trauma I center, Children's Hospital has a strong injury prevention program, from which an advisory board of doctors and nurses were chosen to assist the Center in what to do and how to run the store for the most efficient care.

The Safety Center is the first and only one of its kind in Pennsylvania and was based on existing safety centers throughout the country that have been successful.

As for the future of the store, both women said it's to continue to get the word out and reach as many families as possible. "The goal is not to make a profit, it's just to sell safety products and continue to replenish the stock," said Ms. Sim-Laramee.

And with the first week in September being Child Passenger Safety Week, it's the perfect time to remember that safety comes in both knowledge and action.

The Kohl's Safety Center is located on the first floor near the main entrance of Children's Hospital at 34th and Pine, within the gift/convenience shop and adjacent to McDonald's. It is open every weekday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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