

# Wide 20mph Limits Benefit Children & Families

**A 20's Plenty for Us Briefing Oct 2013**

[http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk/BriefingSheets/Wide\\_20mph\\_Limits\\_Help\\_Children\\_and\\_Families.pdf](http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk/BriefingSheets/Wide_20mph_Limits_Help_Children_and_Families.pdf)

20's Plenty



Where People Live

**Children and families are big winners from slower speeds. Wide 20mph limits help parents and children to get around locally. Less danger or parent 'taxi-duty' and more walking and cycling means happier, healthier families with extra money to spend.**

Child protection should focus more on slower speeds because crashes are the top avoidable cause of early death or injury for 5-35 year olds. Some children are not allowed to go out without an adult because of fears of being run over. Leading expert Professor Danny Dorling says "roads imprison richer children at home, denying them the freedom to move and are the main sites of killing of poorer children"<sup>i</sup>.

Child road safety education might seem a partial solution. But, although it can change behaviour, studies show that education has not reduced traffic crash rates<sup>ii</sup>. Eye sight development explains why being near fast traffic is risky. Vision scientists found that 6-11 year olds cannot reliably see, or accurately judge speeds over 20mph<sup>iii</sup>. Children cannot be taught get out of the way and are not to blame in a collision.

Changing adult driving styles does work. Signing drivers to obey a 20mph limit improves safety - especially if most roads are included. The World Health Organisation say wide area 20mph limits help protect walkers<sup>iv</sup>. Public Health body NICE advises 20 mph limits near children<sup>v</sup>. At 20mph the risk of death is 7 times less than 30mph. There is extra time to get out of the way or brake.



Just 20% of child casualties happen on school journeys. Yet until recently transport officials had focused on engineering slower speeds with humped, school zones. But, humps are costly. They result in confusing limits. Zones only protect a few hundred metres near schools (about 17% of a school trip). Zones encourage parents to drop off in the "safe area" and then remind them to speed up on leaving it. Wide 20mph limits are better

because people who walk or cycle the journey enjoy a 20mph limit throughout the majority of their route. Noise levels fall by 50% too, plus its popular and good for the environment.

The results of protective parents stopping children from going about by themselves are all too clear. Very overweight child numbers are rising. 22% of London's year 6 children (10/11 year olds) are obese. Body fat is controlled by eating fewer calories and exercise. Exercising one hour daily is recommended for kids, yet with most not allowed to walk or cycle alone due to mum's and dad's concerns, few are active enough. Also the focus on obesity is masking rapidly reducing child fitness levels. Nearly half of year 11 pupils (15 year olds) are unfit<sup>vi</sup>. This raises the risks of many other health problems such as heart disease.

**20's Plenty For Us campaigns for a 20mph default speed limit in residential streets without physical calming.**

Web [www.20splentyforus.org.uk](http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk) Twitter @20splentyforus

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Slower speeds are key to more walking and cycling. Bristol found 20+% increases in both in their 20mph limited areas<sup>vii</sup>. Many children want to travel by foot or bike but are not allowed. In Southwark, London while just 3% of primary and 2% of secondary pupils currently cycle to school, 30% of primary age children and 14% of secondary pupils wanted to. Only 14% of those aged 7-10 were usually allowed to cross roads alone, according to parents. Around half were never allowed to and the rest were sometimes allowed<sup>viii</sup>.

Driving children around is costly. A survey of 2,000 mums in 2012 by a child safety seat firm found that they spent an average £1,714 a year on fuel to transport children and 6 hours 43 mins driving weekly<sup>ix</sup>. Even 15 mins each way twice daily is 5 hrs a week on the 'school run', or 195 hrs a year. Letting children walk or cycle could free up a lot of time and money. Some adults could use that time to earn income.

Children matter. Liverpool's researchers found saving child injuries as driver's strongest motivation to obey slower speed limits.

Rod King MBE, 20's Plenty for Us Founder said  
*"Remember that a child sees our roads and world from a height of just 4ft. Their approach to going places is related to the care (or otherwise) with which us adults move our steel vehicles around their streets. Speed becomes greed when it deters children from walking or cycling on streets which are theirs as much as ours"*

Anna Semlyen 20's Plenty for Us Campaign Manager said *"Wide 20mph limits mean safer roads. Parents can then offer children extra freedoms, confidence and exercise. Kids get more chances to say what to do and where to go for themselves. Growing up becomes more fun!"*



**Schools and families can contact 20's Plenty for Us for free help to get 20mph limits. Ask about joining our campaign to get a free pack, stickers, posters and templates or see our website.**

<sup>i</sup> Prof Danny Dorling [http://www.shaf.ac.uk/geography/staff/dorling\\_danny/lectures.html](http://www.shaf.ac.uk/geography/staff/dorling_danny/lectures.html) PACTs Westminster lecture Nov 2010.

<sup>ii</sup> Peden, M et al. (2004) 'World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention'.

[http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/publications/road\\_traffic/world\\_report/chapter4.pdf](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/road_traffic/world_report/chapter4.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> [http://www.pc.rhul.ac.uk/sites/ARL/research/road\\_crossing.html](http://www.pc.rhul.ac.uk/sites/ARL/research/road_crossing.html) &  
<http://pss.sagepub.com/content/early/2011/03/04/0956797611400917>

<sup>iv</sup> WHO Pedestrian Safety [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/79753/1/9789241505352\\_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/79753/1/9789241505352_eng.pdf) pg 64

<sup>v</sup> NICE Preventing unintentional injuries among under-15s <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/index.jsp?action=byID&o=13273>

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/childhood-obesity-obsession-masks-fitness-time-bomb-8846597.html>

<sup>vii</sup> [https://www.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2012/ua/ua000/0726\\_7.pdf](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/committee/2012/ua/ua000/0726_7.pdf)

<sup>viii</sup> <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/Walking-in-London-report-May-2008.pdf> (Southwark Council - fig 16 p 47)

<sup>ix</sup> [http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/425499/Mums-school-run-costs-almost-2-000-per-year?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+daily-express-uk-news+\(Daily+Express+%3A%3A+UK+Feed\)](http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/425499/Mums-school-run-costs-almost-2-000-per-year?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+daily-express-uk-news+(Daily+Express+%3A%3A+UK+Feed))

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