

Pointers For Parents

Helmets That Fit Right Can Save Lives

(NAPSA)—Parents and children are getting a failing grade when it comes to helmet use.

Fewer than half (41 percent) of all children ages 14 and under wear helmets when participating in wheeled activities, and more than a third (35 percent) of kids who use helmets wear them improperly. Adult riders—often seen as role models for children—fared worse, with only 39 percent helmet use.

These figures are based on a new national field study conducted by the National SAFE KIDS Campaign for Bell Sports. More than 8,000 children and nearly 1,400 adults were observed while riding bicycles, skates, skateboards and scooters.

The most common mistakes in helmet use include tilted helmets, loose chin straps and unbuckled chin straps—all of which increase the risk of head injury in the event of a fall. Wearing helmets properly can make a world of difference.

Helmets are a simple solution to a serious problem. According to the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, helmets can reduce the risk of brain injury in a bike accident by up to 88 percent.

Linda Armstrong Kelly, mother of five-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong, is an ambassador for safe riding. She offers parents a simple, three-step check list called “Eyes, Ears & Mouth” to help them achieve proper fitting helmets for their children and themselves.



Linda Armstrong Kelly, mother of five-time Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong, teaches Joseph Katinas of Allen, Texas how to wear his helmet the right way.

Eyes: The rim of the helmet should be one to two finger-widths above the eyebrows.

Ears: The straps should form a “V” just beneath the ear lobe.

Mouth: The buckle should be flush against the skin under the chin; when the rider opens his mouth, he should feel it snug on the chin and hugging the head.

Helmet manufacturer Bell Sports is working to make helmets easier to use, so consumers can achieve and maintain proper helmet fit throughout the ride. The company has added easy-fit features such as one-hand-adjust fit systems that help keep helmets in place on the head, CamLocks™ to make adjusting straps easier and PinchGuard™ buckles to protect tender skin under the chin.

Parents and riders should always read the detailed tips on proper fit in the helmet owner’s manual that comes with every Bell helmet sold. To learn more about helmet safety, visit the Web site at www.BellBikeStuff.com.