

# Think Child Safety

Sometimes, great programs are the result of a tragic emergency or situation. Mothers Against Drunk Driving was established after a mother lost a child in a senseless auto accident. The highly successful Missing Children program was started by a father trying to cope with the abduction and murder of his young son. Once again, in a rural Texas town, a program with the potential for saving thousands of young lives has arisen out of misfortune.

The **Think Child Safety** program was developed by Paris-Lamar County EMS after the tragic loss of nine children in a six month period. One of the important aspects of this program is its flexibility to be modified to meet the individualized needs of each community, and that's exactly what Cypress Creek EMS is doing in implementing the program in northwest Houston.

The 1996 Think Child Safety Injury Prevention Manual, published by the Texas Department of Health and Lamar-Paris County EMS, contains the following vision and mission statements:

"We envision a safe environment in Texas for our children to learn, to play and enjoy a productive, healthy life. Our mission is:

- To teach children how to be safe in their everyday lives and avoid unnecessary injury and death.
- To utilize the teenage student population to reach younger children in our message of safety.
- To create safe zones for children in emergencies using community resources.



- To build community safety coalitions to protect our children, and
- To reduce the number of injuries and death in Texas children.

There are 3 basic components to the program, but extensions of the program may be added as injury prevention issues arise. 1. The Think Child Safety logo and recognition; 2. Student teacher safety instruction for young children; and, 3. Mobile safety vehicles, or "safe havens."



**Logo Recognition:** The object is to get the logo affixed to as many vehicles and public places as possible. This will serve to remind people to really think about the safety of their children whenever they see the logo. CCEMS kept the logo design the same as the logo used in Paris, Texas, but opted to modify the colors to bet-

ter coincide with CCEMS logos and vehicles.

**Student Teaching:** This component has paramedics, firefighters, and police officers training high school students in several aspects of injury prevention. The high school students then go to the elementary schools and teach the younger children.

Having the high schools students giving the lessons has several advantages. It allows the young adults to learn the rewards of giving back to the community, to develop relationships with pre-hospital personnel, and places them in leadership roles which also helps to improve their self-esteem. It was also found that the younger children receiving the lessons responded positively to the teenage teachers. They are closer in age and tend to look up to them.



**Mobile Safety Vehicles:** The concept of this component is to identify businesses or organizations in the community that utilize two-way radios, cellular phones, and have vehicles in the community. These vehicles would be identified as “safe havens” for children if an emergency arises. The individual in the vehicle would be Think Child Safety trained, including basic first aid, and could notify fire, police, or EMS if necessary.

These are the areas of instruction included in the CCEMS Think Child Safety program:

- Car Seat, Booster Seat, and Seat Belt Safety
- Fall Prevention
- Water Safety
- Pedestrian Safety



- Bike Safety
  - Choking and Strangulation Prevention
  - 9-1-1
  - CPR and First Aid
  - ARC Babysitter’s Training
- CCEMS is proud to be able to utilize the Think Child Safety program. We are grateful to those

from Paris-Lamar County EMS and the Texas Department of Health who gave their valuable time to develop, implement, and evaluate the program. These dedicated professionals have created a manual that is not only user-friendly for all communities, but is also one which will help save a countless number of children’s lives. ■



For more information about scheduling a Think Child Safety Program, please contact:

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