



## Pioneering Children's Safety Centers

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### Summary

Johns Hopkins Center for Injury Research and Policy (JHCIRP) created a model Children's Safety Center to encourage more low income families to use life saving safety products. Researchers found that general advice from pediatricians did not motivate families to implement injury prevention practices, especially when there are many barriers to obtaining the necessary products. Faculty from JHCIRP and the Johns Hopkins Department of Pediatrics provided an injury prevention communication training program for pediatricians and built a safety resource center for families to obtain doctor-recommended child safety products at a low cost. This enabled families visiting the center to make their homes safer and reduce their injury risk.

### Challenge

JHCIRP faculty conducted a needs assessment of the East Baltimore area and concluded that up to two-thirds of families with young children were not using widely recommended safety practices and products (e.g., baby gates, cabinet locks and latches, car seats). They also found that more than half of the well child visits did not include injury prevention counseling from pediatricians. Parents reported that they were interested in injury prevention, but that it was often not a priority because they couldn't afford safety products or couldn't find them in stores where they customarily shopped.

### Target Audience

The initial target audience was low income families receiving care at the hospital. However, the audience has expanded to include families throughout Baltimore City, especially those with limited financial resources.

### Quote

"We have proven methods to prevent injuries to children. What we, as public health and health care professionals must do is find innovative ways to disseminate the information and products that will save lives. Community partnerships and safety resource centers are promising strategies to help achieve this goal."

Andrea Gielen, ScD, ScM,  
Professor and Director

## Solution

JHCIRP faculty in partnership with the Johns Hopkins Department of Pediatrics developed, implemented, and evaluated an injury prevention communication training program for pediatricians. During well child check-ups, pediatricians counseled families about child injury prevention in the context of developmental milestones such as crawling, walking, and exploring the environment. Parents talked about financial and access barriers when trying to get recommended safety products. To address this problem, JHCIRP faculty worked with pediatricians to build the first of its kind, onsite Children's Safety Center and partnered with the Baltimore City Fire Department to create a CARES Mobile Safety Center. The centers provide families with high quality safety products at a low cost and personalized education that reinforces the pediatricians' advice. JHCIRP faculty have opened more centers by collaborating with local insurers and community organizations.

## Success

The centers have served more than 25,000 clients. An evaluation of safety practices showed that 34% of parents who visited the Children's Safety Center adopted three or more safety recommendations compared with only 17% of parents who had not used the center. Car seats and proper installation instructions given to parents visiting the center have already been credited with saving lives. JHCIRP also provides low cost safety products and personalized information through the mobile CARES Safety Center. Because of this research, thousands of Baltimore City children and families are better protected. The safety resource centers serve as models for others and are being replicated throughout the country.

## Strategies for Success

The focus of JHCIRP efforts are to:

- Reduce financial and access barriers for low-income families,
- Evaluate whether goals have been achieved and identify needed improvements, and
- Communicate results widely to promote sustainability.

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