



25 years of research



The Children's Traffic Club (CTC) is the most researched, monitored and evaluated road safety education programme in the UK. Since CTC's inception it has been constantly monitored and evaluated to ensure it remains effective as an educational programme for pre-school children, and as a casualty reduction initiative. The research has consistently proven that CTC has the ability to help save lives and influence the lifelong habits of children as road users.

Resume Findings**Reduces the number of children who:**

play in the street

run across the road

Increases the number of children who:

hold their carer's hand when outside
are careful when crossing driveways
stop at the kerb before crossing
recognise safer places to cross

always stop when told
walk on the inside of the pavement
look and listen for traffic before crossing
have knowledge of how to cross a road safely

Also that CTC members:

- had 12% fewer overall road casualties than non-members
- had 4% fewer casualties when walking
- had 20% fewer casualties as a result of being hidden by a vehicle while crossing.

The Children's Traffic Club Research and Evaluation Resume**The Eastern Region Pilot, TRL 1990 - 1993**

The CTC Piloted in seven eastern counties of England: Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. CTC was closely monitored and evaluated by TRL (Transport Research Laboratory), in collaboration with the Royal Holloway College. The Experimental Region was compared with six control counties: Berkshire, Kent, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire. The positive behavioural and attitudinal changes prompted the roll out of CTC nationally. Findings included that CTC:

- reduced the number of children who played in the street
- increased the number of carers who held their child's hand when out
- increased the proportion of children who always stopped when told
- increased carers' road safety education of children and number of teaching methods used
- helped children identify roadside objects, safe routes to walk, places to play from a picture
- gave children knowledge of how to cross a road safely.

TRL study on casualty data, 1994

A further study was carried out by TRL on using STAT19 road accident data to assess CTC on child casualties, which showed a positive reduction. Findings included:

- reductions in casualty numbers in the experimental region in excess of the reductions in the control region
- an overall reduction of 12% in child casualties
- 4% reduction in pedestrian casualties
- 20% reduction in casualties involving a child emerging from behind a vehicle.

Based on Department of Transport figures of 1993, if the CTC had been operating free in every authority across the whole of Great Britain, this last statistic would be enough to produce a casualty cost saving of £9.2 million.

Due to the success of the Eastern Region Pilot CTC was introduced in several areas of the UK, in partnership with local and health authorities. One of these was the Lothian Authority, who then undertook some research on deprivation and road risk.

Independent research by Lothian, Scotland, 1994

Research in Lothian established a relationship between deprivation and road accident involvement. As a result, in 1994 the Carstairs Deprivation System was used to analyse CTC membership. The results showed a clear linear relationship between CTC uptake and deprivation category, with the uptake decreasing as the deprivation increases. Following this further developments to CTC were made to include more direct links, messaging and identification with lower socio economic groups.

The Scottish government were keen to take on CTC and therefore carried out further research throughout three years.

The Scottish Office research, June 1993 - 1995

The Scottish Office commissioned a research project on the effectiveness of CTC and its suitability for the whole of Scotland. The research was carried out by TRL and Coopers & Lybrand. As a result CTC was launched in Scotland in November 1995.

TRL, assisted by BITER, 1996

TRL and BITER were commissioned jointly by The Scottish Office and the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions to evaluate The Children's Traffic Club in Scotland in its first years.

Main findings were:

- There were significant differences between the experimental sample and the control sample.
- The effects of CTC on children, parents and carers were at least as great as the effects in the Eastern Region Pilot
- The membership uptake varied with the socio-economic groups. However, use of the material did not vary – indeed it was higher than average between SEGs D and E (and higher than groups A, B, and C1) for four out of five books

- Children's learning about road safety continued across all five stages of CTC with carers' teaching of road safety peaking when children were about four and a half years old.

Members' survey, 1998

After the initial years of CTC operating and available 'nationally', we undertook to survey parents of existing members who were nearing completion of the scheme, in order to gain an insight into what parents thought about CTC, assess the suitability/ease-of-use of the material for both parents and children. These surveys have kept any adaptation or update of CTC pertinent and relevant to the needs of the members. The main findings of this survey were as follows:

- 96% said that CTC had helped them teach their child road safety skills
- 71% (76% Scotland / 67% rest of UK) said CTC had helped them personally to become more road safety aware
- 82% of those who had other children in the household (in addition to the member child) said CTC had helped them teach road safety to their other children.
- 96% were pleased they had enrolled their child in CTC
- 92% (96% in Scotland / 88% in the rest of the UK) said they would recommend CTC to other parents
- 93% (96% Scotland /90% rest of UK) thought their child had enjoyed being a member
- 96% of parents agreed that CTC had helped them teach their children road safety
- Children enjoyed receiving the material through the post, but some parents felt the 6-month gap between books was too long
- Children liked the balloon characters and looking at the pictures of the books
- Most parents (88%) had been practising with their child outside at least once a week.

George Street Research Ltd, 2000

Based on all previous findings the CTC material was updated, redesigned and restructured (to provide the material quarterly rather than six monthly) through 2000/ 2001. Development of new books was carried out with in-depth consultation with pre-school educationalists, road safety professionals, health visitors, parents and children, throughout the whole of the UK. George Street Research Ltd was commissioned by dbda and Scottish Road Safety Campaign to evaluate the new material, which was found to be positive and inclusive. Main findings included:

- All parents agreed the new format was better than previous versions
- Children identified with the child characters and lifestyles
- Stickers were very popular with children
- Parents found notes provided useful suggestions for additional things to do
- Professionals were supportive of the new format and the emphasis on different housing and ethnic groups.

Complementary Material Research

As a result of the 2003 parents survey new items were added to the CTC material, in particular Nursery and Playgroup Packs. These were introduced into Scottish Nurseries to heighten awareness of CTC and provide an additional route for the education of young children. Research commissioned by the Scottish Road Safety Campaign found that:

- 70% of those nurseries and playgroups using it said the pack had a positive effect in raising road safety awareness
- Nurseries and playgroups had integrated the pack into a wide range of road safety activities
- The pack had a significant effect in raising or reinforcing awareness of CTC among nursery and playgroup staff, and with parents.

Member Parents/carers surveys 2003/2005/2007/2010

The parents of the members have continued to be surveyed to ensure CTC is listening to the needs of parents/carers and children. The surveys aim to assess not only the overall effectiveness of the material, but members' attitude and behaviours towards road safety generally, and to establish any possible areas for resource development. The findings from all previous surveys include:

- A reported 20% increase in children holding hands when out
- A reported 18% increase in children "stopping" when told
- A reported 47% reduction in children playing in the street
- The overall satisfaction level of parents/carers was exceptionally high
- 100% of parents said CTC had helped the member to become more road safety aware
- 95% of parents said CTC had helped them personally to become more road safety aware
- 98.4% of parents felt CTC helped them teach their children road safety skills
- 86% were helped to teach other children in the household
- Over 50% of parents used the material at least once per week.

The survey sent in 2010 to every parent/child receiving Book 2 or Book 6 showed very enthusiastic findings and helped to establish the way forward to terms of digitising the content and connecting even more with high deprivation families.

Focus Groups, Desk Research 2002/2004/2006/2008/2010

Throughout the life of CTC we have carried out a range of focus groups and telephone interviews, not only with the parents and children but also with the professionals engaged with the young children: Health practitioners, Early Years coordinators, childminders, nursery leaders and Road safety Officers. The last round in February 2010 helped lead the way in developing the new multimedia CTC in May 2012. Some positive comments were noted:

Some parents comments:

- 'My 2nd child is receiving the books; they have both kept them to read over and over again. It reinforces the road safety rather than parents just telling them what to do!'
- 'I think the books are invaluable for teaching road safety to young children, I'm so glad we joined not just for teaching road safety but it's a great way of spending time reading and interacting with your child'.

- 'My son gets so excited to see the postman has been and delivered his Traffic Club book. He enjoys looking at and understanding the pictures while I read out explanations for each page'.
- 'I think The Traffic Club is an excellent initiative – to remind parents to actively teach road safety, rather than assuming children would just learn passively'.

Comments from Early years Practitioners:

- 'CTC is invaluable - it not only addresses the Foundation objectives but also gives me an endless supply of discussion, role-play, reading and listening opportunities, whilst encouraging road safety thank you!'
- 'The Children think its such fun, they love the balloon characters and it really helps to reinforce some of the messages'
- 'Thank you we have a real challenge with some of the parents and The Club materials provide an opportunity to liaise and get their interaction with the children more at home!'

Comments from Road Safety Officers:

- 'Wow! Really impressed with the Children's Traffic Roadshow! You managed to get a lot of families involved at the shopping centre, it certainly helps to have such catchy tunes and the balloon characters brought to life'
- 'It helps me working with the high risk areas in my borough, the Sure Start material is just what's needed'

Independent research from The Gifford Partnership, 2013/14

We commissioned independent research between November 2013 and January 2014 to evaluate the use of the new multimedia DVD Club which launched one year prior to this. Findings were gathered from parents, children and road safety officers through a series of focus groups, and was supplemented by a member's survey. Overall the DVD Club has been received very well by parents and RSOs, with key recommendations. In summary the research found the following:

Some parents said:

- 'They valued their involvement in the scheme and appreciate the support of CTC in helping them tackle behaviours in their children that they felt threatened their safety'
- 'Helps to remind them that they are their child's role model'
- 'The material is from the child's viewpoint enabling each child to identify lessons for themselves and imitate the relevant characters'
- 'They are in favour of the new DVDs, but some felt that digitisation could be taken even further and some of the content could be easily moved online and accessed via mobile devices; as well as offering an app as a supplement to the core material'
- 'They also felt that that the inclusion of some books with an online Club would be of great benefit as it provides both a tangible and personal connection with CTC for the child and books are easier for parents. However, the interactive content is also highly regarded and crucial.'

Some Road Safety officers said:

- 'They really value the educational value of CTC and both the DVDs and activity books offer a quality learning resource that reflects the culture and ethnicity of different areas within the UK, particularly London'
- 'That as a known 'brand' the CTC has considerable value in the road safety community'

- 'All showed huge encouragement for developing a further digital offer for CTC to engage with children's increase in proficiency with phones and tablets and it was noted that levels of connectivity are increased all the time'

Independent research for London Club - February 2015.

Research carried out via parents' questionnaires and nursery surveys. Extra interviews were carried out in boroughs defined as 'high BAME' and 'high deprivation'. Findings:

- The materials have a clear positive impact on children's behaviours and attitudes, and the majority of children find them interesting and easy to understand
- When parents receive the packs 94% use them, and the materials are also used as teaching aids in nurseries
- A high proportion of parents reported a positive change in their child's approach to road safety. 87% who received packs through PCT and 81% who received packs via nurseries said their child was more aware of road safety and potential dangers
- The impact of CTC materials was marginally greater in high BAME and high deprivation boroughs
- Using all packs has the greatest impact, though use of any materials has a beneficial impact on young children's attitudes and behaviours towards road safety

Focus groups in Lancashire - May 2015

The following were the main outputs from the Focus Groups carried out on behalf of Lancashire County Council's Road and Transport Safety Group on the 20th and 21st May 2015.

- Distribution through the school was considered the best method as it meant it came from a 'trusted' source.
- All parents had used the materials with their children.
- Strongest and most memorable messages were considered to be Stopping, Looking and Listening. This was due to the balloon character names and the actions they represent staying in the mind of both parent and child.
- Structured nature of pack was much appreciated by the parents as it was easy to understand.
- Format of pack was well liked; all parents had access to multiple IT platforms.
- Interactive Games were considered the most engaging, followed by the stories and stickers. Certificates were also mentioned as a good 'reward'.
- In households where there were older children the packs have been used 'multi-generational'.
- Where English was not a first language the pictorial nature of the packs was considered vital.
- No particular barriers to usage were highlighted. Two parents of children with autism stated they had to be selective in what stages were used.
- The majority of parents walked to school each day.
- Travel messaging within the packs had been noted and parents were aware of the benefits of travel other than cars.
- Use of the materials in the family setting had made the majority of parents question their own road safety attitudes and behaviour.
- Parents were suitably motivated to 'practice what they preach' with their children.

CTC London Evaluation – September to December 2016

TfL undertook an evaluation of the CTC London programme to evaluate the effectiveness of the resource assets, retention of key messages and consider actions taken as a result of the findings.

Below is an overview of the results:

Objectives

- Assess appeal and usage of the CTC London resources among children, their parents/carers and early year's practitioners.
- Assess the quality, suitability and frequency of use of each resource (the Nursery Leaders Guide, the printed material for parents, the website and the app).
- Identify the level of influence the resource has on behaviour and evaluate retention of key road safety and active travel messages.

Summary

Overall CTC London is very well received but it is the story book which remains the most useful element for both parents/carers and early years practitioners.

Overall

- Satisfaction with CTC London is high.
- Resources are perceived as useful for teaching children about road safety and active travel.
- There is a preference for physical materials over the website and the app as they are easier to access and use with children.

Parents/Carers

- Printed packs are the clear favourite among parents/carers.
- Despite this, some elements of the printed pack are seen as less conducive to educating children about road safety and active travel than others. It is the book itself which is most useful.
- Those who do use the website and app are generally satisfied with them but this is mainly in their supporting role to the printed material. Usage is much lower: 92% have used the printed material, 36% have used the website and 18% have used the app.

Nursery Leaders

- CTC London material is seen as supplementary to road safety and active travel lessons already taught.
- The Nursery Leaders Guide is deemed useful but it is not always utilised in full. However, over three quarters use the guide and USB at least once per term.
- Many did not realise a USB came with the pack and some mentioned difficulties accessing IT at their place of work.
- Again, the book provided in the printed material given to parents is seen as highly valuable.

Key findings

Of the parents/carers and nursery leaders surveyed below are the top line results which were overwhelming positive:

- **90 per cent parental satisfaction** rating with the quality, content and suitability of CTC London resources.
- **70 per cent of parents** say that road safety and active travel messages have been easy to remember with **60 per cent** noticing positive behaviour change in their child when out and about.
- **61 per cent of early years practitioners** surveyed use CTC London between 1-3 times a term with their children.
- **81 per cent** share that the CTC London Nursery Leaders Guide is a good teaching aid and help them to meet OFSTED requirements.

Research to inform redevelopment of National Club 2017

Overview

Insight and diversity specialists SLS were commissioned by Zinc Communicate to conduct research with nursery staff and parents from diverse backgrounds to gauge their reactions to a Children's Traffic Club road safety book and App.

Research was required to look at the content in two ways:

- General reactions towards the proposed book and App.
- How the content was received from a diversity viewpoint.

Conclusions

Both the book and App were rated extremely positively and will be highly valued and used.

- **Parents really liked the book.** They think it is well designed, love the lay-out and imagery, and can see value in it as a learning resource.
- **Nursery staff liked the book** and can see it as a valuable learning source.
- Nursery staff would be most open to using the book during the summer when they take children out of the nursery on outings.
- Both parents and nursery staff think children will find the book appealing and engaging.
- Parents and nursery staff think the stickers are a great idea. However, nursery staff claim they would need a lot more of the stickers to be able to make use of them.
- The flash cards were well received and seen as a strong asset.
- Parents love the App. They think it is very exciting and can see how their children would use it.
- Nursery staff had mixed feelings about the App. Older staff do not see the point in the App, while younger nursery staff think it is modern and cool and could be a great learning device.
- Our low sample base suggests that nursery staff rarely, if ever, use technology with children, which is a strong potential barrier to promoting the App.
- From a diversity perspective, the book performs excellently.
- It feels modern and fresh.
- It covers most diverse audiences.
- It feels relevant.
- It normalises diversity.
- Parents and nursery staff welcome the diversity content.
- It promotes equality and inclusion.
- It is a useful tool for educating children about both road safety and diversity.
- It challenges stereotypes, e.g. the Asian girl Neeta playing football and the Asian mum driving.
- The characters look authentic and ethnically accurate.
- Respondents would like to see a disabled child as a main character.
- The sub-characters contribute to the fact we live in a diverse world and help to make the book modern and relevant.
- Respondents had some suggestions for additional characters that they would like to see included.