

Dangerous driving puts kids at higher risk of getting hit during school drop-offs

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Dangerous driving when dropping children off at schools may put kids at increased risk of getting injured in the vicinity of their schools, a recent York University and The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) study indicates.

"Though [dangerous driving](#) behaviour near schools is often witnessed and reported, such incidents are not well described," says Professor Alison Macpherson, in the Faculty of Health. "Our study shows that there is a significant association between schools with dangerous driving and pedestrian-motor vehicle collisions (PMVCs)."

The observation is the result of a joint study by researchers at York University, the Hospital for Sick Children and the University of Toronto.

In 2011, trained observers measured dangerous driving behaviours and numbers of [children](#) walking to [school](#) during morning drop-off times.

The study reviewed police reports on child PMVCs, mapped around 118 Toronto public elementary schools, along with characteristics of the physical traffic environment. The research team also compared the level of [social disadvantage](#) for each school, provided by the Toronto District School Board.

"Over a 12-year period, there were 411 children involved in PMVCs near schools, with 45 occurring during school travel times. Twenty-nine of these collisions (64 per cent) were taken to the emergency department

for their injuries," points out lead author Linda Rothman, who is a York U Postdoctoral Fellow and a research manager at SickKids.

Unsafe parking and child drop-offs, such as dropping children off on the opposite side to the school, stood out as the most common dangerous driving behaviours, seen near 104 schools (88 per cent) according to the findings of "[Dangerous student car drop-off behaviours and child pedestrian-motor vehicle collisions: an observational study](#)", published online at *Traffic Injury Prevention*. More dangerous driving was observed in schools with greater social disadvantage and those near higher speed roadways.

"We urge that collision prevention approaches should include strategies to change the physical traffic environment, provide police enforcement and education to promote active transport to schools to reduce dangerous driving behavior," says Dr. Andrew Howard, a senior scientist and orthopaedic surgeon at SickKids and Associate Professor in the departments of Surgery & Health Policy, Management & Evaluation at the University of Toronto. He adds that the study results could have major impact on the City of Toronto's as well as the Toronto District School Board's policies to make walking to school safe for children.

Provided by York University

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