

DHS Poisons Brochure and Campaign  
Wednesday 15 November 2006  
10.20am, DAEC

Speech for Shannon Walker

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Thank you.

Good morning, my name's Shannon Walker and I work for EMC, a consultancy partnering with the Department of Human Services to manage the ***Remove the Risk. Put Poisons away. Straight away*** campaign.

Poisoning is the second highest cause of zero to four-year-old child hospitalisations in Victoria, according to the Accident Research Centre at Monash University.

The second highest cause, after falls. And the frightening thing is, most parents don't really consider poison-proofing their home to be a priority.

Parents need to be concerned about accidental poisonings in the home. At least eight children receive medical attention every day in Victoria after swallowing poison.

The government launched this campaign early last month and is now communicating with parents and other carers of young children to help them avoid an accidental poisoning in their home.

The first part of our campaign is this Remove the Risk brochure and fridge magnet (*HOLD UP BROCHURE AND MAGNET*), explaining the dangers and giving parents the information they need to keep children safe from poisons in their home.

The brochure will be distributed to all parents of one-year-olds by maternal and child health nurses over the next twelve months, but we need your help as well.

We want to spread our message, that children are at real risk of being accidentally poisoned in the home, as widely as possible. You are all in an excellent position to help us with that and I encourage all of you to get involved with this campaign.

Over the next eighteen months we will educate parents, grandparents and children about the likelihood of poisoning in the home and how they can make their home safer.

We are asking a range of groups for help to communicate our message.

As well as maternal and child health nurses, we are also approaching child care centres, grandparent educators, culturally and linguistically diverse community leaders, the Royal Children's Hospital, seniors week organisers and even product retailers to support this campaign.

We have started working with the safe-start projects in Geelong and Casey to promote the campaign. I thank the two previous speakers, Megan and Adriana, for their help.

You can help us to remove the risk of child poisonings by spreading our messages through your networks. The brochures and information sheets will soon be available for you to use in any showbags or information kits you may put together.

One of the best ways to warn parents of the dangers of child poisonings is by highlighting the cases of those families it happens to. We know there are about eight children a day who are treated for poisoning. Parents who are willing to talk to the media about their experiences can help us stop it from happening to other children, so if you hear of any cases, please refer them to us – more information can be found at the DHS stall in the foyer.

We are also happy to come and speak to any meetings you might run, where you think the audience may benefit from hearing the facts about accidental child poisonings and how to poison-proof their home.

Accidental poisoning in the home is a real problem and I strongly encourage you to get involved with this campaign.

Together with Victorian parents we will remove the risk by putting poisons away. Straight away.

Thank you.

ENDS