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Vietnam launches national child helmet action plan

By **Minh Hung**, Thanh Nien News

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Representatives of relevant agencies at the launch of National Child Hemlet Action Plan in Hanoi on January 13. Photo credit: AIP Foundation

The National Traffic Safety Committee (NTSC) on Tuesday launched a National Child Helmet Action Plan to promote child helmet use across the country.

Main activities of the Action Plan include public awareness-raising and mass media communications on child helmet use, school-based education, and increased police enforcement on a national scale to crack down on violations of the child helmet regulation.

Under the plan, a week of "enhanced enforcement" is scheduled from April 6-9 with police patrols conducted around schools and drivers whose children are not wearing helmets on motorcycles will be stopped and given a reminder.

All violation cases will be reported to the schools to take further action.

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Khuan Viet Hung, NTSC chairman, said that over the past few years, there has been very high compliance with the mandatory helmet regulation among adults while helmet use among children remains unacceptably low.

"Children are the future of the country and deserve the best care and attention. I hope that, through the active roles of the relevant ministries and support from international organizations and sponsors, as well as strong commitment out of love from teachers and parents, every child will wear a helmet when travelling on a motorbike or electric bicycle," he said.

Under the plan, the televised public service announcement (PSA) "Love your child, provide a helmet," developed by AIP Foundation, was launched on the same day to address the indifference parents exhibit around child helmet use.

The commercial shows that parents can make dangerous safety mistakes due to inattentiveness or lack of concern, and reminds parents—from the perspective of a child—that they are responsible for guiding, loving, and educating children on safety.

"Similar to the father in the commercial, I won't let my daughter run around in the house with scissors in her hand or play with fire," said Jeff McLean, General Manager of UPS Vietnam that supported the PSA.

"Failing to educate your child about basic safety rules meets other parents' disapproval. I hope that helmet use is now a habit for children like it is among most adults and be seen as a basic safety concern," he said.

In Vietnam, even though helmet use is mandatory by law for both adults and children over the age of 6, child helmet use has remained significantly lower than adult use with only 1 in 3 children in major cities wearing helmets.

The National Child Helmet Action Plan seeks to raise public awareness and create a transformational shift in public attitude towards child helmet use and compliance with the child helmet regulation.

The plan is supported by many organizations, including the Asia Injury Prevention (AIP) Foundation, Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP), World Health Organization (WHO), The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), The UPS Foundation, and FIA Foundation.

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