

BICYCLE SAFETY HELMETS

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1991
 Reviewed by Board of Managers January 2010

- WHEREAS,** Plank #10 of the California State PTA Legislation Platform states that PTA will support legislation “To prevent, control or eliminate hazards to the health, safety and well-being of all children and youth;” and
- WHEREAS,** The National PTA position statement, “Bicycle Helmet Use,” encourages bicycle helmet programs and parent education programs that stress the use of bicycle safety helmets; and
- WHEREAS,** The increased popularity and use of bicycles has caused an upsurge in the number of related injuries with the result that every day in the United States at least one child aged 14 or younger dies in a bicycle accident and every day over 1,000 are seriously injured; and
- WHEREAS,** Three out of four of all deaths and serious injuries in bicycle accidents result from head injuries and the head is extremely vulnerable to injury if unprotected; and
- WHEREAS,** Only 5% of child cyclists use bicycle helmets, but bicycle safety helmets reduce risk to head injury by 85% and the risk to brain injury by almost 90%; and
- WHEREAS,** There is no compulsory requirement for minors to wear bicycle safety helmets while riding in the State of California; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA, its units, councils and districts urge parents, educators and other agencies to actively support the use of bicycle safety helmets for all who ride bicycles; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA develop materials for parent education on the need for, and use of, bicycle safety helmets; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA support the adoption of legislation mandating the use of approved safety helmets for all minors riding bicycles in the State of California; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA forward this resolution to the National PTA for consideration by delegates to the 1991 National PTA Convention.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Each year, nearly one million American children between 5 and 14 years of age suffer bicycle-related injuries severe enough to require medical attention. More than half of these children will require emergency room or trauma team evaluation and approximately 600 will die. Nearly 70% of all hospitalized cyclists are treated for head trauma.

A number of studies have shown that most bicycle-related injuries are among younger children, generally less than 12 years of age and 6% were less than six years of age.

Less than 5% of child cyclists use safety helmets. Part of the reason is that young people often think that they “aren’t cool” if they wear a helmet. However, most parents do not enforce the use of helmets because they are unaware of the shocking statistics concerning the number of bicycle accidents resulting in serious injury or death.

The unnecessary injury and death of children could be avoided if the California Legislature mandated the use of bicycle safety helmets for minors. However, even as the California State PTA is requested to work for passage of such a law, PTAs throughout California can protect the safety and well-being of children by promoting bicycle safety programs that emphasize the use of safety helmets, and by urging school districts to adopt regulations that require all students to wear safety helmets.