

Toyota Puts the Vroom in Safety Education Program Aimed at Putting Kids in the Driver's Seat

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Lexington, Ky., March 8, 2016 — Driving habits, good or bad, begin to form long before a driver can reach the gas pedal and as early as when a child's car seat is turned to face front. So, to learn what it means to be a safe driver, passenger and pedestrian, Kentucky tots are taking the wheel.

Safety City, a free, safety education program for second and third graders, combines classroom instruction with student driving experiences that simulate the real world. Toyota is helping power the program with a \$49,000 donation toward the purchase of ten kid-sized electric cars. The new cars will replace an aging fleet that dates back to Safety City's inception in 1990.

"Early education is critical," said Lisa Conley, Safety City's executive director. "The purchase of these cars allows us to continue to give young students a meaningful, hands-on experience to help them develop a foundation of safe habits that will be so important in the future."

Safety City is a partnership between Eastern Kentucky University and the Lexington Police Department, serving more than 2,000 local students each school year. By offering classes on topics like Traffic and Pedestrian Safety and Seatbelt Use, students who complete the program are equipped with knowledge to help them be safer in their community, today and tomorrow.

"Two of EKU's signature programs are public safety and education, making Safety City a natural partnership for the University," said Dr. Michael Benson, president, Eastern Kentucky University. "We are honored to have a role in educating the police officers who patrol our streets, and we also take great pride in joining the effort to teach future drivers the rules of the road."

For Toyota, supporting Safety City is second nature. "We believe everyone deserves to be safe, and we want to be a part of helping keep people safe, on and off the road," said Wil James, president of Toyota's Kentucky plant. "That's a priority for us, and it's why we're investing in programs like Safety City."

"So many children have grown up with fond memories of Safety City. The program helps build a positive connection between the community, officers, and the work we do as an agency," said Chief Mark Barnard, Lexington Police. "Toyota's investment in Safety City will go a long way in creating lasting experiences that will stick with students for years to come."

"There's nothing more important than keeping our children safe," said Mayor Jim Gray, Lexington. "Safety City makes learning about traffic safety fun. We thank Toyota Motor Manufacturing Kentucky, Eastern Kentucky University and Lexington Police for making it possible."

Safety City is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday-Friday, by appointment only, and is located at 1160 Red Mile Place in Lexington, KY. To schedule a trip, visit <http://safetycity.eku.edu/scheduling-your-visit>.

Toyota's investment in Safety City reflects a broader commitment to advancing automotive safety in Kentucky and across North America. By supporting programs like Alive at 25, a partnership with Kentucky State Police and the National Safety Council, developing comprehensive initiatives like *Toyota TeenDrive365* (www.TeenDrive365.com) to inspire parents and teens to be safe drivers together, and working to develop and share life-saving technologies through Toyota's Collaborative Safety Research Center in Ann Arbor, Mich., Toyota is working across the map to benefit everyone on the road.

For more information on Toyota's safety initiatives, visit <http://www.toyota.com/usa/safety>.