

Did you know that about twice as many children are killed in accidents in the Czech Republic than in Sweden? This is not because Swedish children by nature are more careful or safety-minded than Czech ones – far from it. It is more likely the result of decades of hard work and information campaigns that gradually have changed both legislation and public attitudes towards children and safety.



Supported by Czech doctors

The "Sweden For Children" campaign is based on the fact that Sweden has a lot of knowledge and practical solutions for child safety, and the idea that this should be shared. A pilot project was launched in Hungary in spring 2008 and was very successful. Based on the popularity among both partners and public, "Sweden For Children" campaigns will take place in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania this spring, as well as a follow-up campaign in Hungary. All country campaigns are led by the Swedish Trade Council offices and the Swedish Embassies in respective countries, in cooperation with professional and media partners as well as several Swedish companies.

The Czech campaign – "Ze Švédska pro děčka" – is supported professionally by the OSPDL (Czech association of pediatricians, see www.detskylekar.cz)

"There is definitely a need for easily accessible information material to hand out to Czech families", says Dr. Renata Růžková of OSPDL. "We try our best to inform parents about injury prevention at home, and this campaign will certainly help raising awareness about this issue."

Swedish companies make it happen

"Sweden For Children" consists of three main parts: a brochure on home safety that will be distributed in about 150 000 copies to Czech families all over the republic; an Official Day of seminars and workshops for teachers, kindergarten staff, political decision-makers, child product distributors and other professionals; and a Family Weekend with activities for children and parents in one of Prague's main shopping centres.

"Most accidents happen at home. This is a fact and we would like to share Swedish know-how and smart solutions for how to make your home a safer place for your children", says Petra Norling, Project Leader for the campaign at the Swedish Trade Council. "It is also entirely in line with the Trade Council's main task – to support and promote Sweden and Swedish business abroad", adds Nikki Brandt (photo), Trade Commissioner at the Trade Council. "And without the support of our Partner companies, a campaign this big would not be possible to carry out."

"Sweden For Children" in the Czech Republic is supported by Medicover, IKEA, Hags and the Nordic Chamber of Commerce, among others.

"As doctors, we have a lot of practical experience of injury prevention among children", says Marcel Toporčák (photo), Country Manager at Medicover. "We strongly believe that this campaign to a large extent can help raising the public awareness of child safety and lower the number of accidents."

Both IKEA and playground producer Hags took part in last year's Hungarian campaign, and would like to repeat the success this year in the Czech Republic as well as in Slovakia.



Hags has built more than 300 playgrounds all over the Czech Republic



55 000 people visited the "Sweden For Children" Family Weekend in Budapest 2008

"We were very happy with our partnership last year, when especially our stand at the Family Weekend was very popular among the families visiting the event here in Budapest", says Mr Vendel Gerösz, regional PR manager for IKEA in Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia. Hags Aneby AB, producing playground equipment of highest European safety standard for many years, is taking it one step further and takes part in all four country campaigns.

"Most serious playground accidents occur on equipment which has not been safety-tested", Ludmila Eriksson, Area Sales Manager for Hags in Central Europe, points out. Playgrounds must be attractive and exciting, but also as safe as safe can be. All Hags products are TÜV certified."

High time for Swedish companies to join

The campaign is open for all Swedish or Sweden-related companies to support. "It's a topic that concerns basically everyone and where Sweden is a forerunner", Petra Norling says. "We want to promote Swedish knowledge and experience in this field and think that it's a perfect opportunity for any Swedish company, whether they wish to promote their products or just show their support to a good and highly relevant cause".

For more information on how your company can be a part of "Sweden For Children", contact the project leader Petra Norling at the Swedish Trade Council on as soon as possible (www.tradewithsweden.com).

Information in Czech about all activities within the campaign is available on the official web page, www.ZeSvedskaProDecka.cz.