

# Walk to School Month Coordinator Toolkit



<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>



# Participate in Walk to School Day

## October 3, 2011

Walk to School Day brings parents, teachers, children, and community leaders together to focus on the importance of physical activity, safety and walkable communities. Walk to School Day events teach kids and parents to think of walking as an active, safe, and healthy means of transportation.

### Three Steps and You're Walking

- 1 Go to [www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org) to find out about this year's October event and visit [www.iwalktoschool.org](http://www.iwalktoschool.org) to see what other countries are planning.
- 2 Talk to your principals, police, and parents right away. Line up partners. Invite elected, health, safety and transportation officials, local businesses and the media to join the event.
- 3 Register your event on the Walk to School website and find walking checklists, sample press releases, flyers, logos, and more.

### Take It Beyond The Day

Increasing physical activity among children, teaching safe walking skills, easing traffic and improving the environment around schools can not be achieved in one day. Many communities are using Walk to School Day to kick off long-term programs designed to bring about permanent changes.

### Start A Walking School Bus

Many Communities who want to make walking to school safe have started walking school buses. A walking school bus is a small group of children who walk to school together under the supervision of one or more adults. In Chicago, more than 175 schools participated in a walking school bus program created by the City and the Chicago Police Department. To find out more about walking school buses, go to [www.walkingschoolbus.org](http://www.walkingschoolbus.org).



### Measure Your Neighborhood's "Walkability"/"Bikeability"

Using a simple five-question walkability/bikeability checklist adults and children can examine their neighborhoods and measure how friendly their streets are for walkers/bikers. The checklist helps users identify specific walking/biking problems, such as a lack of sidewalks or dangerous street crossings and offers solutions. Results can be shared with community leaders to prompt change.

# Teach Safety Skills

Walking skills will not only make children become better pedestrians, but they will learn to become better motorists when the time comes. During your Walk to School Day place extra Crossing-Guards at busy intersections to ensure safety.



## Ways to Relay the Safety Message:

**Obstacle Course:** Build a pedestrian obstacle course and ask children to demonstrate the safest response to each hazard.

**Safety Zone:** Pick a district that will receive intense pedestrian safety education and use Walk to School Day to be the kick-off.

## Change Driving Behavior:

Traffic congestion and speeding cars can make the area around the schools a dangerous place for kids on foot or on bike. Many communities have used Walk to School Day to encourage drivers to slow down and to reduce traffic in front of schools.

**Drop Off Zones:** Encourage drop off zones be located one block from school. This will decrease the amount of traffic in front of schools.

**Speed Enforcement:** Work with local traffic officers to get speed boards posted around schools.

## Get Kids Moving:

Walking or bicycling to school is a great way to get kids moving again. Even schools not located within walking or bicycling distance have found ways to get their students active.



## Ideas to Encourage Physical Activity:

**Walking Wednesday:** Establish at least one day a month for everyone to walk to school or schedule a weekly walk at or around the school.

**Pedometers:** Use pedometers (devices that count steps) to track the distances students walk. Plot mileage on a map of the United States. See how long it takes the school to walk across the nation.

## Make it Permanent

Walking should be a viable option for everyone in a community. For that to happen, communities must make walking a part of everyday life, incorporating it into civic culture decision making, and the personal habits of the citizens.

### Follow the Funding:

Some states provide mini-grants to schools hosting walk to school events, while others are following California's example and earmarking transportation funding for improving routes to school.

### A Full-Time Job:

Assign a school "non-motorized transportation coordinator" whose job it is to promote and support safe walking and bicycling to school.

### Location:

Place schools in the community so that more students can walk or bike to school and after-school activities.

### Build the Network:

Create or enforce codes that require sidewalks and paths throughout your community.

There is a new movement under way to make the streets along school routes permanently safer for walking and bicycling. Neighborhood groups, engineers and planners, community leaders, state transportation officials and school personnel are working together to reach a common goal:

—to provide "Safe Routes to School."

### Promote the Health Benefits

### Rewards:

Recognize kids who've walked the farthest or classes with the greatest participation.

### Learn Health:

Read about the benefits of daily exercise: resting and exercise heart rate, strength, and endurance.

### Challenge the Family:

Have students catalogue family health changes: miles walked, weight lost, dietary habits, fitness improvement.

### Mile-Walk Challenge:

At the beginning of the school year, time a one-mile walk. Repeat after nine-months of walking to school, and recognize the biggest improvement.

### Walking Curriculum:

Draw maps, calculate miles, observe nature and history, or write poetry. Walking can be a part of class.



# Example of Activities for Walk to School Month (October 2011)

- ❖ Walking Audits
- ❖ Walking School Bus
- ❖ Obstacle Courses
- ❖ Create a Safety Zone Kid Drop Off
- ❖ Weekly Walk during Recess
- ❖ Feet Across The Country: Use Pedometers to measure how long it would take your school to walk across the USA
- ❖ Mile Club During Recess
- ❖ Contests
- ❖ Have students take pictures with a disposable camera on their walk to school and use the pictures for Art Class or Science Class.
- ❖ Treasure Hunt
- ❖ Have students make signs for the walk
- ❖ Create Themes for Your Walk to School Day
- ❖ Hold A Walking Festival— set up booths that promote traffic safety, walking for healthy, walking for the environment, and walking for the community. Have other organizations to set up informational booths.
- ❖ Essay Contest— have students write about their experience walking or biking to school.
- ❖ Walk-A-Thon

## Examples for Incentives

- ❖ Golden Shoe (the class that has the most walkers wins the Golden Shoe—can be a sneaker spray painted Gold)
- ❖ Necklaces with charms (feet/shoe charms)
- ❖ Stickers/Badges/Crowns
- ❖ Bike or Bike Helmet Drawing (donated by local retailers or police department)
- ❖ Disposable Cameras (take pictures on your walk to school and use the pictures for Art and Science Class)
- ❖ Breakfast (donated by Panera, Tim Horton's, etc.)
- ❖ Pizza/Ice Cream Party

## Who should be involved in Walk to School Month??

(October 2011)

- ❖ Kids
- ❖ Parents (PTO, PTA)
- ❖ Teachers
- ❖ School Administrators
- ❖ Local Businesses
- ❖ Law Enforcement
- ❖ Officials from Local Public Agencies (engineers, parks and recreation departments)
- ❖ Community Groups

# Creating a Walk to School Map

## GOALS:

- 1 Identify safe places, streets and intersections within 2 miles of the school.
- 2 Provide easy information for each family to choose the best route.

## STEPS:

- 1 Obtain a map of a 2 mile radius of the school
- 2 Walk the Streets
- 3 Trust Your Instincts
- 4 Mark your Map with places (buildings, parks, stand alone locations), sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic lights, pedestrian signals.
- 5 Star the Good Places
- 6 "X" the Bad Places
- 7 Mark the Streets on your Map Green, Yellow, or Red.
- 8 Mark the Intersections on your Map Green, Green, Yellow, or Red.

## THE MAP:

Show a Map with:

- Green, Yellow, and Red Streets and intersections.
- Good places and Bad places.

This information will allow the parents to choose their own route to school.

Parents should walk the Green Streets that go past the "Good Places". If this route does not work the parents should then use the Yellow Streets. When walking or biking to school the Red Streets and the "X" places should never be used.



What do you have when you combine healthy exercise with hands-on street proofing lessons and reduced air pollution emissions? A Walking School Bus! Don't believe us? Why not try organizing and participating in a Walking School Bus and then decide. Here's how to get a Walking School Bus going in your community.

Nearly 9 out of 10 parents who walk their children to school see it as an ideal way to meet new people, socialize at the school gate and get some daily exercise.

**A walking or cycling school bus is two or more students and parents traveling together for safety.**

### What to Do:

- 1 Map the routes to school to create the School Map. You will need a clear map of your school catchment area.
- 2 Determine interest in participating in a Walking School Bus.
- 3 Mark the locations on the school area map to identify which routes have enough students and parents to participate in a Walking School Bus.
- 4 Arrange to have a "meet-and-greet" event where interested parents get to meet each other, cultivate trust, and get the initiative rolling.
- 5 Notify your local police division about the Walking School Bus at your school. Show your local police your School Map so they can help you better. Tell them which routes families will be walking and request extra police eyes on these routes if possible. Invite them to the "meet-and-greet" event.
- 6 Ask the police to assist with a school assembly to remind students of pedestrian safety rules.
- 7 Show your local municipal councilor and traffic engineers your School Map. Ask if they are aware of any areas that could pose conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. If so, ask if they can assist to make these routes safer for pedestrians.
- 8 Distribute a Walking School Bus tool kit to each family who intends to participate.

# Resources

## WALK TO SCHOOL

[Walk to School](#)

[www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org)

[Kids Walk-to-School Guide](#)

[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk)

[Safe Routes to School](#)

[www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)

[Walking School Bus](#)

[www.walkingschoolbus.org](http://www.walkingschoolbus.org)

## WALKING AND BICYCLING

[National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#)

[www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)

Safe Kids

[www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)

[Federal Highway Administration](#)

[www.fha.gov](http://www.fha.gov)

[Institute of Transportation Engineers](#)

[www.ite.org](http://www.ite.org)