

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

HOW TO START YOUR OWN

Walk-to-School

Bike-to-School

Traffic Reduction
&



Safety PROGRAM

Safe Routes to Schools

Tool Kit Manual

or
How to Start Your Own
Walk-to-School-Bike-to-School-
Traffic-Reduction-and-Safety Program

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WalkBoston



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Chapter 1— Introduction

For generations parents have told their children how much farther they themselves walked or bicycled to school... up hills, through rain and snow, wearing heavy shoes. The message behind the joke was that walking to school was good for them and if the younger generation only walked half a mile, they had it pretty easy.

Actually, many adults over the age of 30 remember enjoying walking and bicycling home from school: taking a shortcut across a field; buying a snack at a store; stopping at a friend's house. But today it's different. Although 40 years ago half of all U.S. school children walked to school, today less than 10% of school children in kindergarten to 10th grade walk to school and less than 2% bicycle to school.



The Safe Routes to Schools (SRS) program can help change this. It promotes walking and bicycling to school, improves safety of streets from a child's perspective, and reduces fuel consumption and air pollution.

Many of the parents who have been surveyed by SRS programs would like their children to get the exercise and to experience the simple pleasures of walking and bicycling to school — gradually gaining independence, learning about their neighborhoods, and developing new friendships.

Teachers and principals would like children to walk to school so that they arrive alert and ready to learn. School officials also would like to reduce the congestion and safety risks posed by hundreds of parents dropping off their children at schools each day.

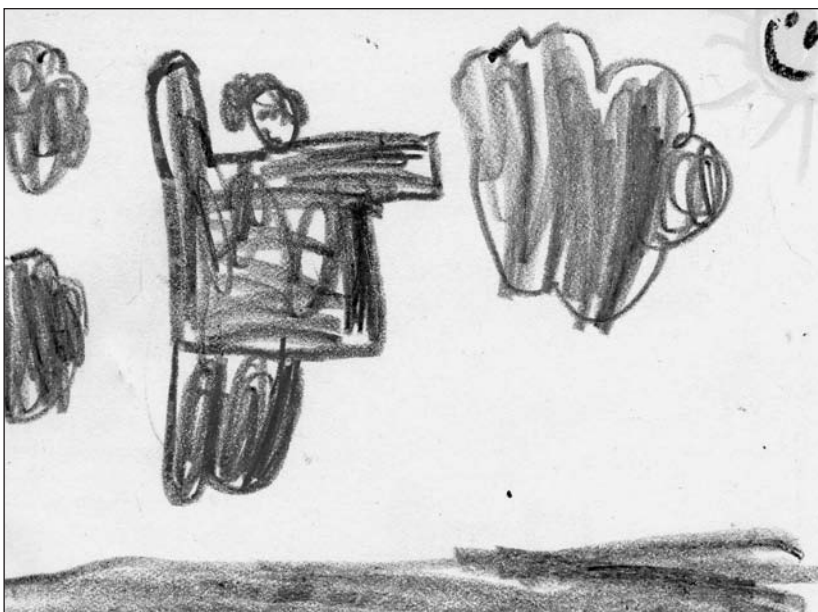
And public health officials want to reverse some alarming trends: more and more American children are overweight and fewer American children meet minimum fitness standards. Kids today are developing a sedentary lifestyle at an earlier age. Walking and bicycling to and from school are ways to put

“Over the past 30 years the percent of overweight children aged 6 to 11 years has more than doubled.”

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002

daily exercise back into children's lives, building a healthier younger generation, and encouraging healthy walk and bike habits that will last a lifetime.

A Milton student drew a picture titled "I want to walk to school."



Habits are Formed Early

A 4th grade girl who doesn't walk to school says it's "because my mom and dad don't like to walk." Student Travel Survey, Arlington Pilot Study, 1999

Do children want to walk to school? Generally, yes. Younger children, especially, crave physical activity. Surveys of grades K–5 conducted by WalkBoston's SRS team found that half the children who are driven to school would rather walk or bicycle. By middle school, however, children have already established habits: the majority of students who are driven to school want to continue being driven to school. [1999 SRS Pilot Study Report]

So it's important to encourage children's interest in physical activity in the earliest grade possible, and get them into the healthy habit of walking and bicycling.

Using the Safe Routes to Schools Tool Kit

This "Tool Kit" is for parents, principals, teachers, and community officials who want to begin a walk- or bike-to school program in their own community. No special skills or resources are required. (Resources included in this kit may enrich your program, but they are not essential.) In fact, similar programs in the United States, Canada and Great Britain have shown that the most important factor in developing a successful program is the commitment of the people who undertake it.

In our experience, the program has worked especially well when it has at least one strong champion who acts as a motivator, and when it is implemented by a local SRS "task force" that includes one or two committed parents. (WalkBoston's program has been designed around a paid part-time parent coordinator at each school — often someone who was already a local advocate for walking or safety.)

Contents of the Tool Kit

- Safe Routes to Schools Manual (the do-it-yourself guide that you are reading now)
- *KidsWalk to School, a Guide to Promote Walking to School*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2000
- Slides that present the basic ideas of SRS
- Materials (forms) for you to copy and use
- Samples of products that you may find helpful (a pedometer, a tally counter, or a safety vest, for example)

We recommend that you select the Tool Kit activities that most appeal to you and are most practical for your school and community. We designed the program to blend with regular school activities and curriculum guidelines, so as not to place an undue burden on teachers, administrators and support staff.



*"I hold my breath every morning as I see parents drop off their children in the middle of the street. Those children run between double- and triple-parked cars and I know one morning there is going to be an accident."
Principal of Dallin School in
Arlington, MA*

The materials in the Tool Kit were selected from a variety of sources or were developed by WalkBoston's SRS program to meet a particular need during implementation of the SRS programs in Arlington and Boston, Massachusetts. Valuable ideas have been borrowed from other SRS programs across the United States, in Canada and Great Britain. All parts of the Tool Kit are reproducible if credit is given.

The SRS program is child-centered. It is intended to be fun and low-key. Its objective is to change students' behavior by providing them, their parents, their teachers and their school principals with information on the benefits of walking and bicycling to school and on ways to create social and physical environments that support walking and bicycling.

Chapter 2— Background

Why Safe Routes to Schools Programs are Needed

"[Walking is] good for them, good for us, good for the environment. The tangle of cars out front feels chaotic and unsafe."

Arlington parent, SRS Parent Survey 2001

The primary aim of Safe Routes to Schools programs all over the world is to improve the safety and health of our school-children. As researchers have tracked the simultaneous decline in children's physical activity and fitness, the increase in weight-related health problems, and the increase in children's dependence on their parents driving them everywhere, a pattern of interrelated problems is evident. SRS programs address all these issues by changing how children travel to and from school. We need SRS programs because:

- Children are healthier when they are physically active every day. Walking and bicycling to school are effective forms of exercise.
- Students are safer arriving at school when there is less drop-off and pick-up traffic.
- Children need to learn to walk safely and responsibly. If they are not taught these skills, they are at risk whenever they walk, all through their childhoods. Children who seldom walk, never learn the fundamentals of traffic awareness, and they grow up to be drivers who don't understand pedestrian safety. The same holds true for teaching children bicycle safety.



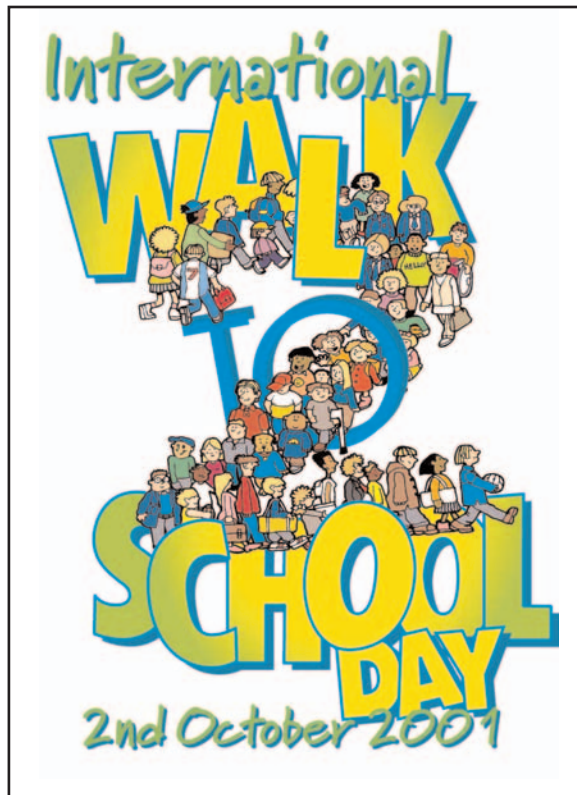
Walking and Bicycling to School: A Lifestyle Choice

Unlike communities in southern and western states, where development tends to be spread out, and distances between home and school are often too far to walk, many Massachusetts communities are compact, with development patterns established prior to World War II. Here in New England there is a strong tradition of neighborhood schools, and walking to school is often a realistic transportation choice.

In Arlington, Massachusetts, where the WalkBoston SRS team launched the Commonwealth's first SRS program, nearly all elementary students live within a half-mile of school. They can walk along tree-lined streets to reach their schools. Yet, before the SRS program was introduced, less than half of the students actually did walk. Instead, because parents are already driving to work, because it seems like the most convenient thing to do, and because everyone else is doing it, parents jump in their cars and drive their children to school.

A Short History of SRS

Although more children are driven to school in the United States than in other industrialized countries, the problem is not unique to America. For this reason, the International Walk to School Day is a huge event, with thousands of children in England, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States participating.



The first SRS programs were conducted in Denmark and then later in England. In both countries safety training, safety improvements along walking and bicycling routes, and community involvement have significantly increased the number of children walking and bicycling to school, while reducing the number of accidents related to travel to school.

The SRS programs in England and Denmark served as a model for the WalkBoston SRS pilot program. In the fall of 1999, with a grant from the National Park Service, WalkBoston undertook a two-week assessment of the receptivity of the Town of Arlington to an SRS program. School

and town officials were very positive about the SRS concept, and by early 2001 WalkBoston was able to secure funding for a demonstration program from the Massachusetts Highway Department to reduce air pollution in the vicinity of two elementary schools and the middle school in Arlington. Thus the primary goal of the WalkBoston SRS program has been to increase the number of children walking to school in order to reduce the number of children driven in private automobiles.

WalkBoston's SRS program has expanded over time and as of winter 2003 includes an elementary school in East Boston, one elementary school each in Dedham and Milton, and the middle school in Milton.

Most of the program information presented in this Took Kit is based upon work done in the Arlington Schools where WalkBoston has had the most experience and greatest measurable impact.

Bike-to-school initiatives are central to Safe Routes programs in Great Britain and Denmark, both because of the appeal and practicality of bicycling to students as they reach middle school age. Arlington officials chose to emphasize walking and to not include a bike-to-school initiative in their schools. However, as of the 2002-2003 school year WalkBoston is promoting bicycling as well as walking at participating Milton and Dedham schools.

The Time is Right

Public policy professionals view the widespread custom of driving children to school as a problem so significant that conferences on transportation, public health, community development, and historic preservation now regularly include panels that address the issue. At the Federal level, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the National Park Service, and even the National Trust for Historic Preservation are all undertaking walk-to-school initiatives.

*"[Walking] fosters independence and is a nice transition between home and school.... It is much more relaxing than driving."
Arlington parent*

Similarly, grave concerns associated with traffic congestion, declining youth fitness, deteriorating air quality, and the diminishing personal contact within neighborhoods have prompted many communities across the country to undertake some type of walk- or bicycle-to-school program. Cities which have some form of walk-to-school program include Phoenix, New York City and Atlanta.

Goals of the SRS Program

Schools and communities that develop SRS programs select a primary goal. This goal influences the SRS message and types of activities undertaken. The goal is regularly communicated to schools, parents and students.

Below are some typical SRS program goals.

- Increase the numbers of children walking and bicycling to school.
- Ensure the safety of children walking and bicycling to school.
- Turn the trip to school into an opportunity for daily physical activity.
- Decrease air pollution by reducing the number of automobile trips to and from school.
- Encourage the social development and independence of children by providing them with safe opportunities to walk and bike without adult supervision.



Walking is fun year-round.

Chapter 3— Arlington, Massachusetts: A Case Study

WalkBoston is running successful SRS programs in one middle school and two elementary schools in Arlington, Massachusetts. This older, settled community of 50,000, located six miles northwest of Boston, has an interconnected street pattern which pre-dates the 1950s. Elementary schools are neighborhood based, and fewer than 1% of the students are bused to school. Despite the large number of students who live within walking distance, prior to SRS half of the students in the participating schools were driven to school by their parents.

An Increase in the Number of Children Walking to School

The Program has worked especially well in the elementary schools in Arlington, where the WalkBoston SRS team tailored the program to each school's culture and needs. With information, incentives and peer support, more families have begun walking to school.

Results have been impressive. At the Dallin elementary school, for example, only 38% walked to school before the SRS program was launched. By the end of the 2002-2003 school year, over 56% walked to school.

Middle schools present a different set of challenges. Middle schools are often larger and draw from a wider geographic area, making walking less practical. The Ottoson Middle School in Arlington (with approximately 1,000 students, grades 6–8) serves the entire town, so for many students distances are too great to walk. A bike-to-school program would probably be more successful with these students. SRS student surveys found a high level of interest in bicycling, but since school officials do not want to promote bicycling because of safety concerns, the SRS program has focused on increasing walking among students who live within a mile of school, and on promoting carpooling and public transit. We designed this SRS program to make the greatest difference, most quickly, by concentrating on the 6th graders, who we felt were more likely to be accustomed to walking, since they had been at neighborhood elementary schools the year before.

*Ottoson Middle School,
Arlington, Massachusetts*



The WalkBoston SRS team also found that students in middle school are less responsive than elementary school children to the health and fitness aspects of SRS. But they have responded enthusiastically when asked to identify safety hazards on walking routes to school or to think of schemes to reduce numbers of car trips and pollution.

It is important to note that the school day at the Arlington middle school — like the day at many middle schools across

Arlington is well served by public buses. Many middle school students take buses in the afternoon.



Massachusetts — starts fairly early, at 7:50 in the morning. Typically, for 11–13 year olds this feels too early. More than half the students are driven to school in the morning. In the afternoon, though, when they are wide awake and eager to be with their friends, less than a third of the students relied on a parent to drive them home.

How the SRS Program Is Implemented in Arlington

For its first walk-to-school program, WalkBoston's Safe Routes to Schools team purposely selected a basically walkable community with neighborhood schools. The 1999 Pilot Study had shown that many families were ready for a walk-to-school program.

The primary focus of the Arlington program was to change the travel behavior of students and their parents. Because surveys showed that the primary reason for driving students to school was convenience rather than unwalkable routes, the WalkBoston team concentrated their efforts primarily upon encouraging students to walk to school.

Key Features:

SRS PARENT COORDINATORS

At each participating school the SRS team hired a parent as a part-time coordinator who helped to run the program. The coordinators contributed knowledge of their school's culture, and all of them were enthusiastic, committed, and extremely competent. (*See box below.*)

A LOCAL CHAMPION FOR THE PROGRAM

A strong, vocal champion within the school staff was especially effective in motivating children to participate. WalkBoston's SRS team found such a champion in the principal of one of the elementary schools. He was tireless in his practical support of the program — encouraging parents to walk with their children and working with teachers to promote the benefits of walking in the classroom.

STARTING SMALL

To get the program off the ground the team started small, organizing Walk-to-School Days and meeting with parent-teacher



WalkBoston's SRS Parent Coordinators

At each participating school a committed, enthusiastic parent is paid to work 10 to 15 hours per week as Parent Coordinator of the SRS program. The Parent Coordinator's responsibilities vary from school to school, but are likely to include:

- Organizing events such as Walk-to-School Day.
- Arranging with teachers for class activities such as walking tours of the neighborhood and graphing of distances students walk in a day.
- Producing newsletters with photos of students and parents who walk, as well as crossing guards or others who assist them.
- Organizing parent volunteers for "walking school buses": Instead of car pooling, parents take turns walking children to school, following a fixed route and stopping to pick up students at designated times.
- Working with parents and schools to improve walking conditions. For example, in one school parents produced a sidewalk inventory that showed where sidewalks were missing. This information was submitted to town officials on a map as the first step toward new sidewalk construction.



organizations. Through these activities WalkBoston identified interested parents and teachers and gradually expanded the program.

FOCUS ON FUN

From the beginning school SRS coordinators took a low-key approach that emphasized fun and did not overburden busy parents. In proposing the program to schools, the SRS team was careful not to impose unreasonable expectations on parents, teachers or school administrators. Almost as important, parent coordinators and SRS team members avoided a militant "You-should-be-walking" tone. The emphasis of the program was on having a good time at walk-to-school events, walking tours of the neighborhoods, and informal walk-to-school groups. This low-key approach has been very successful.

Dallin School principal, Mr. Robert Lynch, telling a local reporter about the importance of their walk-to-school program.

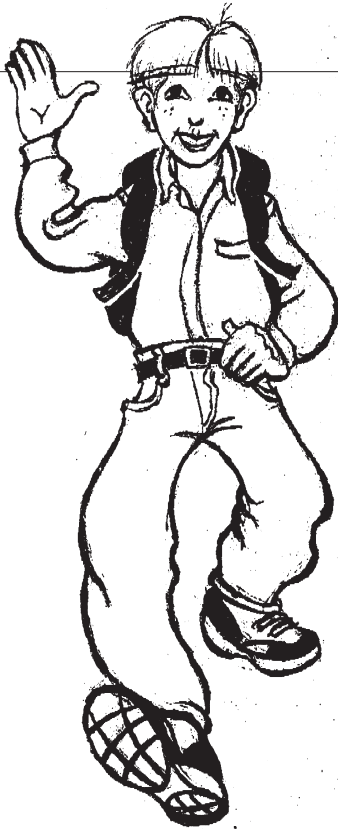


SRS: A Social Change Program

As in every program involving social change, some individuals are more receptive to the message than others. After a year of SRS implementation, the WalkBoston team felt that their greatest success had been with elementary schools and with parents who were predisposed to letting their children walk to school, and who felt that their children should walk, but who needed an organized program, peer support, and assurance that children would be safe.

Chapter 4—Step by Step

Organizing a Program in Your Community



We have found that starting a Safe Routes to Schools (SRS) program is easier than you might think. Parents and school officials already work to ensure that children arrive at school safely and go home again safely. And they also wish that children were getting more daily exercise. Most adults today remember walking or bicycling to school in their own childhoods, and wish children today could have the same opportunities.

Like all tasks that seem overwhelming at first, organizing a walk-to-school or bike-to-school program is easier if you take it step-by-step. Here are seven basic steps. Of course you can tailor your program to fit your own school and community. Although the steps are listed sequentially, some things will actually need to be done at the same time. For instance, to ensure that your program continues, you will need to promote it all the time-- not just at the beginning, but also after it is up and running.

This manual follows the same general steps outlined in the excellent *KidsWalk-to-School, A Guide to Promote Walking to School*, but we have added other ideas and details from our own experience. WalkBoston's SRS program is organized through the schools and includes a variety of informal walking initiatives. The program outlined in *KidsWalk-to-School*, on the other hand, is based on neighborhood organization and focuses on children walking in structured groups with adult escorts (also known as "walking school buses").

Any program involving the schools must offer participants **safety, supervision, motivation, and leadership**. Thus, for your SRS program to succeed, you need to:

- Address parents' safety concerns.
- Provide adult supervision for younger children and peer support for older children.
- Tap into children's natural inclination to be active and independent, so that they become their own advocates for walking or bicycling to school.
- Identify a few adults – parents, teachers, or principals -- who will champion the program.

Step 1. Identify Interest

First you must determine what the level of interest and commitment is in your community.

- Talk with parents to identify who would like to participate in the Safe Routes to Schools program.
- Talk with school officials about the program.
- Contact other local officials, such as your mayor, health and transportation departments, and police.
- Identify a few key people who, like you, are enthusiastic enough about the program to help with implementing it.

Begin by talking. Find out what parents, principals, and community officials think about safety and about how kids are



Program information is more welcome with refreshments.

traveling to school. Talking about other communities' Safe Routes to Schools programs is one good way to introduce the subject and get people thinking. Many people who drive their children to school now won't see any reason at first why it should be different. Some of the things that may appeal to these parents are:

- The benefits for children of physical exercise and increased alertness.
- Improved air quality near the school by reducing traffic.
- The prospect of less rushing around in a car.

In addition to some general community interest from parents, it will be crucial to the success of your program to identify key people who will champion the program. Look for people who care enough about making a difference that they will commit to a long-term effort. The champions in one community, for example, might be two parents, a principal, and someone on the school committee. One of them may be you.

At each school where WalkBoston has an SRS program we have hired a local parent as a part-time "coordinator," and this parent is one of the champions of the program. (See page AR-3.)

Step 2. Organize, Publicize

- Host an exploratory SRS meeting at the school or in the neighborhood. *(See the SRS slide show in this Tool Kit.)*
- Form an SRS task force.
- Contact other organizations that might want to help.
- Publicize and promote your SRS program.

The purposes of the first, exploratory meeting are to get people talking about SRS and to expand the circle of people interested in the vision of SRS. There are three things to try to accomplish at this organizing meeting.

IDENTIFY GOALS

The first task is to identify your community's particular goals for a walk- or bike-to-school initiative. For example, are most people interested in a walking program, a biking program, or both? Do they want an SRS program for one school, a few



schools, or every school in the community? Do people want safety improved for children who already walk or bike to school? Do the safety concerns involve infrastructure – the condition of sidewalks and intersections — or something like neighborhood crime? Will the focus be simply on finding ways to change the drive-to-school habit?

FORM SRS TASK FORCE

The second task of this meeting is to recruit volunteers and discuss the possible make-up of your SRS task force, which will actually implement the program. Identify resources the program will be likely to need (photocopier, computer, maps, etc.), and start thinking about where to find them.



What are your community's goals for a Safe Routes to Schools program? More crossing guards? Bike to school facilities?

The SRS task force will be the heart of the program. This core team will brainstorm ideas, decide on the specific strategies that will accomplish the community's goals, and take the project forward. If only one school is involved, this task force may be a committee of the Parent Teacher Organization. Ideally, though, the task force will include — in addition to a few determined parents — a school official such as the school superintendent, a teacher who will be actively involved in class work on the project, and local officials representing planning, police and public works. Try to ensure that a majority of the members are collaborative, "can-do" sorts of people, and make sure that the project's champions are on the task force.

SCHEDULE FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS

The final task of your organizing meeting is to schedule a series of future planning meetings.

INVOLVE OTHERS

Coalition-building is an essential part of any effort to bring social or environmental change, even if the change is only an SRS program in one school. So involve the wider community as much as possible. There are probably other organizations that have an interest in safety, physical fitness, or the environment that would be supportive of an SRS program and might contribute volunteers, materials, or even help with running the

program as part of your task force. For example, an elderly affairs council might be interested in safer walking conditions; walkers clubs and bicycling advocates may want to help; youth groups (Scouts, church groups) might want to get involved as a form of community service. College athletic departments and teams might help with an SRS event in order to share the publicity, or college students getting education degrees might be interested. Businesses involved in children's fitness could contribute, or at least publicize the SRS program. Local politicians (including your mayor) should be happy to identify themselves with a program like SRS; finally, your local department of public health could be quite helpful. The more community contacts you have, the better.



The Thompson School SRS newsletter is fun and informal.

Search for partnering organizations that may be source for funding. Although the *KidsWalk-to-School* guide assumes a program can be cost-free and all-volunteer, in our experience a program is more likely to succeed over the long haul if it has some funding for hiring a coordinator, for instance, or to cover the costs of publicity and supplies.

PUBLICIZE YOUR EFFORTS

Even though it is just in the formative stages, you should start now to promote your program and seize every opportunity you can to make it visible. Make personal appearances at every gathering that might have an interest in your goals, such as PTOs, teachers' staff meetings, conferences of public health officials, elderly affairs and school committee or school board



Photos of children—like these little girls waiting for SRS safety training—are a great way to draw attention to your program.

meetings. Get on your local and cable-access TV stations and meet with a reporter for your local newspaper. (Be sure to write a thank-you note if the TV or newspaper does a piece about the SRS program). Write a piece for school newsletters, or publish your own newsletters. Use the old standards: door to door flyers and notices sent home in children's backpacks. If the PTO is involved, it may send e-mail to parents, or use phone trees. Look for someone who will design a web site, and ask to link to other sites. Make banners and ask to set up information tables at community events. Talk to the next person in line at the supermarket!

Use quotes and photographs of children and their parents often (you may need written permission to publish pictures of children). Kids love to see themselves.

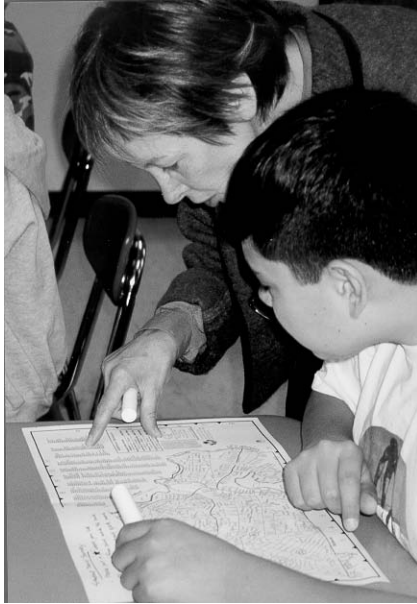
Meanwhile, establish and maintain a presence at the school(s) where your program is located. This may mean participating in regular school events such as PTO picnics, book fairs and fundraisers, and especially at orientation programs for parents of new kindergarten or middle school students. Make SRS an integral part of the school culture.

Step 3. Collect Information and Assess Conditions

- Involve teachers in the SRS curriculum (*See chapter on Classroom Activities.*)
- Survey students and parents about how they presently travel to and from school. (*See Sample Forms and Surveys.*)
- Assess traffic and safety conditions.

Lesson suggestions in Classroom Activities follow the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and help students understand the value of exercise and the environmental benefits of walking and bicycling. Several of the suggested activities would get students involved in interpreting the survey data and in assessing safety conditions on their routes to school.

Survey results offer guidance and provide important documentation of your efforts. Data on how children get to school can be gathered with a quick show-of-hands survey administered when teachers take attendance. But you will also need to



Program Manager Dorothea Hass helps a young boy map his route to school.

survey students to find out how they would like to travel to and from school. Finally, be sure to survey parents about how their children get to school and what the reasons are for their choices.

To assess and document the safety and convenience of the children's walking and bicycling routes to school, you must obtain a map of the school district and walk the routes. You can use the SRS Walkability Survey. Document hazards photographically, if possible, and in writing. (Save this material for later. You will need it if your SRS task force wants to persuade your city to install sidewalks, traffic lights, etc.)

Talk to teachers who might be interested in having children participate in this process through the SRS curriculum. Ask your local transportation or planning departments if they can supply "traffic counts" (data on numbers of cars on the streets) and ask your police, department of health, or local ambulance service for accident statistics.

Finally, create a report summarizing the obstacles to children walking and bicycling to school. The information that you have gathered will form the basis for planning your SRS program. Results from the surveys should be summarized: Put safety hazards on a master map and lifestyle issues (too rushed to walk to school with children, children go to after-school activities, etc.) on a list.

Step 4. Plan Your Program

- Address the safety issues.
- Plan the walk- or bike-to-school program(s) that will work best for your community.
- Plan some high-profile event(s) to launch your SRS program.

Start the process of fixing problems with the streets, crosswalks and sidewalks. Work with the police on enforcement wherever it is needed. Secure crossing guards for dangerous intersections. Work with the department of public works on a sidewalk snow-clearing plan. Discuss the problems with the appropriate local officials in administration, public works, planning. Talk about how to remedy the problems. Explore "traffic calming" techniques for situations with chronic speeding. (See page 39 in *KidsWalk to School; A Guide to Promote Walking to School*.)

Or visit the Federal Highway Administration at <http://www/fhwa.dot.gov/environment/tcalm/index.htm>



Building sidewalks and painting crosswalks are two of the simpler infrastructure improvements that can make walking to school safer.

Some things can be done quickly – such as painting crosswalks on the pavement -- because they are inexpensive. Other improvements may require further study and design and will cost considerable money, which may take a few years. Be prepared to persist until all the safety improvements identified by the SRS program have been implemented.

Your SRS programs — the arrangements for getting children out of cars and, wherever possible, walking and bicycling to school — must be practical for your parents. Some parents who drive their younger children to school will be able to start walking them to school, and some older children will be able to start walking without a parent. However, many parents, especially parents of young children, are often overloaded with responsibilities, so you must make your SRS programs as easy on them as possible. Some typical programs:

- Walking in groups with adult escorts ("walking school bus").
- Bicycling in groups with adult escorts.



- Arranging for walking or bicycling buddies.
- Driving part-way to school, then parking and walking the rest of the way.

(For a good step-by-step process to organize a walking school bus, see *KidsWalk-to-School, A Guide to Promote Walking to School*. Step Three, on page 12, explains how to gather and map out information about where participating families live. Step Four outlines the planning details including safety precautions, routes and schedules, consent forms, and conducting rehearsal walks.)

For many parents and school officials, however, safety is the bottom line. A safe, reliable program must be in place before they will allow their children to participate.

Step 5. Implement Your SRS Program

- Hold a kick-off event.
- Sustain your program.

When your walk- or bike-to-school programs are ready to go, kick off your implementation with some high-profile event(s). Invite local officials, your State Representatives, celebrities,

Walk-to-School Day events included a Dr. Seuss-ian piper and a rally with the school principal to talk about clean air.



and collaborating organizations that you have built partnerships with to participate in the event. Make sure the event gets media coverage. Send out a press release, invite members of the media, and try to get on local access cable television. Be sure to provide refreshments. National Walk Our Children to School Day, held each autumn, is a great time to kick off your walking initiative! (For more information see *Resources*.) You can

plan additional walk- or bike-to-school days to suit your schedule.

After your program is up and running, try to have something happening every week of the school year that will sustain interest. Atlanta PEDS (Pedestrians Educating Drivers on Safety, www.peds.org) suggests "walk on Wednesdays" — nicknamed WOW. Continue to talk with teachers about related classroom activities, and continue publicizing progress (or even frustrations) regarding the SRS task force's efforts to eliminate safety hazards on routes to school. Ask to make reports to PTO and school board or school council meetings.

Step 6. Evaluate

- Track the results of your program regularly — at least twice each school year — by repeating the student surveys.
- Monitor the satisfaction or concerns of parents and school officials periodically.

The SRS task force needs to know what is working well and what needs improvement. The program cannot grow without this information. Members of the task force must chat with parents, teachers, and administrators, find out what they like, and ask for constructive criticism. Parents rapidly lose interest in programs that do not meet their family's needs, but they may not be candid in their feedback without being invited to be frank.

It is useful to document the successes of your SRS program. If you already have, or if you plan to seek funding from outside sources or from your own municipal budget, potential funders will want evidence that you are making a difference. Are more school children getting more exercise? Is there less traffic near the school in the morning and at dismissal time? Has there been a reduction in accidents or near-misses? Likewise, if your community seeks Federal or Massachusetts funding assistance for transportation improvements, you must be specific about your needs. (You may want to use the Evaluation form in *KidsWalk to School*.)

Finally, remember that your local SRS program is part of a nation-wide effort. Your community may be able to contribute important data to the national dialogue about how children travel to school.

Step 7. Plan to Sustain your Program in the Future

- Keep your program going from one school year to the next.
- Explore ways to expand SRS to other schools in your community, or to other communities.
- Continue to work toward the more costly, long-term infrastructure improvements that were identified by the SRS task force.

It is almost impossible to maintain a program solely with volunteers. Once your SRS program has some proven successes, try to institutionalize it within the school department or another appropriate agency that can provide continuity and financial resources.

Remember that the infrastructure changes recommended by your task force can take years to be realized and that you may need to apply steady pressure on elected officials, department of public works, or highway and traffic departments.

Be vigilant. Attend public zoning, parking, parks and recreation, and public works meetings; speak up to ensure that their decisions promote pedestrian and bicycle safety. Attend school board meetings as well.



Chapter 5—Safety Training

Purpose

The Safe Routes to Schools program is **committed to preparing children to be safety smart when walking or bicycling to school**. Since our goal is to prompt many children who were not already regular walkers or cyclists to start walking and bicycling, it is especially important to ensure that they understand traffic dangers and basic rules of the road.

It takes practice before safety is second nature to a child. If a child generally has been driven to school, he/she probably hasn't gotten enough experience yet to know how to walk safely and responsibly. It's even less likely that children will have sufficient experience learning bicycle safety skills.

This chapter presents a safety-training program that can be done in cooperation with schools by teachers and Safe Routes to Schools volunteers. It is not intended to replace parental guidance but to support it. Indeed, the success of the program depends on parents continuing to reinforce these messages whenever they are out with their children.

Grade Levels

WalkBoston's Safe Routes program offers safety training to elementary school students in grades 1, 2 or 3, as determined in consultation with the school Principal. The level of challenge must be appropriate to age level, and we find a marked increase in traffic awareness and confidence sometime around 2nd or 3rd grade.

Likewise, bicycle safety training should be provided at an appropriate age to children as determined by parents and school officials considering local cycling conditions. Grades 4, 5 and 6 are WalkBoston's target group.

These walking safety lessons are based on materials graciously shared by two programs in England: "Footsteps" in Oxfordshire and "Walk and Talk" in Hertfordshire.

Walking Safety Training

Method

This practical, roadside safety training is designed to raise awareness of traffic and then get children to think through their actions. We recommend one adult trainer for every two children. After at least a brief introduction to safety topics indoors, trainers take students out of the school and practice crossing safely on local streets. Rather than lecturing students, we suggest asking students leading questions that help them discover the right — and safe — answers themselves.

- Where are the safe places to cross the street?
- Is it safe to cross between parked cars? Why not?
- What other things might make it difficult to see the street?
- Where should you go if you cannot see the road clearly?

Questions like these lead children to observe and think about traffic in a way that they do not when relying on parents to make decisions for them. (*See sample Trainers' Questions on opposite page.*)

The general skills to be covered include:

- picking safe places to cross;
- planning to cross, including stopping, looking, and listening; and
- crossing safely.

First a trainer must be satisfied that the children can pick safe places to cross, and that they understand the importance of being able to see the road in both directions (and be seen). Actually practicing crossing is the all-important next step. Here is one approach to use. The trainer says:

"I want you to get ready to cross the street as if you were doing it by yourself. When you decide it is safe to cross, say 'Now'. If I agree, I will say 'Yes' and we'll walk across together. If it is not safe, I will say 'No' and we'll stay here and talk about it."

This technique exercises the children's observation and judgment skills in a safe context.

Continued on page ST-4

Trainers' Questions – Day 1

1. Safe Places

Ask children to identify road, curb, sidewalk, driveways, crosswalks.

Ask children where it is safe to walk and where it is safe to cross.

Discuss where pedestrians and cars share use. [Driveways; Crosswalks]

Is it smart to cross the street between parked cars? [No. Kids cannot see street well. And the parked cars could move.]

2. Stop

Do children understand the need to stop before crossing?

Why should they stop? [To check if it's safe to cross]

Where should they stop and wait? [Behind curb, or off the side of the road if there is no curb.] Look at examples.

When walking through a parking lot, ask where cars may be coming from. [Every direction including backing up!]

3. Look

Ask children to point to where traffic may come from at various locations. Include a location near an intersection where there may be traffic coming from several directions.

Do they need to look into driveways?

Ask how they can be sure a driver sees them? [Eye contact. Driver waves.]

Talk about "Look Left; Look Right; Look Left Again."

Ask how to make sure that all cars from both directions stop for them.

4. Listen

Identify vehicle types by sound only.

Identify direction of vehicles by sound.

Do the children sometimes hear a vehicle before they can see it? Why?

Have them close their eyes and point when they hear a vehicle approaching.

Do all vehicles sound the same? Car horns and bicycle bells?

5. Planning to Cross

Why walk straight across? [Walking on diagonal your back is to some traffic.]

Tell them to say "Now" when they think it is safe to cross.

Should they run across? Discuss why not.

Repeat "Stop | Look | Listen" before actually crossing.

6. Fast/Slow

Can they tell if a vehicle is going fast or slow?

Ask them to say if they would have time to cross the road safely when a vehicle is approaching.



Who Will Teach Children?

Trainers can be recruited from among parents and school staff. Crossing guards may be interested in participating. Student safety patrol or middle school mentors may also assist.

The participation of local police should be viewed as essential to any safety training associated with children. They can help pre-train the trainers, ensure traffic control during student training, and they may even want to participate in training with the kids.

Every training session with children should be supervised by experienced Safe Routes to Schools staff and police.

Safety Precautions

During training with elementary school children, it is a good idea for both children and adults to wear reflective safety vests for maximum visibility to traffic.

Depending on traffic conditions, organizers may want to place warning signs mid-street to alert drivers that training is in progress — although drivers may modify their behavior from the norm.

Before going out of the school for road-side practice all the students should be given ground rules:

- Obey the trainer.
- No disruptive behavior.
- No running off.

Likewise, the trainers must have permission to immediately return to school with any students who endanger themselves or others. Individual groups of children and trainers should spread out enough so they do not distract one another.

It is probably a good idea for a few of the training supervisors to have walkie-talkies or cell phones.

That being said, we can happily report that we had no risky student behavior during walking safety training at any of our four participating schools, even after multiple training sessions, and even with the few kids who were disinterested. On the whole students were amazingly well behaved.

Assessment

It is useful for trainers to record notes on each child's progress. Subsequent training sessions can address issues identified in prior trainings. Reports to parents can praise particular skills—or highlight weaknesses.

A sample assessment sheet is included in the "Forms" section.

Fitting Walking Safety into School Day

Physical Education classes may be a good time to schedule safety training. Often Phys Ed teachers support and participate in Safe Routes to Schools programs in order to encourage kids to be physically active.

Alternatively, training can be offered as part of the health curriculum, in after-school programs, or in weekend workshops.

How Much and How Often?

Twenty minutes is about the right amount of time for each roadside training session. Preceded by an introduction, and followed by a brief discussion of what the class has learned, safety training can be made to fit a typical class schedule as needed. An effective walking safety program would include a total of four training sessions — of increasing challenge — for each student, perhaps two in the autumn and two in the spring.

Reminder to Parents

Parents should not assume that because a child participates in SRS safety training that he or she is then capable of walking alone. A responsible adult (or older sibling) should always accompany younger children **until the parents are confident that the children are able to be responsible about safety.**

Bicycle Safety Training

Bicycling is more complicated than walking and requires knowledge of a more sophisticated set of rules and skills. Bicycle safety training should ensure that children have a comprehensive knowledge of traffic safety and laws because, as bicyclists, they have the same responsibilities as drivers. In England, students who have taken comprehensive Safe Routes to Schools bicycle safety training perform better when they later take drivers' education courses.

Beginning bicyclists need to be given exercises that will help them learn to control their bicycles. Also, younger children's perceptions of depth, distance, and speed, as well as their eyesight and hearing, are not fully developed. They need explicit instructions on dealing with traffic that an adult would not require (for example, Don't ride into the path of other vehicles).

Ages for Bike Training

Depending on local conditions students may be ready for bike safety training in grades 3 or 4.



Who Will Teach Bike Safety?

Whereas the average parent can be easily trained to teach walking safety, it requires experienced cyclists to teach bike safety. The League of American Bicyclists certifies cycling instructors. Also some police departments now have some officers on bikes; collaborating with the police is an excellent way to set up bike safety training.

A ratio of 2 trainers to 10 students is recommended.

Method

Demonstrations, drills, and lots of practice in real bicycling situations are key to effective bike safety training. Lessons can begin in empty parking lots and move out onto carefully selected local streets as students gain skill and confidence. Street practice is essential because students are bound to have to ride on streets for some part of their journey to school.

Launch the training sessions with basic handling skills (starting and stopping, straight riding, gear shifting, looking over the shoulder) and then move on to principles of traffic operation (use the right side of the road, yield to cross traffic, yield when moving across the road, signaling, etc.).

BICYCLE SAFETY LESSONS SHOULD INCLUDE:

- Proper bike fit
- Wearing a helmet that fits properly and is correctly positioned
- Using a bicycle mechanical safety checklist
- Riding in a smooth, predictable manner, with no sudden swerves or changes of direction
- How to scan the road, looking ahead, side to side, and over the shoulder to see behind without swerving
- How to recognize and interpret communications from other road users and the importance of making eye contact
- Noticing and understanding traffic signs and signals
- Using hand signals for right and left turns, and for slowing and stopping
- Identifying and avoiding high-risk situations and behaviors
- Riding at a safe speed

- How to keep control of the bicycle when reacting to hazards, and especially how to stop quickly while remaining in control
- Bicycle theft prevention

Students can be awarded a certificate or "license" demonstrating their successful completion of safety training.

Equipment

Children provide their own bicycles, which are subject to a safety check by SRS trainers.

Of course, students must wear helmets while riding; trainers should teach kids how to check for proper fit.

When And for How Long?

It may be impractical to make bike safety training a part of the regular school day. Some families simply won't want their children to participate. And the logistics of having bicycles at school can be cumbersome.

WalkBoston's Safe Routes to Schools program offers bike safety training as either a summer, weekend or after-school activity. Fifteen to twenty-some hours of training make a manageable program, whether it is 6 hours on 3 consecutive Saturdays, or 10 weeks of 2 hours after school, or some other arrangement that totals enough hours.

Chapter 6— Classroom Activities

Goals of SRS in The Classroom

The following ideas are presented as a “starter” curriculum for integrating Safe Routes to Schools concepts into classrooms. The goals include:

- Teaching children the health and fitness value of regular walking and bicycling.
- Encouraging students to explore the effects of their transportation choices — walking, bicycling, riding in a car, or public transportation — on their communities and the environment.
- Building basic skills, as required in Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

ENGLISH AND LANGUAGE ARTS

Walkers' Sounds

Use walking-related words as a stimulus for phonically based word collections. Students could make a shoe template and fill it with "sh-" words, a walking figure with "w-" words, a stop sign with "st-" words, a boot or backpack with "b" words, umbrella with "u" words, etc.

Walkers' Vocabulary

Students can study street and safety vocabulary words. How many words and expressions do they understand? Learn the meanings of words like pedestrian, vehicle, curb, sidewalk, pavement, crosswalk, one way, eye contact, traffic light, turning traffic, walk/don't walk, wait, to speed, to "run" the red light. Use dictionaries to find the meanings and write sentences, stick labels onto pictures of street scenes, or draw illustrative pictures.

Walkers' Senses

Have students write stories about their journeys to school (walk, bicycle, bus, car). What do they see... hear... smell... touch... on the way to school? Compare the level of detail in a few sample stories from students that come to school by different means.

Describing Safety Hazards

Your students could participate in one or more of the following ideas using the theme of different forms of communication. Writing activities could include the use of word processing where appropriate.

DISCUSSION

In groups, your students could discuss the definition of a safety hazard. They could then describe their routes to school and list any hazards they encounter.

DESCRIPTION

Each student could write a description of one hazard on their route to school in a way that would clearly explain that hazard to other students coming to school by the same route.

REPORT

A class discussion could identify what constitutes a road safety hazard; perhaps the class could make a "site visit" to help students understand the concept of a hazard. Each student could then write a report on all the different hazards that they have found in the area of the school. The purpose of each student's

report should be to produce a description of the hazards which would be good enough to alert someone who is unfamiliar with the neighborhood.

ROLE PLAY

Small groups of students could take part in a series of simple role playing activities to act out the hazards they may meet on the way to school and strategies for avoiding them. For example, they could decide that it is dangerous to cross a particular street except where there is a crossing guard. In this case, students could act out the possible hazard of crossing in the wrong place, and then act out crossing safely. One student might provide commentary on the action.

Students should act out all these skits in front of the class. They may decide to develop them into a class play for an assembly or for a younger grade.

IMAGINATIVE WRITING

Your students could write a poem or story involving a journey to school. This should involve the theme of safety, but they might want to think beyond simple possibilities and use their imagination. For example, they could have a Safe Routes to Schools project set in another country where safety hazards may be different.

Safe Routes to Schools Newsletter

Use desk-top publishing to produce a newsletter for parents and/or other members of the local community. It could illustrate results of the Safe Routes to Schools Travel Survey, describe safety hazards on school routes, and present possible remedies suggested by the Safe Routes to Schools Project.

MATHEMATICS

You could ask your students to carry out some or all of the activities below, depending on their ability, age, etc. Some of the activities may not be suitable for younger children.

Meaningful Measures

Students could:

- On the playground or in the gym or classroom, measure out a fixed distance — e.g. 30 feet — and count how many steps it takes each child to walk that distance. (Note that students should *walk* at a normal pace, not run.) How many steps, on average, does it take a student to walk this distance? How many steps does it take an adult to walk the same distance? Students could work out how many times they would have to walk back and forth over this fixed distance to cover the distance of one mile.
- Look at a large-scale map of the area and figure out how far 30 feet is on the map. (The local school department may have maps or be able to direct teachers to municipal departments, online services such as MapQuest.com, or commercially available CD ROM maps.)
- Figure out how far it is from home to the school. In the case of those who live nearby it may be possible to calculate the distance using strides. This should only be done, however, if adults are supervising. Then represent journeys to school in graph form by plotting distance to school against each student's name.
- Calculate the average distance children in the class travel to school.
- Calculate how many miles or kilometers they travel to school in a day, a week, a month, a year, etc.
- Use bicycle wheels as a stimulus for lessons on circumference, distance, and speed.
- Learn about drawing to scale by making simple maps of the school and local area.

Graphs and Charts

The following activities could encourage your students to generalize and hypothesize when interpreting statistics and to evaluate various methods of presentation.

- Enter data from the results of the Safe Routes to Schools Travel Surveys, or use the computer to enter the student responses as they become available. Data can then be interpreted to produce graphs, charts, and reports, exploring concepts of fractions, percentages, and averages.
- Using a computer if possible, analyze the data from the Safe Routes to Schools Survey to produce graphs and reports. These could be incorporated into posters, newsletters, or displays.
- Use real statistics from any incidents which students may have been involved in (e.g., cuts, bruises, etc.) to create an injuries chart for the class. How many injuries were associated in one way or another with journeys? They can display these figures using either a bar or a pie chart.
- Keep a diary of the amount of time spent travelling each day or week and note the modes of transport. Then present the information using a pie chart.
- Conduct traffic surveys of roads close to school and display the results in a variety of ways.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Learning about Air Pollution

Students can participate in a discussion aided by photographs (views of cities or natural vistas with and without smog, factories with smokestacks, pictures of cars and trucks) that introduce the concept of air pollution and what it is caused by. Do fires cause pollution? Do cars and other gasoline-burning engines cause pollution? Do walking and bicycling?

Demonstrating Air Pollution, Discussing Causes

Students will set out two dishes of sticky Vaseline to catch airborne particulates. One dish will be placed near the school bus/ car drop-off area, and another will be placed in a location away from the drop-off area. The dishes should be open to the air, protected from the rain and safe from foot traffic. A control dish could be placed in a closed box. Students will collect the Vaseline samples after one week and discuss their findings:

Is there any difference between the samples? What are the likely sources of the particulate matter found in the Vaseline samples? What chemicals may they contain?

Based on materials from 'The Great Body Shop' curriculum, The Children's Health Market.

Strategies for Reducing Air Pollution

Students can keep a log of how they travel to school and back for one week. Explain that the goal is to determine the total number of car trips to and from school made by class members over a week. How many car trips could be avoided during a week if every student walked or biked to and from school every day? How many might be eliminated by car pooling? If everyone walked or biked to and from school, how many car trips would be avoided over the course of a month? A year? Two years?

Polar Bear Month

These activities were designed especially for walk-to-school programs in areas with cold and snowy winter conditions, the kind of winter weather that might prompt some parents to drive their children to school. The objective is to help kids see that how they travel to school has an impact on the environment. The project builds both science and writing skills.

Polar bears in the arctic are the central theme because these big, lovable -looking mammals are endangered by global warming, which is shortening the number of weeks that the

arctic ocean is frozen enough for the bears to hunt their primary food source, ringed seals.

ESSAY AND ART CONTEST

Early in the coldest winter months, announce a contest with the following theme: “How does walking to school here in ____ help polar bears in the Arctic?” Children may write essays or create artwork that answers the contest question. Suggested resources can be given to students, such as www.polarbear.org.uk, and teachers can be given more comprehensive resource packets as well. The winning entry gets a polar bear themed prize.

WALK LIKE A POLAR BEAR

The school can designate a week or an entire month as polar bear month, a time when families are encouraged to be active in the snowy weather, like polar bears are, and to walk to school as often as they can. One day can be set aside for a polar bear parade, when children are encouraged to wear polar bear t-shirts, “polar bear ears” made in art classes, and to carry their own plush polar bears to school.

Students can keep a walk-to-school log and those who walk the most during the month win special prizes and recognition.

(The more tie-ins to the polar bear theme, the more kids will get involved and the more they will learn.)

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

Making and Using Maps

Using a large-scale map of the school and its immediate area, students could:

- Mark any areas where potential hazards to pedestrians or cyclists exist. After a discussion about these hazards, they could discuss measures to protect cyclists and pedestrians from traffic (e.g., through traffic-calming measures such as speed bumps, closing off streets, 20 mph zones, etc.).
- Plot public transportation networks in the local area and identify commercial, residential, and any industrial areas. Compare with a different neighborhood. Students can take note of differences in public transportation services and speculate about the reasons for them.
- The class can pick an interesting location in their town, and individuals can use public transportation maps and schedules to find how to get to that location by public transportation. Students can discuss their findings to see if they picked the same way to get to the destination. Are some public transportation services easier to use than others? Are some safer to get to than others?

Family Research and Writing

Students can interview their grandparents or parents about how they got to school when they were the students' age. How long ago was it? Where did they live? How far was it to school? What was the route like? How did they like it?

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH

The ideas for classroom activities in this section address the following standards of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks:

- Standard 1.7 (Growth & Development)
Students will explain the function of human body systems and how body systems work together. (In this case the relationship between circulatory system and muscular systems.)
- Standard 2.4 (Physical Activity and Fitness)
Through the study of fitness students will identify physical and psychological changes that result from participation in physical activity.
- Standard 13.2 (Ecological Health)
Students will describe how business, industry and individuals can work cooperatively to solve ecological health problems such as... decreasing pollution.

Note: Many of the following Comprehensive Health lesson ideas work especially well as a collaboration between the physical education and classroom teachers.

Air Pollution and Health

Discuss air pollution and our bodies. Can you smell it? Can you see it (little black flecks of dust settle on the window sills of your house or school)? Can you ever feel it? Why is clean air better to breathe than polluted air?

Exercise and Health

Physical exercise is an important part of keeping our bodies strong and healthy. What is exercise? (running, jumping, skipping, hopping, and even walking) Exercise makes our hearts strong, our muscles strong, and our bones strong.

STRONG HEARTS

Our hearts beat faster when we are getting exercise, supplying more energy to our muscles. While sitting quietly, children can learn how to feel their pulses in their necks. Then they can do some active classroom games (e.g., jumping jacks, windmills, touch toes, “Simon says”) and feel their pulses again to see how their hearts are beating faster.

MUSCLES AND BONES

Children can draw life-sized outlines of their bodies in action (running, doing handstands, walking) or in sedentary mode (watching TV, riding in the car, playing computer games). Using appropriate resources, (see below) students can then use brightly colored markers to highlight areas which are most used during exercise — the muscles, bones and heart. Use uniform color codes for each area. Cut out the “action figures,” and make them into a collage for display in the school lobby. Also display the children’s action figures as an entire class display of “Healthy Bodies in Action.” Students can also locate the main muscles of the leg and back that keep the body upright and are used in walking.

Resources: Action Pack – Human Body, DK Publishers, or other books listed in Bibliography of The Human Body, Kindergarten. The Great Body Shop, including *Discover Bones: Explore the Science of Skeletons* by Leslie Grant. Addison-Wesley, 1992 and *The Skeleton and Movement* by Steve Parker. Franklin Watts (revised edition) 1991

This Lesson Plan is based on ‘The Great Body Shop’ curriculum for Kindergartners, ‘Everyday Play’, The Children’s Health Market.

Exercise in Daily Life

If your school has walk-to-school days when most of the children walk, plan to discuss how the children feel when they first arrive at school. How does it differ from days when they don’t walk to school? Have children make drawings called “How I feel when I walk to school.”

Adding Walking to Your Week

For two weeks in warm weather, students would keep a daily log (at home) of the time they spend in physical activity. The first week they would do nothing special, just their typical routine. The second week every class member would try to walk or bike to school every day. (Students who live too far away to walk should add some other activity to their daily routine for the week: walking or jogging for fun, jumping rope, playing sports with friends, etc.)

Afterwards, students would report on this two-week experiment. Ask that they pay special attention to even subtle changes in strength, energy, sleep, appetite, and alertness to schoolwork. Findings regarding the connections between physical exercise and how students feel can be made into a

class presentation to younger classes.

TALKING WITH EXPERTS

Two special speakers to the classroom, an athlete (possibly a high school student) and a pediatrician could participate in a classroom discussion on how fit and healthy students really are, based on their sleeping habits, nutrition and physical activities. Classes that conducted the two-week “experiment” described above can discuss their results.

Evaluating Fitness

Make a “puffometer” – a simple device consisting of a Ping-Pong ball in a plastic tube with a mouth piece at the base. When they blow into the mouthpiece, the ball will rise up in the plastic tube. If this is done correctly, it is possible to measure the strength of different students’ exhalations by asking each to blow into the tube and marking or measuring the result. They could re-perform the experiment after vigorous physical activity. Can they account for the differences in strength of exhalation?

Undertake heart-rate and fitness experiments by measuring a friend’s pulse rate before and after physical activity. Students could compare fitness among children who walk or bike to school with those who are given a lift in the car.

Walk Across America

This class activity encourages children to walk (and/or bike) — and helps them visualize the cumulative benefit of many short, individual trips on foot or on bicycle. Depending on the number of weeks that the teacher wants to devote to this activity, students can travel across the country, across the state of Massachusetts, or the length of the Appalachian Trail.

Classes can do this activity individually, or a number of classes can do it as a contest, with a bar graph or “thermometer” showing the progress of each class. “Walk Across America” is most effective when undertaken during good-weather months.

ACTIVITIES

- Using a map of your local school district have class determine how far from school each student lives.
- Distribute a travel diary on which students track the number of times they walk and bike to and from school. Make sure the form includes a place to record the number of miles between the student’s home and school.

- Place a map of America (or the state of Massachusetts, or the Appalachian Trail) on the wall.
- Once a week, the students will multiply the number of times they walked to and from school by the number of miles from their home to school.
- Add all of the students' miles together and translate it to distance on the map.
- Take a string and, using the scale on the map, cut it to the length of the miles traveled. Pin one end to the point where the school is located, and stretch the string out and mark how far the students traveled this week. (Alternatively, use a map measurer and brightly colored markers.) Repeat each week.
- At the end of a month (or a few months), add the total miles "traveled" and give a prize to the class that traveled farthest.

EXAMPLE:

If a class has 20 students and 12 (or 60%) walk every day, and students live, on average, one-half mile from school, it will take the class a little over 4 weeks to "walk across" Massachusetts (246 miles greatest east to west distance, by road, from Provincetown to Richmond, MA).

VARIATIONS:

- Distribute pedometers to students in a class, so they can record daily miles walked in travel diaries. This will include all walking trips, not just walking to and from school.
- To encourage travel by bus and carpool (because they are less polluting than individual auto trips) and to avoid excluding children who live too far away from school to walk there, include buses and carpools in this exercise by adding one bonus mile for every trip made by carpool or bus and adding it to the total class miles.
- Instead of taking the most direct route to "Walk Across America," students can choose each week where their accumulated miles take them. The class can then do research to find out something interesting about that location.

Walk and Bike Across America was first conceived by the Way to Go program in British Columbia.

ARTS

Imagine Your World

Students can draw pictures of two make-believe worlds: What would their school and neighborhood look like if there were more air pollution, and everybody always drove and never walked? What would it look like if there were no cars, and children always walked to school?

Different Viewpoints (photography)

Using inexpensive disposable cameras that pairs of students share, students can take photos of what they see on their way home from school, and the class can arrange the photos into two collages, one made by walkers and the other by car or bus riders. Discuss the differences in the collages based on their differing viewpoints.

Using Art to Promote Ideas

POSTER PROJECTS

Students could:

Design and illustrate a poster to warn other children coming to school of an individual hazard.

Design posters that promote the messages of the Safe Routes to Schools program. Some possible themes include:

- Protect the environment by reducing auto trips to school.
- Promote the health benefits of walking and bicycling.
- Walk safely. Bike safely.

The posters can be any media or size that is convenient for teachers and students to work with. They may also combine pictorial elements and graphs to convey information about student's travel to school (see MATHEMATICS, Graphs and Charts.) Display all the finished posters in and around the school and/or the town, or use them to promote specific Safe Routes to Schools events.

LOGO DESIGN

Students can be introduced to the design and uses of logos and can design their own logos to promote the local Safe Routes to Schools program, focussing on one or more of the program's themes, for example:

- Safety.
- The Environment and Air Quality.
- Fun, Fitness and Health.

For maximum versatility, their logo must work in black and white, and it should be suitable for a variety of uses and sizes. A “jury” of art teachers, school and town officials, and local professional graphic artists can review student logos. One logo can be selected for use on local Safe Routes promotional materials. The winning student could be awarded a prize.

Chapter 7 — Resources

Many of the best resources to help you launch your own walk-to-school or bike-to-school program are on the internet.

WalktoSchool.org

If you want to organize a Walk to School Day event in your community, it's easy with the help of this website. Designed to promote the annual October "International Walk to School Day" this website is your guide to planning a successful event. It includes:

- organizing tips
- fact sheets
- resources and on-line links
- and more.

Check out www.walktoschool.org/resources

Articles about Children and Walking

Making walking and physical activity an attractive choice for children requires creating an environment where physical activity is both encouraged and easily accomplished. Here are some articles that offer insight into creating a more physically-active environment for your children.

The Surgeon General's Call To Action To Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity
www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity

Bush to America: Get Off Your...
www.cbsnews.com

Fitness for the whole family
<http://stacks.msnbc.com/news/757025.asp>

Obesity-related ills on the rise in kids
<http://www.msnbc.com/news/746276.asp>

Childhood Obesity: Managing Your Child's Food Environment
http://abcnews.healthology.com/focus_article.asp

KidsWalk website

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers excellent resources on its website. A sampling of items that can be downloaded from the website include:

- Walking and Bicycling to School: Community Presentation
Slide presentation to increase knowledge and interest in participating in a Walk & Bicycle to School program.
- Train the Trainer, another slide presentation developed to encourage state level promotion of walk and bicycle to school programs
- Physical Activity Fact Sheets
- The KidsWalk-To-School brochure
This guide is a resource to help communities develop and implement a year-long walk-to-school initiative.

Model Programs

WalkBoston's Safe Routes to Schools

www.walkboston.org/safe

Marin County, California

www.saferoutestoschools.org

Toronto, Canada

<http://www.greenestcity.org/indexasrts.html>

Way to Go! Canada

www.waytogo@telus.net

Sustrans, UK

www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk

Sample Forms and Surveys

This section contains samples of materials that have been used by other Safe Routes to Schools programs. Feel free to use them and modify them to suit your school's individual needs. (For your convenience, the same materials are in file folders in the Tool Kit box.)

- **Parent Survey**

The information gained from a parent survey is invaluable. It will reveal why parents choose one method of travel over another for getting their children to school. In addition it gets a reading on parents preferences and willingness to change habits and what changes of policy or the built environment are needed to increase walking and bicycling. The numbers should closely correlate with the numbers in the Show-of-Hands Travel Surveys.

- **Quick Show-of-Hands Travel Survey**

The show-of hands survey can be administered regularly when teachers take attendance. It is designed to get a quick, reasonably accurate count of the different ways that students travel to and from school.)

- **Student Travel Survey**

This a three-page survey to be administered to a representative selection of students. Its purpose is to learn students' reasons and attitudes about how they get to school the way they do, and to get a sense of their general levels of physical activity.

To increase its usefulness, distribute a map of the school district with the survey, and have students mark the following features on the map

- a) Where does each student live?
- b) If the student walks or bicycles to school, what route is taken?
- c) What, if any, are the dangerous places along the routes?

All three of the preceding surveys can provide vivid quotes and testimonials for a campaign to promote your Safe Routes to Schools program.

- **Walkability Checklist**

How walkable is your community? Is it "awful" or "excellent"? This useful tool can help you rate your community. It will also help you

identify things that need to be done to make it more walkable.
Can be downloaded from www.walktoschool.org/resources

- **Safety Training – Trainers’ Questions**

These sheets are designed to guide trainers through the key issues to discuss with students in a walking safety training. These questions will encourage students to **observe** street traffic and make careful **judgements** about crossing safely.

- **Safety Training – Skills Assessment Sheets**

Companion to the Trainers’ Questions, these sheets are for recording student progress in safety training classes.

Dear _____ Parent,

The Safe Routes to Schools program is working to increase the number of children who walk to school. We are trying to figure out how to make walking safer and more enjoyable for children and parents here, and to do that we need to get an idea of how walking fits (or doesn't fit) into your life. Would you help us by taking the time to fill out this survey?

Attached to the survey is a map of the school district so you can help us identify places that are dangerous for walkers.

Thanks for your help!

Safe Routes to Schools Parent Survey

1. How do your children **usually** get to school and back?

Child #1	Child #2	Child #3
Grade _____	Grade _____	Grade _____
To school in the morning?	To school in the morning?	To school in the morning?
<input type="checkbox"/> Walk	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk
<input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle	<input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle	<input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle
<input type="checkbox"/> Car	<input type="checkbox"/> Car	<input type="checkbox"/> Car
<input type="checkbox"/> Carpool	<input type="checkbox"/> Carpool	<input type="checkbox"/> Carpool
<input type="checkbox"/> School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/> School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/> School Bus
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Bus	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Bus	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Bus
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
To home in the afternoon?	To home in the afternoon?	To home in the afternoon?
<input type="checkbox"/> Walk	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk	<input type="checkbox"/> Walk
<input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle	<input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle	<input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle
<input type="checkbox"/> Car	<input type="checkbox"/> Car	<input type="checkbox"/> Car
<input type="checkbox"/> Carpool	<input type="checkbox"/> Carpool	<input type="checkbox"/> Carpool
<input type="checkbox"/> School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/> School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/> School Bus
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Bus	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Bus	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Bus
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

2. If your children (and you) usually walk to school, about how long does it take?

- 10 minutes or less up to 30 minutes
 up to 20 minutes more than 30 minutes

3. What do you like best about having your children walk to school?

4. What do you like least about having your children walk to school?

(Please turn over)

5. If you usually drive your children, what are the reasons?

(You may check more than one.)

I drop them off on my way to work or I pick them up on my way home.

A member of our family has a disability that prevents walking.

We are in a rush.

I'm concerned about bullies.

I worry about them crossing busy streets. (Which streets?)

I'm concerned about crime.

My children ask me to.

We don't like to walk when it's raining or snowing.

We live out of district.

The sidewalks are not good enough. (Where?)

Other reasons that you don't walk?

6. How did you get to school when you were the same age as your children?

7. Do you want your children to walk to school more often?

Yes No Undecided

8. If you are an elementary school parent, would you like your children to walk with a group of other children and an adult (a "walking school bus")?

Yes No Undecided

9. Would you like to help plan the "Safe Routes to Schools" program at our school? Yes No Undecided

Optional:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone or email _____

Thanks. Please return this form to your child's classroom teacher.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

Prepared in cooperation with the Massachusetts Highway Department and U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.



Quick Show-of-Hands Travel Survey

Quick Teacher Survey: On the designated day, please administer when you take attendance. By a "show of hands" ask how your students travel to and from school. Pass this completed form to the principal's office. You and your class will receive a report of the total results. — Thank you.

Teacher's name _____

Grade/Class _____

Today's Date _____

The weather today is _____

This **morning**...

How many of you **walked** to school? _____

How many of you came by **bicycle**? _____

How many of you came by **car**? _____

How many of you came by **school bus**? _____

How many of you came by **public transit**? _____

Other? _____

Total** _____

This **afternoon**...

How many of you will **walk** home? _____

How many of you will **bicycle**? _____

How many of you will be picked up in a **car**? _____

How many of you will take a **school bus**? _____

How many of you will take a **public transit**? _____

Other? _____

Total _____

**Totals should equal the number of children in class today.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

Prepared in cooperation with the Massachusetts Highway Department and U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.



Safe Routes to Schools Program

Student Travel Survey

(estimated time: 30 mins)

What grade are you in?

Boy Girl

Name of street where you live

How do you get to school ?

How do you *usually* get to school ?

Walk School Bus Car Public Bus Bicycle

How do you *usually* go home after school ?

Walk School Bus Car Public Bus Bicycle

Do you like the way you get to school? Yes No

Explain.

.....

.....

Are you allowed to walk to school by yourself? Yes No

If you walk to school, how safe do you consider your route to be?

Very safe OK Dangerous

If you don't walk to school, why not?

.....

.....

.....

If you walk to school now, what would make it better?

.....

.....

.....

If you usually come to school by car...

(Skip these questions if you don't usually come by car.)

When you come to school by car, how many children are usually in the car?

1 (Just me) 2 kids 3 kids or more

(Example: If you *and* 1 other kid are in the car, then the answer is "2")

After you are dropped off at school by car, your parent goes...

Home To Work To do errands I don't know

How would you like to get to and from school?

- Walk
- School bus
- Public bus
- Car
- Bicycle
- Other

Why?
.....
.....

If you want to walk to school, why?.....
.....
.....

If you don't want to walk, why not?
.....
.....

Free Time Activities

Do you own a bicycle? Yes No

Do you wear a helmet? Yes No

If you have a bike, how many times have you ridden it in the last 7 days?
(Do not count going to school)

Once Twice Three or more times None

How far are you allowed to bicycle without one of your parents?

Not at all Just my street 2 streets away from my house

Farther than 2 streets from my house

Are you allowed to use public buses without an adult? Yes No

How often do you play sports, or exercise, outside of school hours?

Almost every day

twice a week

once a week

less than once a week

never

Thank you for your help.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

Prepared in cooperation with the Massachusetts Highway Department and U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.



Walkability Checklist

How walkable is your community?

Take a walk with a child and decide for yourselves.

Everyone benefits from walking. But walking needs to be safe and easy. Take a walk with your child and use this checklist to decide if your neighborhood is a friendly place to walk. Take heart if you find problems, there are ways you can make things better.

Getting started:

First, you'll need to pick a place to walk, like the route to school, a friend's house or just somewhere fun to go.

The second step involves the checklist. Read over the checklist before you go, and as you walk, note the locations of things you would like to change. At the end of your walk, give each question a rating. Then add up the numbers to see how you rated your walk overall.

After you've rated your walk and identified any problem areas, the next step is to figure out what you can do to improve your community's score. You'll find both immediate answers and long-term solutions under "Improving Your Community's Score..." on the third page.



Partnership for a
Walkable America



Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center



U.S. Department
of Transportation

Take a walk and use this checklist to rate your neighborhood's walkability.

How walkable is your community?

Location of walk _____

Rating Scale:



1. Did you have room to walk?

- Yes Some problems:
- Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
 - Sidewalks were broken or cracked
 - Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, etc.
 - No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
 - Too much traffic
 - Something else _____
- Locations of problems: _____

Rating: (circle one) _____
1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

4. Was it easy to follow safety rules?

Could you and your child...

- Yes No Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen by drivers?
- Yes No Stop and look left, right and then left again before crossing streets?
- Yes No Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic where there were no sidewalks?
- Yes No Cross with the light?
- Locations of problems: _____

Rating: (circle one) _____
1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

2. Was it easy to cross streets?

- Yes Some problems:
- Road was too wide
 - Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross
 - Needed striped crosswalks or traffic signals
 - Parked cars blocked our view of traffic
 - Trees or plants blocked our view of traffic
 - Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair
 - Something else _____
- Locations of problems: _____

Rating: (circle one) _____
1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

5. Was your walk pleasant?

- Yes Some unpleasant things:
- Needed more grass, flowers, or trees
 - Scary dogs
 - Scary people
 - Not well lighted
 - Dirty, lots of litter or trash
 - Something else _____
- Locations of problems: _____

Rating: (circle one) _____
1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

3. Did drivers behave well?

- Yes Some problems: Drivers...
- Backed out of driveways without looking
 - Did not yield to people crossing the street
 - Turned into people crossing the street
 - Drove too fast
 - Sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through traffic lights?
 - Something else _____
- Locations of problems: _____

Rating: (circle one) _____
1 2 3 4 5 6 _____

How does your neighborhood stack up? Add up your ratings and decide.

1. _____ 26-30 Celebrate! You have a great neighborhood for walking.
2. _____ 21-25 Celebrate a little. Your neighborhood is pretty good.
3. _____ 16-20 Okay, but it needs work.
4. _____ 11-15 It needs lots of work. You deserve better than that.
5. _____ 5-10 Call out the National Guard before you walk. It's a disaster area.

Total _____

Now that you've identified the problems,
go to the next page to find out how to fix them.

Now that you know the problems,
you can find the answers.

Improving your community's score...



What you and your child can do immediately

What you and your community can do with more time

1. Did you have room to walk?

Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
Sidewalks broken or cracked
Sidewalks blocked
No sidewalks, paths or shoulders
Too much traffic

- pick another route for now
- tell local traffic engineering or public works department about specific problems and provide a copy of the checklist

- speak up at board meetings
- write or petition city for walkways and gather neighborhood signatures
- make media aware of problem
- work with a local transportation engineer to develop a plan for a safe walking route

2. Was it easy to cross streets?

Road too wide
Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross
Crosswalks/traffic signals needed
View of traffic blocked by parked cars, trees, or plants
Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair

- pick another route for now
- share problems and checklist with local traffic engineering or public works department
- trim your trees or bushes that block the street and ask your neighbors to do the same
- leave nice notes on problem cars asking owners not to park there

- push for crosswalks/signals/parking changes/curb ramps at city meetings
- report to traffic engineer where parked cars are safety hazards
- report illegally parked cars to the police
- request that the public works department trim trees or plants
- make media aware of problem

3. Did drivers behave well?

Backed without looking
Did not yield
Turned into walkers
Drove too fast
Sped up to make traffic lights or drove through red lights

- pick another route for now
- set an example: slow down and be considerate of others
- encourage your neighbors to do the same
- report unsafe driving to the police

- petition for more enforcement
- request protected turns
- ask city planners and traffic engineers for traffic calming ideas
- ask schools about getting crossing guards at key locations
- organize a neighborhood speed watch program

4. Could you follow safety rules?

Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen
Stop and look left, right, left before crossing
Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic
Cross with the light

- educate yourself and your child about safe walking
- organize parents in your neighborhood to walk children to school

- encourage schools to teach walking safely
- help schools start safe walking programs
- encourage corporate support for flex schedules so parents can walk children to school

5. Was your walk pleasant?

Needs grass, flowers, trees
Scary dogs
Scary people
Not well lit
Dirty, litter



- point out areas to avoid to your child; agree on safe routes
- ask neighbors to keep dogs leashed or fenced
- report scary dogs to the animal control department
- report scary people to the police
- report lighting needs to the police or appropriate public works department
- take a walk with a trash bag
- plant trees, flowers in your yard

- request increased police enforcement
- start a crime watch program in your neighborhood
- organize a community clean-up day
- sponsor a neighborhood beautification or tree-planting day
- begin an adopt-a-street program

A Quick Health Check

Could not go as far or as fast as we wanted
Were tired, short of breath or had sore feet or muscles

- start with short walks and work up to 30 minutes of walking most days
- invite a friend or child along

- get media to do a story about the health benefits of walking
- call parks and recreation department about community walks
- encourage corporate support for employee walking programs

Need some guidance?
These resources might help...

Great Resources

WALKING INFORMATION

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC)
UNC Highway Safety Research Center
730 Airport Road , Suite 300
Campus Box 3430
Chapel Hill, NC
27599-3430
Phone: (919) 962-2202
www.pedbikeinfo.org
www.walkinginfo.org



National Center for
Bicycling and
Walking
Campaign to Make
America Walkable
1506 21st Street, NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (800) 760-NBPC
www.bikefed.org

WALK TO SCHOOL DAY WEB SITES

USA event: www.walktoschool-usa.org
International: www.iwalktoschool.org

STREET DESIGN AND TRAFFIC CALMING

Federal Highway Administration
Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Research Program
HSR - 20
6300 Georgetown Pike
McLean, VA 22101
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/index.htm

Institute of Transportation Engineers
www.ite.org

Surface Transportation Policy Project
www.transact.org

Transportation for Livable Communities
www.tlcnetwork.org

ACCESSIBLE SIDEWALKS

US Access Board
1331 F Street, NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1111
Phone: (800) 872-2253;
(800) 993-2822 (TTY)
www.access-board.gov



PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Traffic Safety Programs
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590
Phone: (202) 662-0600
www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/ped

National SAFE KIDS Campaign
1301 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 662-0600
Fax: (202) 393-2072
www.safekids.org

WALKING AND HEALTH

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity
Phone: (888) 232-4674
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/readysset
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm

Prevention Magazine
33 East Minor Street
Emmaus, PA 18098
www.itsallaboutprevention.com

Shape Up America!
6707 Democracy
Boulevard
Suite 306
Bethesda, MD
20817
www.shapeup.org

WALKING COALITIONS

America Walks
P.O. Box 29103
Portland, Oregon
97210
Phone: (503) 222-1077
www.americawalks.org



Partnership for a Walkable America
National Safety Council
1121 Spring Lake Drive
Itasca, IL 60143-3201
Phone: (603) 285-1121
www.nsc.org/walkable.htm

Walking Safety Training

Trainers' Questions – Part 1

1. Safe Places

Ask children to identify road, curb, sidewalk, driveways, crosswalks.
Ask children where it is safe to walk and where it is safe to cross.
Discuss where pedestrians and cars share use. [Driveways; Crosswalks]
Is it smart to cross the street between parked cars? [No. Kids cannot see street well. And the parked cars could move.]

2. Stop

Do children understand the need to stop before crossing?
Why should they stop? [To check if it's safe to cross]
Where should they stop and wait? [Behind curb, or off the side of the road if there is no curb.] Look at examples.
When walking through a **parking lot**, ask where cars may be coming from. [Every direction including backing up!]

3. Look

Ask children to point to where traffic may come from at various locations. Include a location near an intersection where there may be traffic coming from several directions.
Do they need to look into driveways?
Ask how they can be sure a driver sees them? [Eye contact. Driver waves.]
Talk about “Look Left; Look Right; Look Left Again.”
Ask how to make sure that all cars from both directions stop for them.

4. Listen

Identify vehicle types by sound only.
Identify direction of vehicles by sound.
Do the children sometimes hear a vehicle before they can see it? Why?
Have them close their eyes and point when they hear a vehicle approaching.
Do all vehicles sound the same? Car horns and bicycle bells?

5. Planning to Cross

Why walk straight across? [Walking on diagonal your back is to some traffic.]
Tell them to say “Now” when they think it is safe to cross.
Should they run across? Discuss why not.
Repeat “Stop | Look | Listen” before actually crossing.

6. Fast/Slow

Can they tell if a vehicle is going fast or slow?
Ask them to say if they would have time to cross the road safely when a vehicle is approaching.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

The Safe Routes to Schools program is funded by the Massachusetts Highway Department and U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

Walking Safety Training

Trainers' Questions – Part 2

Review and check skills. New material is underlined.

7. Safe Places

Ask children where it is safe to cross the street.

What if there is no crosswalk? [Street corners are next best]

When is it safe to cross mid-block? [Quiet streets with little traffic]

Is it safe to cross between parked cars? Why not?

Are there other things that can make it difficult to see? [plants, curves, other people]

What is the most important thing about safe crossing places? [You can see and be seen.]

What should they do if they cannot see the street clearly in both/all directions? [Find a place where they can.]

8. Stop

Having chosen a place to cross, ask the children to do what they should do before crossing, and then to say “Now” when they think it is safe to cross. See if they stop in the correct place before starting to look / listen.

9. Look

See if they are looking without being prompted. Are they looking in all directions that traffic could be coming from?

Include a location near an intersection.

Why look left, right, left? [To double-check that no car has come while looking right]

10. Listen

Are they responding to traffic noise? Can they close their eyes and tell if traffic is approaching or going away?

11. Crossing

Do they keep looking while crossing? Discuss why they should.

Why should they walk straight across?

[So they can look both directions while crossing.]

What should they do if a vehicle approaches while they are walking across? [Get out of the street quickly but calmly.]

12. Look

If a car stops how can children be sure it is really safe to cross.

[Driver waves them across.]

When one vehicle stops to let children cross, do children look for other cars? Why should they? [Must be sure cars stop both/all directions!]

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS

The Safe Routes to Schools program is funded by the Massachusetts Highway Department and U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

Student:	Grade & Teacher
Date:	Trainer Name:

	Not attempted	OK First Try	OK Second Try	COMMENTS
Safe Places				
Uses crosswalks or picks other safe places				
Understands that must be able to SEE and be SEEN				
Can find a place with good sight lines				
Stop				
Stops at curb				
Look				
Looks left, right, left				
Looks for turning traffic at intersections				
Listen				
Listens for traffic				
Can tell if car is approaching or going away				
Planning to Cross				
Waits for signal from driver				
Checks that ALL cars have stopped, from both directions				
Crossing				
Keeps looking while crossing				
Walks straight across				
Estimating Time				
Can judge if there is time to cross				



WalkBoston promotes walking for transportation, health and recreation through education and advocacy. Our mission is to create and preserve safe walking environments that build vital communities.