



Pedestrian Safety Lessons

These lessons are designed to teach 2nd graders how to be safe when walking with an adult or an older child. Safety experts do not recommend that 2nd graders walk alone because they do not have the cognitive abilities to safely walk alone.

1) Safe Places to Walk and Cross

- Ask the children, “Where is it safe to walk?” Answer: On the sidewalk, as far away from the street as possible.
- “Where is it safe to cross the road?” Answer: Places where they can see in both directions, where there is a light or a crosswalk, or where there is a crossing guard.
- “Is it a good idea to cross in the middle of a block?” Answer: Usually it is a bad idea. If there is no intersection or crosswalk nearby and they need to cross, children must make sure that they can see in all directions before attempting to cross mid-block.
- “Is it safe to cross between parked cars?” Answer: Absolutely not. If you can’t see the car coming toward you, then the driver can’t see you. Additionally, parked cars may move.
- “How can you be safe near a bus?” Answer: Wait a few steps from the curb for the bus to stop. Wait for the bus driver to put out the signs for you to walk in front of the bus. Never walk behind a bus.

2) Stop

- “Why should children stop before crossing?” Answer: They need to wait, look, and listen to make sure a car, truck, bus, or bicycle is not moving toward them.
- “Where should children stop and look?” Answer: They should stop behind the curb. If a parked car or object is blocking their view of the road, they should try to get a better view by moving to a different place on the sidewalk where they can see in both directions.
- “If one car stops to wave you across the road, but other cars continue to come towards you, what should you do?” Answer: Children should wait until all cars in each direction have stopped before going into the street to cross the road.

3) Look

- At corners, ask children to point in all the directions where cars could come from. The children often forget that cars can turn from various directions or come from behind them, so it is important to point these out.
- Practice looking left, right, behind, and left again before starting to cross the street. Watch each child to make sure s/he actually looks.
- Look into alleyways, driveways, and all places where a car/truck might drive.
- Look at the driver to make eye contact. This is especially important if the driver is looking away from where the walker is standing to see if another car is coming.

4) Listen

- Ask children to close their eyes and point in the directions the cars are coming from. Remind them that listening, in addition to looking, is very helpful.

5) Planning to Cross

- Explain that you want them to figure out when it is safe to cross the street. Direct them to say “now” when they think it is safe to cross, but to wait for your response before starting to cross. If it is safe to cross, you will say “yes” and cross the street with them. If it is unsafe to

cross, you will say “no” and stay on the sidewalk to talk about the situation. You may need to practice a few times before you can actually cross. Try to be firm about waiting until the children figure out when it is safe to cross.

6) Strangers

- Ask the children, “If a stranger stops and asks you a question, what should you do?” Answer: They can ignore the stranger, keep walking, walk in another direction, and/or tell a nearby adult that they know.
- “If a stranger tries to talk to you, and you need to cross the street to walk away from the stranger, what should you do?” Answer: First, look and listen for cars, and then cross the street.

7) Show children why running is less safe than walking

- Pick a safe running area. Tell children you will ask them to run and then to listen to what you say. Line them up, say “get ready, set, go” and watch as they run for about 10 steps. Yell “stop”. Most will take five or six steps before they can stop moving. Explain how this shows that running makes it harder to stop to avoid an unexpected car. Repeat the sequence, but ask them to walk instead. Most children will stop within a step or two after you say “stop.” This proves your point that they are in more control - and more safe - when walking.

8) Other lessons to practice and illustrate

- a) Ask children to choose the best place to get from point A to point B. The children should choose, in order from best to worst, a traffic signal light, a crosswalk, a corner, and finally mid-block with good visibility. If it is not safe to cross nearby, they need to walk to where it is safe to cross. They should go a little out of their way to be safe!
- b) Show children that drivers may have trouble seeing them by showing them that their heads barely come up to window height of small cars and below window height of many SUVs and trucks. To demonstrate it:
 - (1) Kneel down to their height and discuss whether the children can see the driver and whether they think the driver can see them in that position.
 - (2) Have the children walk alongside two parked cars and show how difficult it is to see or be seen.
 - (3) Pretend to be the driver and explain that if they darted out, you would not be able to stop in time because you wouldn’t see them or brake until it is too late.
- c) “What would you do if your ball or another object goes into the street?” Answer: If possible, they should cross with an adult’s help. If there is no adult around, they should stop, look, and listen before going into the street. After picking up the object, they should keep walking in the same direction to the opposite side of the road. Then, they would need to turn around, and stop, look, and listen before crossing back.
- d) “Where should you walk in a parking-lot? How can you tell if a car might move?” Answer: Never walk directly behind a car. Leave space between you and the parked cars. Four clues that a car might move are lights, motor sounds, exhaust from the rear, and a driver in the car.
- e) Ask them if they’ve ever seen a driver do something by mistake or break a safety rule. Ask them to tell you which rule was broken or to give an example. Talk about cars rolling through stops signs or not putting on turn signals. Tell the children that they have to watch out for themselves and not assume drivers will always be looking out for walkers.