WALKING THE WALK

Massachusetts Pedestrian Safety Education Tool Kit for 2nd & 3rd Graders

Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Program

Pedestrian Safety Education for 2nd & 3rd Graders - Tool Kit

This Tool Kit was developed for the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Program by WalkBoston. Mass*RIDES*, a service of the Executive Office of Transportation, implements the Commonwealth's Safe Routes to School Program. This program is supported by the Federal Highway Administration.

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HOW TO PLAN & LEAD A PEDESTRIAN SAFETY TRAINING

- Step-by-Step Guide
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Planning Checklist
- Pedestrian Safety Lessons

This toolkit is intended to provide guidance to the individual who will plan and lead pedestirian safety training at a school.

For most communities, walking as a way to get to and from places has become less frequent, while vehicle travel has increased. This means that many children may not have a lot of walking experience or have not learned walking safety lessons at home. At the same time, walking safety skills are increasingly important for navigating in an environment with high levels of traffic and where drivers encounter few pedestrians in their daily routine.

Pedestrian Safety Training provides critical lessons for parents and children about what it takes to walk safely and to keep children safe. The key elements of Safety Training teach children:

- To walk on the sidewalk as far from the street as possible
- How, when, and where to cross the street
- To be aware of moving vehicles in parking lots and driveways
- To always stop, look, and listen for vehicles

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

A. BEFORE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY TRAINING

1. Organize a planning meeting

The school principal, a teacher, and lead parent volunteer(s) should attend the meeting. Involve the school safety officer when possible.

- Distribute materials from the Tool Kit: Sign-in Sheet, Sample Training Schedule: Five Volunteers, Sample Training Schedule: Ten Volunteers, Parent Permission Slip, Please Volunteer Letter, Informational Letter to Volunteers, Letter to All Parents, Pedestrian Safety Lessons, and Planning Checklist.
- Choose a day for the training program (fall and spring).
  - » Schedule the training for about four weeks after the planning meeting.
- Create a schedule for the day, taking class times, specialist classes, lunch, and recess into consideration (allow 30 minutes for each walk).
  - » Depending on the number of adult volunteers, divide a class in half (two 30 minute trainings) or take all the students at once (one 30 minute training). (See Sample Training Schedule: Five Volunteers or Sample Training Schedule: Ten Volunteers).
  - » The sessions can be a little shorter or longer than 30 minutes, but 30 minutes is the ideal.
- Discuss how to recruit adult volunteers and who will take the lead.
- Ask the principal whether pictures of the children can be taken during the walk.
- Plan a rain date in case of inclement weather.
- Decide whether to hand out small rewards (i.e. small reflectors, etc.) to students, and where and how to get them before the training date.

2. Use sample forms if helpful

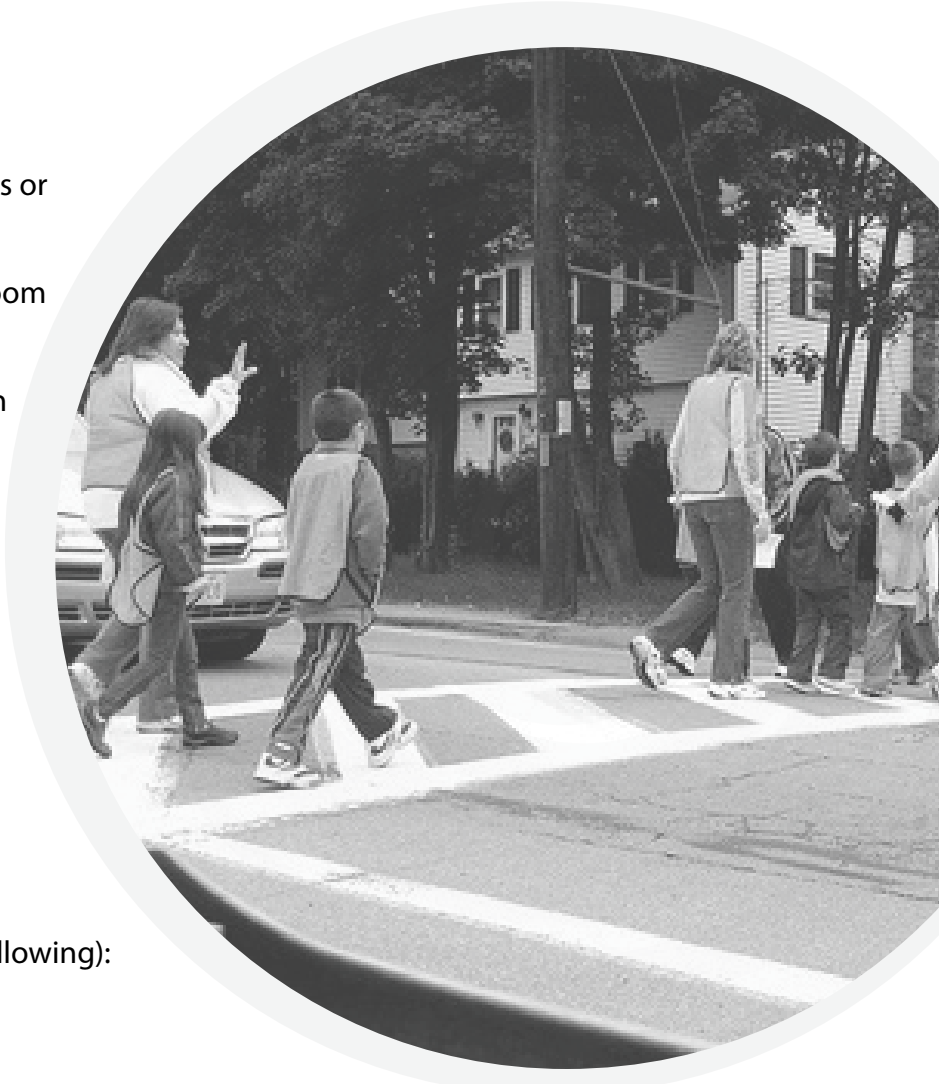
Look at the forms in the following chapter. Fill in the correct information for your school.

- Parent Permission Slip: Give each teacher copies of the permission slip to hand out to the children two to three weeks prior to the training with a deadline of at least one week prior to the training. Check receipt of the form and remind those parents that have not filled one out to do so by the training date, so their children can participate.
- Please Volunteer Letter: Used to help recruit parent volunteers (optional).
- Informational Letter to Volunteers: Information for parents after they volunteer to help out (optional).
- Letter to All Parents: Information to send home two weeks prior to the training day (optional).
- Sample Training Schedule: Five Volunteers or Sample Training Schedule: Ten Volunteers: fill out the date and times.

3. Recruit volunteers

Here are some suggestions:

- Ask the teacher for involved parents or room parents.
- Get a list of parents for each classroom and make phone calls.
- Call parents you know and ask each parent for additional names.



4. Walk the route
(See Choosing a Walking Route)

- Walk the route prior to the training date to review environmental features, good places to practice lessons, the length of the walk, and heavy traffic areas.

5. Gather and prepare materials

For the leader (one copy of each of the following):

» Sign-in Sheet
» Lunch Order Form
» Classroom Talking Points
» Camera (digital is best, but disposable is fine)

- For volunteers (one copy of each of the following):
  - » Training Schedule
  - » Pedestrian Safety Lessons
  - » Lesson Reminders for Walk Leaders
  - » Evaluation Form
- For students (one per student):
  - » Safety vests (optional)
  - » Rewards (optional)

6. Find a co-leader (optional)

- Find another parent volunteer to share the responsibilities with the lead volunteer. This volunteer parent could share the task of introducing and wrapping up the lessons for students in each classroom.

B. DAY OF PEDESTRIAN SAFETY TRAINING

PART I: Train Adult Volunteers

1. Introductions and orientation

- Find a room for the volunteers to gather (this space may change for lunch and evaluation periods).
- Get a menu from the school office for ordering lunch from a local sandwich shop.
- Meet, greet, and direct volunteers to the location of your meeting.
- Fill out a sign-in sheet and do introductions (see Sign-in Sheet).
- Review the schedule with volunteers (see Training Schedule).
- Ask volunteers to write down their lunch orders (see Lunch Order Form).
- Hand out Pedestrian Safety Lessons and the Lesson Reminders for Walk Leaders and give volunteers time to read them. Explain that everything will be covered in the training.
- Collect the Sign-in Sheet and Lunch Order Form. Give the Lunch Order Form to the front office BEFORE the walk begins. Ask if someone in the office can call in the orders and receive the lunch when delivered.

2. Adult training walk

- Lead the adult volunteers through the walking route (using the route you will walk with the children).
- Use different areas to demonstrate different lessons.
- Emphasize stop, wait, listen, look, and look again.
- Remind them to ask children questions and prompt their learning with "what if" scenarios rather than give them the information in lecture format.
- Assure them that they will usually take two children at a time.
- Ask volunteers to separate during the walk with children and not bunch up together in one place because it distracts children.
- Let them know that they can teach any of the lessons at any time and encourage them to use real "teaching moments" as they arise in the environment.

3. Get ready for student trainings

- When you complete the adult walking route, return to the meeting room and give volunteers a short break. Find out if they need to move personal belongings to another area.
- Hand out safety vests (optional if your school has them) for students to wear during each walk. Adults should wear them throughout the day to act as role models for the students.
- Give the volunteers instructions on which classroom to start with and instruct them to line up in the hallway to wait as children leave the class two-by-two.
- Ask the volunteers to take any two children as they leave the class and to start the training immediately.

Part II: Student Training (Adult volunteers conduct student training.)

1. Direct volunteers to the classrooms and gather students

- Before the safety walks start, give a short talk to the whole class to get the students excited to go for a walk (see Classroom Talking Points).
- Ask the teacher to help divide the students into groups of two (if possible, put one boy and one girl in each group, and avoid close friends being together in a group).
- Ideally a parent should not take his/her own child, as children may listen to other adults better, but parents can take their own children if desired.
- Remind volunteers to return on time.
- If your volunteers will be returning to the same class to take more children, let them know that they don't need to wait until the whole group returns to take the next two children. If you are moving to a different classroom, all volunteers should wait for the classroom introduction.

2. During the walk

- Remind the volunteers to try to discuss each of the Pedestrian Safety Lessons throughout the walk.
- Ask volunteers to carry the Lesson Reminders for Walk Leaders as a reminder of what lessons to teach.
- Take pictures of the children during the walk (if you received approval from the principal). Pictures are a great way to show your efforts to the school community.
- Make adjustments to the route or length of walks as necessary.

3. Class wrap-up

- The leader provides a short recap to the whole class (see Classroom Talking Points).
- The leader provides the rewards to the teacher to give to students.
- If possible, send your co-leader to the next classroom to begin introductions.

4. Regroup and evaluate

- Find a room to regroup and discuss positive and negative aspects of the day. Hand out the Evaluation Form.
- Discuss follow-up plans.
- Collect the vests and the evaluation forms.

C. AFTER PEDESTRIAN SAFETY TRAINING

1. Report your success

- Report general results and findings to the principal and let him/her know the training has been completed.
- Review evaluations and make notes about what went well and what could be improved for the next training.
- Get the word out to your school community: use the school website, newsletter, email lists, bulletin boards, and/or notices sent home with students.
- Thank volunteers.

NOTES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

BEFORE THE TRAINING

WHY train second and third graders instead of other grades?

The training is geared to catch students early in childhood. Second and third graders are at an appropriate developmental level because they are old enough to take in the concepts and are on the cusp of taking more responsibility for themselves as walkers. Although it is strongly recommended that second and third graders still walk with adults or older children, it is important for them to start being aware of the precautions to take as a pedestrian. This training program can be adapted to other ages if a school decides to undertake a more broad-based program.

HOW many students can each adult train?

We recommend that each adult train two children at a time. We have found this to be the optimal ratio for the children to best learn and demonstrate their knowledge, and to provide a comfortable experience for volunteers. At times, adults may need to take three children in order to fit all students into an allotted training time. If so, the training begins with the one to two ratio and then changes to a one to three ratio if and when the volunteers feel comfortable.

HOW many volunteers are needed?

At an average size elementary school (four classes of 20 students), five volunteers will allow for a timely and comfortable training schedule with two students per adult. It is least disruptive to class time to take either the whole class or half of the class at a time. Thus, if the class has 20 students, ten volunteers are needed to take the whole class at once, or five volunteers can take half of the class at a time.

WHO can volunteer?

Any adult who is willing to participate in the walk leader training and safety walks with the second grade students can volunteer. Some schools have CORI or other safety requirements.

HOW do I recruit adult volunteers?

Each school has a different method, but we can offer some suggestions:

One method is to find a parent who will serve as the Safety Training Liaison who will contact parents of students to request that they volunteer. A very successful method when calling parents is to ask if they can volunteer and then also to request the names of three to five other parents who can make calls and may be willing to volunteer. Some schools have one or more room parents who can divide up the work.

Another method is to invite teachers and teacher aides to join their students. This can be done if the whole class can do the training at the same time. To make this easier, some schools schedule the training during physical education time. Inviting local police, crossing guards, and community members helps to expand awareness of the program. Sometimes principals participate. Lastly, if your school has "Walking School Buses", we highly recommend that those parents participate in the adult volunteer training whether or not they can stay to train the children.

HOW long does it take to train the adults?

Schedule about one hour to welcome, train, and prepare the adults to take the children for safety walks.

WHAT do the adults learn?

The adults will learn the safety curriculum and how to apply the lessons with children, using the school's walking area as the training ground. Educational skills are also reviewed, such as how to prompt students to answer questions and engage them in demonstrating what they know and have learned.

WHAT happens during the adult training?

After the adults meet the other volunteers, sign in, and order lunch (about ten minutes), the event leader(s) take the volunteers on a walk outside to show them how and where to teach the safety lessons to the children. This gives the volunteers an opportunity to experience the training, ask questions, and add comments. Lastly, leave at least five to ten minutes at the end to take a break, hand out safety vests or something bright for the children to wear, and move as a group to the first class to be trained.

DURING THE TRAINING

HOW do you keep the students safe?
Each volunteer participates in safety training before teaching the children, and only trains two to three children at a time. If a child requires more adult supervision, one-on-one supervision should be provided. Prior to the walk, rules are discussed and each child must agree to follow the rules before being allowed to participate. In addition, the adults can bring a child back to the school if they do not feel the child is following directions. For extra safety measures, the school may provide safety vests during the walk to increase visibility.

HOW long do the student walks take?
The ideal length is about 30 minutes, with the walk taking about 25 minutes, allowing three minutes to talk to the class before the walk, and if time permits, two minutes to talk again after the walk.

HOW do you organize the student walks?
The walk leaders all start in one class, gather the appropriate number of students, take them on their walk, and return them to their class. This sequence is repeated until all the students have been trained. Brief introductory and concluding remarks are made to each class before and after the training.

DO parents need to give permission?
Because the staff and volunteers are walking off school grounds with the children, usually parents must sign and turn in a permission slip to allow their child to participate in Pedestrian Safety Training. The principal can decide if s/he would like to do it differently.

WHERE do the walks take place?
Students are trained outside near the school.

WHEN do students take the walks?
Students are taken during the school day, leaving from their classroom or PE class.

HOW is the route chosen?
Choose the shortest route possible that will allow children to stop to discuss and practice all the safety components: parking lot issues, crosswalks, driveways, sidewalks, and visibility issues. The route should lead through a medium level of traffic volume and occur in areas where students usually walk.

AFTER THE TRAINING

HOW do I know if the training went well?
There is an evaluation form that adult participants anonymously fill out to give feedback after the training. The children will also demonstrate what they are learning throughout the walks.

IS there anything to give to the children or parents to review the skills?
Yes, a one-page summary for the children and another for the parents to review the walking skills with their children (see Safety Tips for Children and Safety Tips for Parents).

CAN children in other grades do the training?
The lessons in the Tool Kit are designed for the maturity and knowledge level of second graders, but you can adjust the training as you see fit for children of various other ages.

HOW does a school keep the training going?
The training sessions will continue as long as there is school support for the program and an adult who is willing to take the lead to plan and implement the training. This Tool Kit explains all the necessary steps to continue the sessions each year.

PLANNING CHECKLIST

SIX WEEKS BEFORE THE TRAINING

- ☐ Call the principal and teachers to set up a planning meeting

FOUR WEEKS BEFORE

- ☐ Conduct planning meeting with the principal and teacher(s)
- ☐ Start recruiting parent volunteers
- ☐ Decide on the day for the training (and a rain date)
- ☐ Create schedule for training day

TWO WEEKS BEFORE

- ☐ Hand out permission slips to teachers
- ☐ Complete volunteer recruitment

ONE WEEK BEFORE

- ☐ Check-in with teachers about permission slips
- ☐ Check-in with parent volunteers
- ☐ Collect and prepare materials

For the leaders
(one copy of each of the following):

- » Sign-in Sheet
- » Lunch Order Form
- » Classroom Talking Points
- » Camera
  (digital is best, but disposable is fine)

For volunteers
(one copy of each of the following):

- » Training Schedule
- » Pedestrian Safety Lessons
- » Lesson Reminders for Walk Leaders
- » Evaluation Form

For students (one per student):

- » Safety vests (optional)
- » Rewards (optional)

DAY OF THE TRAINING

- ☐ Bring materials
- ☐ Train adults: introductions, sign-in, order lunch, and training walks
- ☐ Train students: introductory talk, gather students, training walks, and closing talk
- ☐ Evaluate: discuss and fill out form

TWO WEEKS AFTER THE TRAINING

- ☐ Report your success to the principal

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY LESSONS

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

1) SAFE PLACES TO WALK AND CROSS

a) ASK THE CHILDREN , "Where is it safe to walk?"

Answer: On the sidewalk, as far away from the street as possible.

b) "Where is it safe to cross the road?"

Answer: Places where they can see in both directions, where there is a traffic signal or a crosswalk, or where there is a crossing guard.

c) "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.

d) "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.

e) "How can you be safe near a school bus?"

Answer: Wait a few steps from the curb for the school bus to stop. Wait for the bus driver to put out the signs for you to walk in front of the school bus. Never walk behind a school bus.

2) STOP

a) "Why should children stop before crossing?"

Answer: They need to wait, look, and listen to make sure a vehicle is not moving toward them. Explain to the children that the word "vehicle" means anything moving in the street such as cars, trucks, and bicycles.

b) "Where should children stop and look?"

Answer: They should stop behind the curb. If a parked vehicle 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.

c) "If one driver stops to wave you across the road, but other cars continue to come toward 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

a) 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 this out.

b) Practice looking left, right, behind, and left again before starting to cross the street. Watch each child to make sure s/he actually looks.

c) Look into alleyways, driveways, and all places where a vehicle might drive.

d) 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

a) 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, but they might miss a newer, quieter vehicle, or be unable to hear over other loud noises, so they must always look before crossing.

5) PLANNING TO CROSS

a) 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

a) 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.

b) "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 vehicles, and then cross the street.

7) 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, 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:

- 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.
- Have the children walk alongside two parked vehicles and show how difficult it is to see or be seen.
- 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, cross with an adult's help. If there is no adult around, stop, look left, right, left and over your shoulder for traffic, before going into the street.

d) "Where should you walk in a parking lot? How can you tell if a vehicle might move?"
Answer: Always walk with an adult. Never walk directly behind a vehicle. Leave space between you and the parked vehicles. Four clues that a vehicle might move are lights, motor sounds, exhaust from the rear, and a driver in the vehicle.

e) "Have you 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. Discuss vehicles rolling through stop signs or not putting on turn signals, and that children have to watch out for themselves and not assume drivers will always be looking out for walkers.

f) 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 vehicle. 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.

ORGANIZING TOOLS & FORMS BEFORE THE EVENT

- Choosing a Walking Route
- Sample Map
- Using Your Route to Teach
- Parent Permission Slip
- Please Volunteer Letter
- Informational Letter to Volunteers
- Letter to All Parents
- Sample Training Schedule: Five Volunteers
- Sample Training Schedule: Ten Volunteers

CHOOSING A WALKING ROUTE

Choosing your Route

The following factors should be weighed to select the best walking route for your Pedestrian Safety Training. Careful consideration will yield a choice that will work well for your purposes and cover all the necessary topics. Your walk will likely cover a small distance very near your school.

LENGTH

Try to choose a route that is:

- Walkable by young students who take short steps.
- Walkable in the time allotted (20-30 minutes), allowing for lesson stops.
- Walkable without rushing or running.
- Walkable without tiring out the students or adults.
- Don't assume that a longer route works best. Sometimes all of the lessons can be reviewed in a very short route or at one four-way intersection.
- Don't opt for a longer route to get to that one traffic signal down the road: skip it in favor of repeating the core lessons. You can bring up topics with a discussion even without experiencing the topic on the walk.

SAFETY

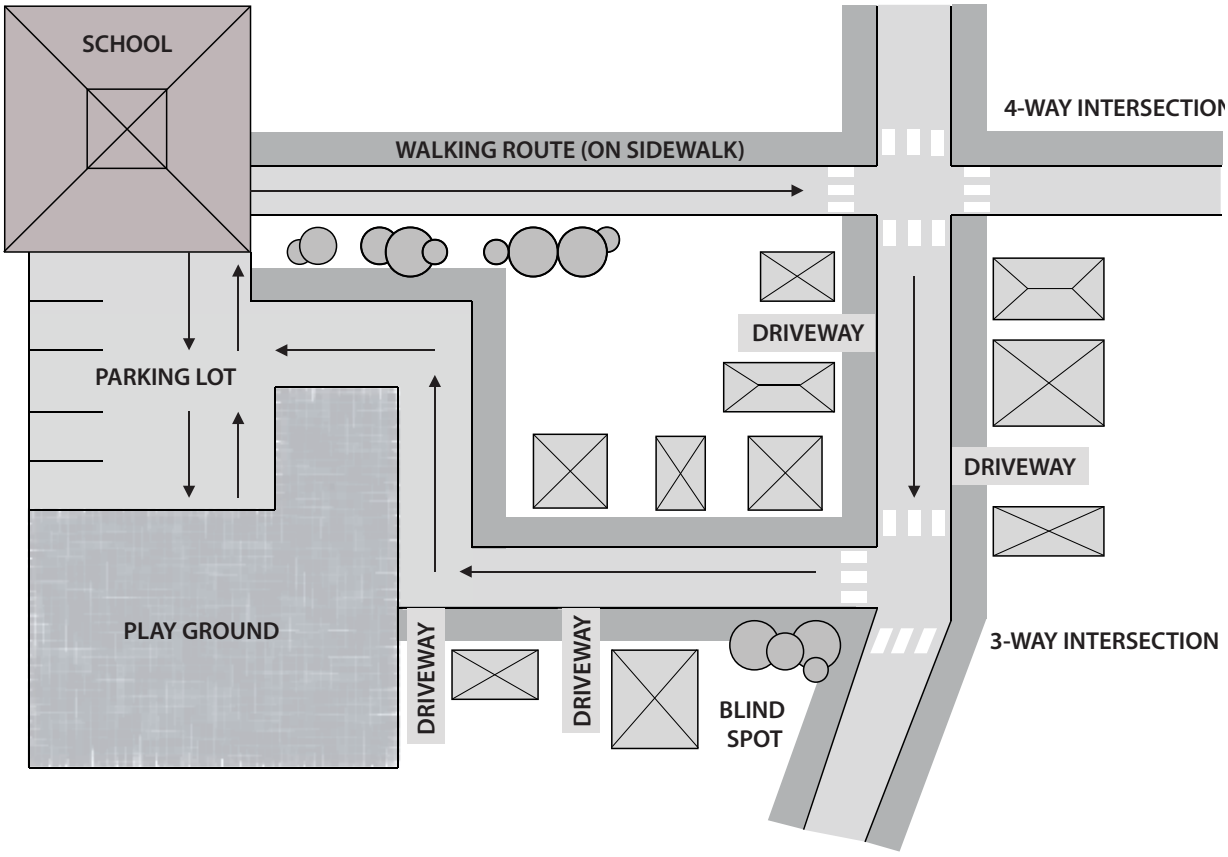
While the object is to keep the children safe during their training, picking a perfectly calm and danger free walking route won't give students the opportunity to practice real life examples. The key is finding a good balance:

- Choose a medium level of traffic. Too much traffic will worry adults and slow down the lessons while too little traffic will offer few opportunities to see how vehicles operate or how pedestrians interact with drivers.
- Choose a medium level of safety. Don't pick an intersection with frequent mishaps, extremely fast speeds, or bad blind spots, but do find one where there are vehicles regularly driving past. This is more difficult during the school day. Don't assume the normally busy intersection at rush hour is still congested during the school day.

ENVIRONMENTALLY VARIED

Try to set up a route that will take you to a variety of features. Try to find at least three out of the following: crosswalks, intersections, stop signs, traffic signals, driveways, parked vehicles, or blind spots.

- Sidewalks: It is good to do the training on sidewalks. If the neighborhood does not have them, pick a quiet side road, not a busy main road, to practice the lessons.
- Drop-off/pick-up areas: These sometimes create the most hazards for the walking students. Use those areas, if possible, even if they don't link up to walking areas.
- Common walking areas: Use the routes and areas that students commonly use to walk or bike to school.



USING YOUR ROUTE TO TEACH

The lessons cover a range of topics on different types of encounters children are likely to face. Here are some tips to match the lessons with good places to teach them, and how to keep safety training sessions fun and exciting for the students.

OVERALL TIPS

- Use a graduating sequence of difficulty. If possible, progress from a quiet crosswalk, to a busier crosswalk, to a crossing area without one, from a quiet intersection to a two-way or a four-way intersection, from a small private driveway to a commercial driveway, from a sidewalk route to a no sidewalk route, etc.
- Learning opportunities will arise spontaneously. Use them. There are no fixed rules about when and where the lessons must be taught.
- Use a combination of teaching techniques: showing, asking, prompting, humor, drama, observing real action, practicing, and assessing "how we did."
- Stop, wait, look left, right, left and over your shoulder, and listen before crossing. Continue to look as you cross the street.
- These skills can be practiced virtually anywhere and many times over the training. Crosswalks and intersections are obvious places to do this, but they work when showing driveways, parked vehicles, and drop off areas as well.

CROSSWALKS - BEST PLACE TO CROSS

- What are they? Why use them?
- Practice looking left, right, left and over your shoulder and continue looking as you cross the street.
- Driver behavior: watch if drivers stop and stay stopped.

ALONG THE WALK: NO CROSSWALKS AVAILABLE?

- How to choose the best place to cross.
- Go where there are no blind spots such as hills, trees, or parked vehicles.
- Avoid crossing in the middle of a block.

PARKING LOTS

- Visual ability of drivers to see a child.
- Ability of walker to see drivers and vehicles.
- Volume of vehicles and different directions of vehicles driving (backing up, turning, etc).

- Clues about when a vehicle might move: lights, sound, exhaust, or driver in vehicle.

PARKED CARS

- Demonstrate why crossing between parked vehicles is dangerous.
- Discuss the visual ability of drivers to see walkers and ability of walkers to see drivers.
- Show the smaller zone of safety between walker and traffic versus sidewalk.
- Be aware that parked vehicles may start moving.

DRIVEWAYS

- Show how many driveways there are along the walking route.
- Discuss the low visual ability of the driver and walker.
- Point out where vehicles drive (both into and out of the driveway).
- Practice looking over your shoulder for vehicles.

SIDEWALKS

- Walk as far away from the street as possible and not along the curbside.
- Point out places where the edge is blurry or where vehicles may drive over the sidewalk.

NO SIDEWALK

- Walk as far to the inside as possible.
- Go around the inside of obstacles rather than the street side.
- Demonstrate the difference in view lines when walking towards traffic versus away from traffic.
- By seeing the vehicles, you can get out of the way if necessary.

ON QUIET STREETS OR INTERSECTIONS

- How to get something safely that was accidentally dropped in the street.
- Getting a ball in the street.
- Walking without a sidewalk along the side of the road.

DRIVER BEHAVIOR IN ALL PLACES

- Make sure to make eye contact and get acknowledgement that the driver saw you before crossing.
- "Let's see what this vehicle does now!" (with or without moving across the street)
- "Did they use their turn signal?"
  "Were they talking on the phone?"
  "Were they talking to a passenger?"
- Notice that vehicles might stop, and then decide to go before you can cross.
- What to do when drivers wave you across? (look for vehicles in other directions, vehicles passing the stopped vehicle, and whether the vehicles remain stopped)
- Sometimes vehicles will weave around stopped vehicles that are waiting for you to cross.
- Drivers may avoid stop signs, stoplights, or fail to slow down.
- Notice that drivers will only be looking one way and may not see you when coming from a one-way street.
- All stranger behavior. Don't go over to a vehicle to answer any questions. If a stranger asks you a question, walk or run away, ignore him/her, and/or tell an adult you know what happened.

PARENT PERMISSION SLIP

Sample Letter: Customize with school information in noted places

[DATE]

Dear [SCHOOL NAME] Families:

As part of the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program, our school is participating in Pedestrian Safety Training for students in the [GRADE LEVEL] grade on [DAY, DATE]. This training program is committed to preparing children to be safety smart wherever they are walking, including when they are accompanied by an adult.

The training will take place during one day of [CLASS TYPE OR NAME], outdoors on the streets near the school. We will be working in small groups — one adult for every two students for maximum safety and individual attention to children. Trained teachers and parent volunteers will lead the pedestrian safety training.

Please sign and date this permission slip at the bottom to indicate that you give your consent for your child to take part in this walking safety program.

If you have any questions, please call [SAFETY LIAISON NAME AND PHONE NUMBER/EMAIL].

Sincerely,

[PRINCIPAL NAME]

[SCHOOL NAME]

TEAR OFF HERE

I, (Parent/Guardian Name) _____ give my child

(Name) _____ permission to take part in Pedestrian Safety Training and be taken on a walk around [SCHOOL NAME] to learn walking safety tips and skills.

Parent/Guardian Name:

Print _____

Sign_____

Date _____

SAMPLE

PLEASE VOLUNTEER LETTER

Sample Letter: Customize with school information in noted places

[DATE]

Dear [SCHOOL NAME] Families:

We are looking for parent volunteers!

[SCHOOL NAME] is participating in the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. The SRTS program is committed to preparing children to be safety smart whether they are walking to school or in their own neighborhoods. [SCHOOL NAME] is now continuing the program for this year's [GRADE].

We are looking for parent volunteers to help lead the children on the short walks to teach them about walking safety, such as how to cross streets, follow signs and signals, and be alert to drivers at all times. We will train you during the event, just prior to the walks with the children. After that, you will be more than ready to lead two children at a time on a 20-30 minute safety learning experience.

One adult walks with only two students for maximum safety and individual attention to children. Experienced parents and teachers will lead the safety training.

Adults and children enjoy this event and it is important for the safety of our young walkers. If you are willing to help out, please call [SCHOOL LIASON] as soon as possible.

Walk in good health!

Sincerely,

[PRINCIPAL NAME]

[SCHOOL NAME]

SAMPLE

INFORMATIONAL LETTER TO VOLUNTEERS

Sample Letter: Customize with school information in noted places

[DATE]

Dear [FIRST NAME],

Thank you for volunteering to support Pedestrian Safety Training at the [SCHOOL NAME]! We are planning a full day of learning and are very pleased you are able to participate in this important event. Enclosed please find a copy of the day's Safety Training Schedule and the Pedestrian Safety Lessons that you will be using to train the children during the walks.

Pedestrian Safety Training will be conducted next [DAY, DATE, TIME AND PLACE]. We will begin at [TIME] by providing you and other volunteers with an orientation session. During that hour, we will review the skills and tips you will be teaching to students and give you time to practice and ask questions. By the end of our introduction, you will be more than prepared to lead groups of two children on short walks around the school block, showing them some basic, but key skills to safely navigating streets, vehicles, sidewalks, and traffic. Each walk should take about 30 minutes, and you may lead from three to five separate groups of children during the day.

We will take a break during the day to eat lunch, so feel free to bring lunch, or you will have a chance to order lunch from a local sandwich shop. Don't forget to wear comfortable shoes and to bring sun protection if we are rewarded with sunshine for our walks. We will walk in drizzle; if it is raining, please contact us that morning at [PHONE NUMBER] to find out if the training is cancelled. Please do not assume that clouds mean we won't be holding our event.

I would very much appreciate a confirmation of your attendance. Please let me know if you can make the training, or if something comes up at the last minute. Call [PHONE NUMBER] of [SCHOOL SAFETY TRAINING LIAISON NAME] with any questions or concerns.

Thanks again for your time and energy. Look forward to seeing you!

Best regards,

[SCHOOL SAFETY LIAISON]

SAMPLE

LETTER TO ALL PARENTS

Sample Letter: Customize with school information in noted places

[DATE]

Dear [SCHOOL NAME] Families:

Our [GRADE] students will be participating in Pedestrian Safety Training during the school day. This training is part of the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. Pedestrian Safety Training is designed to teach young children safety skills while walking – to school and everywhere – including when an adult accompanies them.

The training involves taking each student outdoors to streets near the school and showing them how to walk safely using real streets, sidewalks, and situations. We will be working in small groups — one adult for every two students for maximum safety and individual attention to children. Trained teachers and parent volunteers will lead Pedestrian Safety Training.

Safety isn't only learned at school; in fact much of what children learn about walking starts at home. You can play a very important role in teaching and modeling good walking safety, even if it involves a walk around the block or through your supermarket parking lot.

We believe that walking is a great lifetime habit – for health, the environment, for our community, and for fun. This effort is part of our school's Safe Routes to School program, in which we are encouraging our school families to walk to school as a great form of physical exercise, and to walk as a regular part of their everyday lives. Please watch for upcoming events and activities.

Sincerely,

[PRINCIPAL NAME]

[SCHOOL NAME]

SAMPLE

SAMPLE TRAINING SCHEDULE: FIVE VOLUNTEERS

School Name _____

Date _____

Time _____

Please bring comfortable walking shoes, a watch, and weather protection.

8:30- 9:30	Orientation and Volunteer Training: sign-in, organize lunch, and train the trainers by walking the route while reviewing the training lessons
9:30 – 11:00	Student Training
9:30 – 10:00	1st group walks (10-12 students with five adults)
10:00 - 10:30	2nd group walks (10-12 students with five adults)
10:30 – 11:00	3rd group walks (10-12 students with five adults)
11:00 – 11:45	Eat Lunch
11:45 – 2:15	Student Training
11:45 – 12:15	4th group walks (10-12 students with five adults)
12:15 – 12:45	5th group walks (10-12 students with five adults)
12:45 – 1:15	6th group walks (10-12 students with five adults)
1:15 – 1:45	7th group walks (10-12 students with five adults)
1:45 – 2:15	8th group walks (10-12 students with five adults)
2:15 – 2:30	Regroup and Evaluate

SAMPLE TRAINING SCHEDULE: TEN VOLUNTEERS

School Name _____

Date _____

Time _____

Please bring comfortable walking shoes, a watch, and weather protection.

8:30 - 9:30	Orientation and Volunteer Training: sign-in, organize lunch, and train the trainers by walking the route while reviewing the training lessons
9:30 - 11:30	Student Training
9:30 - 10:00	1st group walks (20-22 students with ten adults)
10:00 - 10:30	2nd group walks (20-22 students with ten adults)
10:30 - 11:00	3rd group walks (20-22 students with ten adults)
11:00 - 11:30	4th group walks (20-22 students with ten adults)
11:30 – 11:45	Regroup and Evaluate
11:45 – 12:15	Eat lunch together (optional)

ORGANIZING TOOLS & FORMS DURING THE EVENT

- Sign-in Sheet
- Lunch Order Form
- Pedestrian Safety Lessons
- Lesson Reminders for Walk Leaders
- Classroom Talking Points
- Evaluation Form
- Safety Tips for Children
- Safety Tips for Parents

SIGN-IN SHEET

School Name_____

Date_____

Activity _____

NAME	PHONE	EMAIL	RELATION TO SCHOOL

LUNCH ORDER FORM

School Name_____

Date_____

Activity _____

NAME	ORDER	PRICE

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY LESSONS

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

1) SAFE PLACES TO WALK AND CROSS

a) ASK THE CHILDREN , "Where is it safe to walk?"

Answer: On the sidewalk, as far away from the street as possible.

b) "Where is it safe to cross the road?"

Answer: Places where they can see in both directions, where there is a traffic signal or a crosswalk, or where there is a crossing guard.

c) "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.

d) "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.

e) "How can you be safe near a school bus?"

Answer: Wait a few steps from the curb for the school 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 school bus.

2) STOP

a) "Why should children stop before crossing?"

Answer: They need to wait, look, and listen to make sure a vehicle is not moving toward them. Explain to children that the word "vehicle" means anything moving in the street such as cars, trucks, and bicycles.

b) "Where should children stop and look?"

Answer: They should stop behind the curb. If a parked vehicle 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.

c) "If one driver stops to wave you across the road, but other cars continue to come toward 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

a) 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 this out.

b) Practice looking left, right, behind, and left again before starting to cross the street. Watch each child to make sure s/he actually looks.

c) Look into alleyways, driveways, and all places where a car/truck might drive.

d) 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

a) Ask children to close their eyes and point in the directions the vehicles are coming from. Remind them that listening, in addition to looking, is very helpful, but they might miss a newer, quieter vehicle, or be unable to hear over other loud noises, so they must always look before crossing.

5) PLANNING TO CROSS

a) 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

a) 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.

b) "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 vehicles, and then cross the street.

7) 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, 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:

- 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.
- Have the children walk alongside two parked cars and show how difficult it is to see or be seen.
- 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.

d) "Where should you walk in a parking lot? How can you tell if a car might move?"

Answer: Always walk with an adult. 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) "Have you 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. Discuss cars rolling through stop signs or not putting on turn signals, and that children have to watch out for themselves and not assume drivers will always be looking out for walkers.

f) 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.

LESSON REMINDERS FOR WALK LEADERS

LESSONS	NOTES
Knows Safe Places to Walk and Cross	
Walks • On sidewalk and not on edge • If no sidewalk, face traffic on left side of road	
Crosses • At signal, crosswalk, or intersection • Not mid-block, between, or behind cars or buses	
Sees and Can Be Seen • Blind spots for drivers (parked and moving) • Can find a place with good sight lines	
Estimates Time and Distance • Can judge if there is time to cross	
Stops • Stops at curb, not on the edge • Stays stopped until clear to go	
Looks • Looks into driveways, alleyways, and at parked cars • Points to directions cars come from and go to • Looks all ways three or more times, including over shoulder • Checks that ALL cars have stopped from both directions • Makes eye contact with drivers	
Listens • Listens for car or motor sounds • Can tell direction cars move with eyes closed	
Plans to Cross and Crosses • Can say when it is safe to cross (“Now it is safe”) • Keeps looking while crossing • Walks, not runs, straight across • Knows how to retrieve something dropped in the street (ball, book, mitten)	

CLASSROOM TALKING POINTS

TALK BEFORE THE WALK

For all students:

- Hello everyone. My name is ……and I'm from the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School program. We are here today to talk about walking and not only talk about it, but we are going to actually take a walk during your class.
- How many of you like to walk? Do some of you walk to school? Around your home? At the grocery store? There are lots of places where we walk everyday.

For students who have not been trained before:

- While we are walking, it is very important to know how to be safe. There are some rules we all need to know, and some rules we need to learn to make sure we don't get into a crash with a vehicle.
- I bet a lot of you already know a few ways to stay safe. What are some rules for walking outdoors?
- Why do we have these rules? They aren't just there because someone wanted them and they aren't there just for you or just for children: they are for everyone. They help to keep you safe.
- Today, as we take a walk, we'll be showing you some new safety skills. You are all getting bigger so it's time to learn about walking safety.

For students who have been trained before:

- How many of you remember your walk with us last year? We are going to go on a walk today and find out if you were listening last time and see if you can show us what you remember.
- What are some things you remember or that you've learned since then?

For all students:

- We have a group of walk leaders with us, and we are going to take you on a short walk around the school to review the safety lessons.
- First, you are going to pair up and each pair will go with one adult. We need you to listen carefully for your name and line up to go out with a leader at the door.
- There are two rules you need to follow:
  - » Stay with your walk leader

- » Listen to and follow all of your walk leader's directions

- If you can't follow these two simple rules, your walk leader will bring you back to your class immediately.
  - » Can everybody do that? Ok, let's get going!

TALK AFTER THE WALK

For all students:
Congratulations class! Our walk leaders said you were a wonderful bunch of walkers and listened very well! That is great. Thank you.

After students' first training:
What were some things you learned today? Where should you walk? Which ways do you need to look before crossing the street? What are some signs that a parked vehicle might move?

After students' second training:
We hear that your class remembered a lot and showed off what you knew about safety. Excellent. Now you are graduates of your school's Pedestrian Safety Training. Congratulations!

For everyone:
So after today, when we go out to walk with our parents, we are going to remember these lessons, right? And here is your homework: when you get home, pick one thing you learned and show your parent.

(Optional: Hand out rewards or prizes (i.e. reflectors, etc.) or give to teacher to hand out later).

EVALUATION FORM

Date _____

School Name _____

1) Please rank the orientation and training <u>you received</u> today (orientation and training).
(1=lowest, 5=highest) Circle one.

Low		Medium		High
1	2	3	4	5

2) Please rank the student Pedestrian Safety Training that you completed today (walks with children).
(1=lowest, 5=highest) Circle one.

Low		Medium		High
1	2	3	4	5

3) Did you feel the training adequately prepared you to lead children on safety walks?

Yes No Mostly

Comments _____

_____

4) What did you like most about the event?

_____

_____

4) What did you like least?

_____

_____

5) Did you feel the students learned new safety skills and behavior? Yes No Mostly

_____

_____

6) Do you think adequate time was spent on the safety walks? Yes No

(If no, explain) _____

7) What do you believe was the most important idea/skill children remembered or learned?

_____

_____

8) If you could change one thing about the entire event, what would it be? _____

_____

_____

Additional Comments: _____

_____

_____

SAFETY TIPS FOR CHILDREN

CHILDREN: WHEN YOU GO OUT FOR A WALK...

WALK on the SIDEWALK as far away from the street as possible - When there is no sidewalk, always walk facing traffic.

FIND a GOOD PLACE to CROSS

- Do not cross in the middle of the street.
- Cross at corners, at a crosswalk, or at an intersection with a traffic signal.
- Follow signs, traffic signals, and the walk/do-not-walk signs.
- Watch out for parked vehicles; don't walk out from between two parked vehicles.

STOP and WAIT at the CURB

When you walk, run, inline skate, skateboard, or ride a bicycle, stop at the curb or the edge of the street before you cross.

LOOK ALL WAYS ---TWICE!

Look left, look right, and look left again, turning your head to see over your shoulder before you step into the street to cross to the other side. Continue to look as you cross the street.

LISTEN!

Don't cross if you hear a siren, horn, or motor coming towards you. While listening is helpful, you may be unable to hear some newer, quieter cars or be unable to hear over other loud noises, so remember to always look when crossing.

WAIT for VEHICLES TO STOP!

Be aware that vehicles may not stop even if you are waiting at a crosswalk. If someone waves you across, check for other vehicles to stop before you walk. Wait until ALL vehicles have stopped.

DON'T WALK with a STRANGER

Only walk with someone who your parents say is okay to walk with. Don't talk or walk with strangers.

WEAR SAFE CLOTHES

When it's gray or dark outside, wear reflective or light colored clothing, a blinking light, or a reflector.

SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS

WALKING SAFETY TIPS TO PRACTICE AT HOME

Parents: Walking can be a healthy and enjoyable way to get exercise, move around your community, and get to school. You are the most important teacher for your children when it comes to staying safe while walking or doing any outdoor activity. Below are a few things you can teach your children – anytime, anywhere – on a walk to the store, the playground, the dog park, the train, and of course, to school.

Find SAFE PLACES to WALK and CROSS

- Walk on the sidewalk if there is one, as far from the street as possible. Walk facing into traffic if there is no sidewalk.
- Stop at the curb. Don't step into the road until you are ready to cross.
- Use intersections with traffic lights, pedestrian signals, or crosswalks whenever possible.
- Don't cross in the middle of the block.
- Find a place to cross where you can see and be seen by drivers.
- Never run into the street to catch a ball or chase a toy, a friend, or a pet.

LOOK and LISTEN

- Look left, look right, and look left again. Turn your head to see over your shoulder, before you step into the street to cross to the other side. Continue to look as you cross the street.
- Look into all alleyways, driveways, and around bushes/other things that block your sight.
- Listen for the sound of vehicle motors, vehicle doors, sirens, and horns before you step into the street.
- If you hear a motor running in a parked vehicle, don't walk behind it.

SEE vehicles and BE SEEN by drivers

- Step into the street only if you do not see any moving vehicles. Wait for vehicles to stop. Vehicles may not stop for you even if you are on a crosswalk or the pedestrian "walk" light is on.
- Try to make eye contact with the driver before crossing in front of the vehicle.
- Be careful around parked vehicles – you are probably hidden from sight. Stop, look left, look right, and look left again before stepping out from between parked vehicles.
- When walking early in the morning, in the evening, or at night, wear light reflectors, light colored clothing, or a flashing light.

Don't WALK or TALK with STRANGERS

- Ignore someone you don't know who tries to talk with you. If they continue, cross safely to the other side of the road, run away, find a safe public place, and tell an adult you know.

ORGANIZING TOOLS & FORMS AFTER THE EVENT

- Student Worksheet
- Expanding to Other Grades

STUDENT WORKSHEET

Name_____ Date_____

1. When walking outside, it is best to walk on the _____.

2. If you need to cross the street, where are some good places to cross?

_____

_____

_____.

3. What do you need to do before crossing the street?

_____.

4. It is good to use your eyes to look for cars. What else should you use?

_____.

5. If you are at a crosswalk and one car stops and tells you to go, do you need to wait for all the cars to stop before you cross? Yes or No _____.

6. If it is rainy or foggy outside, what should you wear to make it easier for drivers to see you?

_____.

Student Worksheet Answer Key

1. Sidewalk
2. At a traffic signal, a stop sign, an intersection, a crosswalk, or with a crossing-guard
3. Stop on the curb, look left, right, left, and over your shoulder and listen for cars
4. Your ears to listen
5. Yes
6. Reflective or light colored clothing, a flashing light, and/or a safety vest

EXPANDING TO OTHER GRADES

Safety experts recommend teaching children at the second grade level because most children at this age are old enough to grasp the majority of the concepts, and it allows us to reach children at a young age before they begin to form bad habits or miss the lessons altogether. After participating in Pedestrian Safety Training, second graders learn key safety skills, but should continue to walk with an adult or older child rather than on their own.

Most children would benefit from lessons on walking safety. Below are some tips for how to carry out Pedestrian Safety Training for younger or older children.

Kindergarten – Too young to grasp most concepts, but are walking with adults.

- Very basic guidelines for NEVER going into the street without an adult
- Walking on the inside of the sidewalk
- Waiting until an adult tells you it is ok to cross or takes your hand

First Grade – Some walking experience, but limited awareness.

- Never cross the street without an adult
- Always wait on sidewalk, wait until all cars have stopped
- Use your eyes and ears to look and listen for cars
- Don't follow anyone else into the street

Third Grade – Varying levels of competency.

- Easy to upgrade lessons with more prompts and questions
- Ask them to demonstrate what they know more often, and congratulate or correct them
- Use "what if" scenarios

Fourth Grade – Too old to repeat the lessons, but they will benefit from using other topic areas and academics to draw on their past experiences.

- More able to think about distance, speed, and predict what could happen and why
- More experienced with driver behavior
- Show the risk of "knowing it all" and not staying on your toes
- Give examples of one thing that made them feel safe and one that made them feel unsafe
- One wish for making their walk to school safer

Fifth Grade – Best to appeal to them as role models for younger students. They are able to contribute to walk to school campaigns and safety improvements.

- More lessons and about why the school is encouraging children to walk
- Observe and report on what children face when they walk to school
- Gather information and discuss unsafe things they see on their way to school, then brainstorm ways to make the areas or intersections safer
- Help teach pedestrian safety lessons to younger children (go out with the adults during second grade trainings)
- Master leading young children and become safety officers
- Model good safety and use it during walking school buses

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