

# ***International Walk to School Day is Wednesday, October 9, 2013.***

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## **Did you know?**

- Walking one mile to and from school each day is two-thirds of the recommended sixty minutes of physical activity a day. Plus, children who walk to school have higher levels of physical activity throughout the day.
- Only a generation ago (1969), 50% of kids walked or biked to school.
- Today, only 15% of kids walk or bike and more than half are driven. The result?
- Kids today are less active, less independent and less healthy than past generations.
- Parents driving their kids to school put a lot more cars on the road - they account for 20% to 30% of rush hour traffic.

## **Tips for teaching pedestrian safety to children:**

Walking is a fun and healthy way to spend time with your children while teaching them skills that can serve them well throughout life. The walk to school is a great time to use these safety tips.

### **Be a walking role model**

Children learn through experience. Walking with parents or another caregiver is an important way for children to practice crossing real streets and picking safe places to walk. There is no magic age when children are old enough to walk without an adult. But, as a parent, you should decide when your child has the skills and experience to deal with traffic safely without you.

As you walk with your child, remember these safety tips:

- Wear bright-colored clothes, and carry flashlights or wear reflective gear if it's dark or hard to see.
- Look for traffic at every driveway and intersection.
- Be aware of drivers in parked cars that may be getting ready to move.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Cross the street safely:
  1. Stop at the curb or edge of the street.
  2. Look left, right, left and behind you and in front of you for traffic.
  3. Wait until no traffic is coming and begin crossing.
  4. Keep looking for traffic until you have finished crossing.
  5. Walk, don't run across the street.

### **Understand your child's limitations**

Children are not small adults. It will take time and practice for a child to develop the ability to deal with lots of traffic. Over time, children develop the ability to accurately judge the speed and distance of oncoming traffic. Young children may think that a car is able to stop, when in fact, it is not. Also, children may think that if they can see a driver, the driver can see them. But,

children are smaller and harder for drivers to see. Get down to a child's height to experience their perspective and see what they see.

### **Choose the safest route to school**

Select a walking route with less traffic and intersections.

- Pick places where there are sidewalks or paths separated separated from traffic.
- If there are no sidewalks or paths, walk as far from the motor vehicles as possible and, if possible, on the side of the street facing traffic.
- Limit the number of street crossings.
- When available, cross at a location with an adult school crossing guard.
- Avoid crossing busy or high-speed streets.

[Register your event.](#)