



Look both ways™...

When we cross the street with children, these words come from our mouths almost automatically. Protecting children—teaching them how to live a long life—is so natural; we barely have to think about it. In the same way, teaching the children of our community how to live healthfully should be just as natural to us. Safety and healthy living should go hand in hand.

But that's not always the case in [STATE].

When children are able to walk or bike to school, they have a chance to learn safe ways to stay active on a regular basis. Sidewalks and bike lanes are scarce in our community, which means we're missing the opportunity to demonstrate forming healthy habits that lead to a long life. In the face of a childhood obesity rate that has tripled since 1963 and a parallel decline in physical activity, it's time for something to be done.

Building safe routes to school in [STATE] could be one of the most effective ways to fix this:

- For children, the CDC recommends at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day,ⁱ and walking to school can help fulfill that goal.^{ii, iii}
- From 2000 to 2006, 30% of traffic-related deaths among children between ages 5 and 15 happened while walking or bicycling.^{iv} Safety concerns must be addressed before parents can feel comfortable allowing their children to walk or bike to school.
- Safe Routes to School education programs teach important walking and bicycling safety skills starting at a young age. These programs complement street-scale improvements, helping to prevent and reduce injuries that may occur while walking or bicycling.
- A recent study in New York City revealed that census tracts with Safe Routes to School interventions saw a 44% decline in school-aged pedestrian injury during school travel hours while locations without stayed the same.^v
- And in California, walking and bicycling increased anywhere from 20% to 200% among schools that received Safe Routes to School funding for infrastructure improvements.^{vi}

But safe routes to school aren't just for kids; they are for the whole community:

- If more children bike or walk to school, that means that parents are driving less, ultimately reducing traffic, road congestion and carbon emissions and improving air quality around schools.^{vii, viii, ix}
- Sidewalks and bike lanes would increase the overall walkability and safety of our neighborhoods, while promoting the further development of active and sustainable communities.^x
- Simply put, sidewalks and bike lanes make for a convenient, social and fun way for our entire community to stay physically active.^{xi}

It's time to make changes in [STATE] that help our children lead lives of safety AND health. We can do that through safe routes to school. Learn more and get involved today at [URL PLACEHOLDER].

Did you know? Federal funding for safe routes to school has already been given to [STATE], and it's up to our leaders to make sure it gets used for safe routes. Visit [URL PLACEHOLDER] today to tell our decision makers to build safe routes to school in [STATE]!

SOURCES

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- ⁱ “How much physical activity do children need?” *Physical Activity for Everyone*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 9 Nov. 2011. Web. <<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/children.html>>.
- ⁱⁱ Alexander LM, et al. The broader impact of walking to school among adolescents: seven day accelerometry based study. *BMJ* 331 (2005): 1061-1062.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Cooper AR, et al. Commuting to School: Are Children Who Walk More Physically Active? *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*. 25.4 (2003): 273-276.
- ^{iv} Borse N, et al. *CDC Childhood Injury Report: Patterns of Unintentional Injuries among 0-19 Year Olds in the United States, 2000-2006*. Report. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, December 2008. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/SafeChild/images/CDC-ChildhoodInjury.pdf>.
- ^v DiMaggio C and Guohua L. Effectiveness of a Safe Routes to School Program in Preventing School-Aged Pedestrian Injury. *Journal of Pediatrics* 131.2 (2013): 290-296.
- ^{vi} Orenstein M, Gutierrez N, Rice T, Cooper J, and Ragland D. *Safe Routes to School Safety and Mobility Analysis*. Report to the California Legislature. UC Berkeley Traffic Safety Center, April 2007. Available at: <http://repositories.cdlib.org/its/tsc/UCB-TSC-RR-2007-1>.
- ^{vii} Litman T. Can Smart Growth Policies Conserve Energy and Reduce Emissions? *Portland State University's Center for Real Estate Quarterly* 5.2 (2011): 21-30.
- ^{viii} Frank LD, Sallis JF, et al. Many Pathways from Land Use to Health. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 72.1 (2006): 75-87.
- ^{ix} *Travel and Environmental Implications of School Siting*. Report. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, October 2003. Available at: http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/school_travel.pdf.
- ^x “Safe Routes to School Technical Assistance Resource Center.” *Safe Routes to School*. California Active Communities. Web. <<http://www.caactivecommunities.org/our-projects/safe-routes-to-school/>>.
- ^{xi} “Safe Routes to School Technical Assistance Resource Center.” *Safe Routes to School*. California Active Communities. Web. <<http://www.caactivecommunities.org/our-projects/safe-routes-to-school/>>.