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INTRODUCTION

Did you walk or bike to school when you were a child? Thirty years ago, more than 66 percent of all children walked to school. Walking or biking to school gives children a sense of freedom and responsibility, allows them to enjoy the fresh air, and provides opportunities to get to know their neighborhood while arriving to school alert, refreshed, and ready to start their day. Yet, most American children are denied this experience; in fact, only 13 percent of American children walk or bike to school.

Recent research indicates that 20 to 25 percent of morning traffic is due to parents driving their children to school. As a result, traffic congestion has increased around schools, prompting even more parents to drive their children to school thinking they are keeping their children safe. However, the health consequences to our children and to the well-being of the community are extensive.

A successful *Walk (or Bike) to School* program integrates health, fitness, traffic relief, environmental awareness, and safety. It is an opportunity to work closely with your school, your community, and your local government to create a healthy lifestyle for children and a safer, cleaner environment for everyone.

THE TOOL KIT

This tool kit has been designed to assist you in initiating and implementing a *Walk (or Bike) to School* program. Many successful programs began with just one or two volunteers organizing a *Walk (or Bike) to School Day*. Other programs were created through community task forces organized by public officials to address traffic issues. There is no “right” way to get started – the important thing is just to start!

Your chance of creating a successful program will increase by customizing it to meet the needs of your community, and by following in the footsteps of other successful programs in the United States that have incorporated one or more of the following four approaches:

- The **ENCOURAGEMENT APPROACH** uses events and contests to entice students to try walking and biking.
- The **EDUCATION APPROACH** teaches students important safety skills and launches driver safety campaigns.
- The **ENGINEERING APPROACH** focuses on creating physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding the school, reducing speeds, and establishing safer crosswalks and pathways.

WALK TO SCHOOL EVALUATION

Directions: *Complete the following form as it relates to the Walk to School program in your neighborhood.*

Are you a *Walk to School* volunteer? YES NO

If yes, explain:

INFORMATION (Check all that apply)

1. How did you find out about the *Walk to School* program?

- ☐ Flyer/poster
- ☐ Letter
- ☐ Telephone call
- ☐ E-mail
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Neighborhood meeting
- ☐ Other

Comments or suggestions:

2. How would you describe the information you received about the *Walk to School* program?

- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Not useful
- ☐ Right amount
- ☐ Too much
- ☐ Not enough

Comments or suggestions:

3. How would you describe the neighborhood *Walk to School* meetings?

- ☐ Organized
- ☐ Disorganized
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Not useful

Comments or suggestions:

PROGRAM (Write the number that best corresponds to your response)

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Do not know
1	2	3	4	5

- _____ Adequate precautions were taken to ensure the children's safety as they walked.
- _____ I believe that my child/children are safe on the way to and from school.
- _____ I believe that my child/children have become more skilled pedestrians.
- _____ I am pleased with the volunteers who walk my child/children to and from school.
- _____ I think my child/children are getting more physical activity as a result of the *Walk to School* program.
- _____ My child/children enjoy walking to and from school with the group.
- _____ I believe that the program has helped my family get to know our neighbors better.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

4. Would you like the *Walk to School* program to continue next term? (circle one)

YES

NO (please explain)

5. What did you like about the *Walk to School* program this term?

6. What should be changed about the *Walk to School* program for the next term?

7. How would you rate the *Walk to School* program?

Excellent

Good

No opinion

Poor

8. Additional comments and suggestions:

Name and telephone number (optional): _____

Please return this form to:

Name: _____

Street, City, State, Zip: _____





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



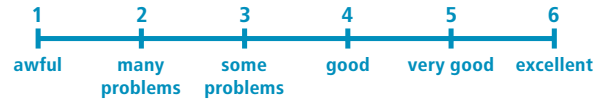
U.S. Department
of Transportation

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
- ☐ 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



WALK TO SCHOOL SURVEY

Parent Survey (to be completed by parent or guardian.)

1. **How many children do you have attending this school?** _____
2. **What are their ages?** _____, _____, _____, _____, _____
3. **In an average school week, how many days does your child/children use the following modes of transportation to get to and from school?** (Write the number of times your child/children travel to and from school; if different for each child, indicate the number of times and age of the child that travels each way (3x/8 year old, 2x/10yo).

TIMES PER WEEK

_____ Walk to school
 _____ Bicycle to school
 _____ Ride the school bus to school
 _____ Ride in a car to school
 _____ Ride in a carpool to school
 Other (explain) _____

TIMES PER WEEK

_____ Walk home from school
 _____ Bicycle home from school
 _____ Ride the school bus home from school
 _____ Ride in a car home from school
 _____ Ride in a carpool home from school
 Other (explain) _____

4. **What concerns do you have about your child/children walking to and from school?**
 (Please place the appropriate number in each box according to the following scale)

1 = Concerns me greatly
3 = Concerns me a little

2 = Concerns me somewhat
4 = Not a concern

_____ Crime (stranger danger, gangs, bullying)
 _____ Too much traffic in neighborhood
 _____ Too much traffic at school
 _____ Traffic speed
 _____ No or inadequate sidewalks/bikeways on the route to school
 _____ Distance from school
 _____ Not enough time
 _____ Child's/children's after school schedule
 _____ Convenience (it is easier to drop off child/children on the way to work)
 _____ Child/children would be walking/bicycling alone to school
 _____ Child/children do not want to walk or bicycle to school
 Other (please explain) _____

5. **If your child/children *do not* already walk or bicycle to school, what would make you more likely to allow them to?** (Check all that apply)

_____ Crime watch
 _____ Less traffic
 _____ Sidewalks/bikeways/crosswalks
 _____ Another child to walk/ride with your child/children
 _____ An adult to walk/ride with your child/children
 _____ None
 Other (explain) _____

6. If your child/children *do* already walk or bicycle to school, what changes would make you more comfortable as your child/children walk or bicycle? (Check all that apply)

☐ Crime watch

☐ Less traffic

☐ Sidewalks/bikeways/crosswalks

☐ Another child to walk/ride with your child/children

☐ An adult to walk/ride with your child/children

☐ None

Other (explain) _____

7. Do you have any comments or suggestions about how this neighborhood should implement a *Walk to School* program?

8. Would you allow your child/children to participate in a *Walk to School* program in our neighborhood? (Circle only one)

YES

NO

Unsure

9. Would you be interested in volunteering to help plan the *Walk to School* program? (Circle only one)

YES

NO

Undecided

If yes, what days/times of the week would be convenient for you to meet to plan the *Walk to School* program?

10. Would you be interested in walking with a group of children one or more times per week?

YES

NO

Undecided

11. Would you be interested in having your home identified as a checkpoint for emergencies that children might experience while walking to and from school?

YES

NO

Undecided

Optional (please print)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City, Zip Code: _____

Thank You for Completing this Survey!

COLORADO



OCTOBER 6-10, 2003

COLORADO

WALK



TO SCHOOL DAY

OCTOBER 8, 2003

COLORADO



WALKING WEDNESDAYS

Bikeability Checklist

How bikeable is your community?

Riding a bike is fun!

Bicycling is a great way to get around and to get your daily dose of physical activity. It's good for the environment, and it can save you money. No wonder many communities are encouraging people to ride their bikes more often!

Can you get to where you want to go by bike?

Some communities are more bikeable than others: how does yours rate? Read over the questions in this checklist and then take a ride in your community, perhaps to the local shops, to visit a friend, or even to work. See if you can get where you want to go by bicycle, even if you are just riding around the neighborhood to get some exercise.

At the end of your ride, answer each question and, based on your opinion, circle an overall rating for each question. You can also note any problems you encountered by checking the appropriate box(es). Be sure to make a careful note of any specific locations that need improvement.

Add up the numbers to see how you rated your ride. Then, turn to the pages that show you how to begin to improve those areas where you gave your community a low score.

Before you ride, make sure your bike is in good working order, put on a helmet, and be sure you can manage the ride or route you've chosen. Enjoy the ride!



National Highway Traffic
Safety Administration



Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center



U.S. Department
of Transportation

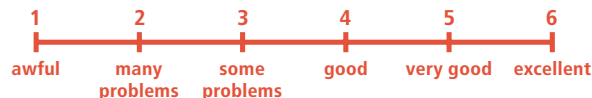
Go for a ride and use this checklist
to rate your neighborhood's bikeability.



How bikeable is your community?

Location of bike ride (be specific):

Rating Scale:



1. Did you have a place to bicycle safely?

a) On the road, sharing the road with motor vehicles?

- ☐ Yes ☐ Some problems (please note locations):
- ☐ No space for bicyclists to ride
 - ☐ Bicycle lane or paved shoulder disappeared
 - ☐ Heavy and/or fast-moving traffic
 - ☐ Too many trucks or buses
 - ☐ No space for bicyclists on bridges or in tunnels
 - ☐ Poorly lighted roadways
- Other problems: _____

b) On an off-road path or trail, where motor vehicles were not allowed?

- ☐ Yes ☐ Some problems:
- ☐ Path ended abruptly
 - ☐ Path didn't go where I wanted to go
 - ☐ Path intersected with roads that were difficult to cross
 - ☐ Path was crowded
 - ☐ Path was unsafe because of sharp turns or dangerous downhill
 - ☐ Path was uncomfortable because of too many hills
 - ☐ Path was poorly lighted
- Other problems: _____

Overall "Safe Place To Ride" Rating: (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. How was the surface that you rode on?

- ☐ Good ☐ Some problems, the road or path had:
- ☐ Potholes
 - ☐ Cracked or broken pavement
 - ☐ Debris (e.g. broken glass, sand, gravel, etc.)
 - ☐ Dangerous drain grates, utility covers, or metal plates
 - ☐ Uneven surface or gaps
 - ☐ Slippery surfaces when wet (e.g. bridge decks, construction plates, road markings)
 - ☐ Bumpy or angled railroad tracks
 - ☐ Rumble strips
- Other problems: _____

Overall Surface Rating: (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. How were the intersections you rode through?

- ☐ Good ☐ Some problems:
- ☐ Had to wait too long to cross intersection
 - ☐ Couldn't see crossing traffic
 - ☐ Signal didn't give me enough time to cross the road
 - ☐ Signal didn't change for a bicycle
 - ☐ Unsure where or how to ride through intersection
- Other problems: _____

Overall Intersection Rating: (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

Continue the checklist on the next page...

4. Did drivers behave well?

- ☐ Yes ☐ Some problems, drivers:
- ☐ Drove too fast
 - ☐ Passed me too close
 - ☐ Did not signal
 - ☐ Harassed me
 - ☐ Cut me off
 - ☐ Ran red lights or stop sign
- Other problems: _____

Overall Driver Rating: (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

5. Was it easy for you to use your bike?

- ☐ Yes ☐ Some problems:
- ☐ No maps, signs, or road markings to help me find my way
 - ☐ No safe or secure place to leave my bicycle at my destination
 - ☐ No way to take my bicycle with me on the bus or train
 - ☐ Scary dogs
 - ☐ Hard to find a direct route I liked
 - ☐ Route was too hilly
- Other problems: _____

Overall Ease of Use Rating: (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

6. What did you do to make your ride safer?

Your behavior contributes to the bikeability of your community. Check all that apply:

- ☐ Wore a bicycle helmet
- ☐ Obeyed traffic signal and signs
- ☐ Rode in a straight line (didn't weave)
- ☐ Signaled my turns
- ☐ Rode with (not against) traffic
- ☐ Used lights, if riding at night
- ☐ Wore reflective and/or retroreflective materials and bright clothing
- ☐ Was courteous to other travelers (motorist, skaters, pedestrians, etc.)

7. Tell us a little about yourself.

In good weather months, about how many days a month do you ride your bike?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Occasionally (one or two)
- ☐ Frequently (5-10)
- ☐ Most (more than 15)
- ☐ Every day

Which of these phrases best describes you?

- ☐ An advanced, confident rider who is comfortable riding in most traffic situations
- ☐ An intermediate rider who is not really comfortable riding in most traffic situations
- ☐ A beginner rider who prefers to stick to the bike path or trail

How does your community rate? Add up your ratings and decide.

(Questions 6 and 7 do not contribute to your community's score)

1. _____	26-30	Celebrate! You live in a bicycle-friendly community.
2. _____	21-25	Your community is pretty good, but there's always room for improvement.
3. _____	16-20	Conditions for riding are okay, but not ideal. Plenty of opportunity for improvements.
4. _____	11-15	Conditions are poor and you deserve better than this! Call the mayor and the newspaper right away.
5. _____		
Total _____	5-10	Oh dear. Consider wearing body armor and Christmas tree lights before venturing out again.

Did you find something that needs to be changed?

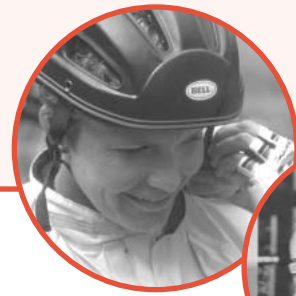
On the next page, you'll find suggestions for improving the bikeability of your community based on the problems you identified. Take a look at both the short- and long-term solutions and commit to seeing at least one of each through to the end. If you don't, then who will?

During your bike ride, how did you feel physically? Could you go as far or as fast as you wanted to? Were you short of breath, tired, or were your muscles sore? The next page also has some suggestions to improve the enjoyment of your ride.

Bicycling, whether for transportation or recreation, is a great way to get 30 minutes of physical activity into your day. Riding, just like any other activity, should be something you enjoy doing. The more you enjoy it, the more likely you'll stick with it. Choose routes that match your skill level and physical activities. If a route is too long or hilly, find a new one. Start slowly and work up to your potential.

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

Improving your community's score...



1. Did you have a place to bicycle safely?

a) On the road?

No space for bicyclists to ride (e.g. no bike lane or shoulder; narrow lanes)
Bicycle lane or paved shoulder disappeared
Heavy and/or fast-moving traffic
Too many trucks or buses
No space for bicyclists on bridges or in tunnels
Poorly lighted roadways

What you can do immediately

- pick another route for now
- tell local transportation engineers or public works department about specific problems; provide a copy of your checklist
- find a class to boost your confidence about riding in traffic

What you and your community can do with more time

- participate in local planning meetings
- encourage your community to adopt a plan to improve conditions, including a network of bike lanes on major roads
- ask your public works department to consider "Share the Road" signs at specific locations
- ask your state department of transportation to include paved shoulders on all their rural highways
- establish or join a local bicycle advocacy group

b) On an off-road path or trail?

Path ended abruptly
Path didn't go where I wanted to go
Path intersected with roads that were difficult to cross
Path was crowded
Path was unsafe because of sharp turns or dangerous downhill
Path was uncomfortable because of too many hills
Path was poorly lighted

- slow down and take care when using the path
- find an on-street route
- use the path at less crowded times
- tell the trail manager or agency about specific problems

- ask the trail manager or agency to improve directional and warning signs
- petition your local transportation agency to improve path/roadway crossings
- ask for more trails in your community
- establish or join a "Friends of the Trail" advocacy group

2. How was the surface you rode on?

Potholes
Cracked or broken pavement
Debris (e.g. broken glass, sand, gravel, etc.)
Dangerous drain grates, utility covers, or metal plates
Uneven surface or gaps
Slippery surfaces when wet (e.g. bridge decks, construction plates, road markings)
Bumpy or angled railroad tracks
Rumble strips

- report problems immediately to public works department or appropriate agency
- keep your eye on the road/path
- pick another route until the problem is fixed (and check to see that the problems are fixed)
- organize a community effort to clean up the path

- work with your public works and parks department to develop a pothole or hazard report card or online link to warn the agency of potential hazards
- ask your public works department to gradually replace all dangerous drainage grates with more bicycle-friendly designs, and improve railroad crossings so cyclists can cross them at 90 degrees
- petition your state DOT to adopt a bicycle-friendly rumble-strip policy

3. How were the intersections you rode through?

Had to wait too long to cross intersection
Couldn't see crossing traffic
Signal didn't give me enough time to cross the road
The signal didn't change for a bicycle
Unsure where or how to ride through intersection

- pick another route for now
- tell local transportation engineers or public works department about specific problems
- take a class to improve your riding confidence and skills

- ask the public works department to look at the timing of the specific traffic signals
- ask the public works department to install loop-detectors that detect bicyclists
- suggest improvements to sightlines that include cutting back vegetation; building out the path crossing; and moving parked cars that obstruct your view
- organize community-wide, on-bike training on how to safely ride through intersections

Improving your community's score...

(continued)

What you can do immediately

What you and your community can do with more time

4. Did drivers behave well?

Drivers:
Drove too fast
Passed me too close
Did not signal
Harassed me
Cut me off
Ran red lights or stop signs

- report unsafe drivers to the police
- set an example by riding responsibly; obey traffic laws; don't antagonize drivers
- always expect the unexpected
- work with your community to raise awareness to share the road

- ask the police department to enforce speed limits and safe driving
- encourage your department of motor vehicles to include "Share the Road" messages in driver tests and correspondence with drivers
- ask city planners and traffic engineers for traffic calming ideas
- encourage your community to use cameras to catch speeders and red light runners

5. Was it easy for you to use your bike?

No maps, signs, or road markings to help me find my way
No safe or secure place to leave my bicycle at my destination
No way to take my bicycle with me on the bus or train
Scary dogs
Hard to find a direct route I liked
Route was too hilly

- plan your route ahead of time
- find somewhere close by to lock your bike; never leave it unlocked
- report scary dogs to the animal control department
- learn to use all of your gears!

- ask your community to publish a local bike map
- ask your public works department to install bike parking racks at key destinations; work with them to identify locations
- petition your transit agency to install bike racks on all their buses
- plan your local route network to minimize the impact of steep hills
- establish or join a bicycle user group (BUG) at your workplace

6. What did you do to make your ride safer?

Wore a bicycle helmet
Obeyed traffic signals and signs
Rode in a straight line (didn't weave)
Signaled my turns
Rode with (not against) traffic
Used lights, if riding at night
Wore reflective materials and bright clothing
Was courteous to other travelers (motorists, skaters, pedestrians, etc.)

- go to your local bike shop and buy a helmet; get lights and reflectors if you are expecting to ride at night
- always follow the rules of the road and set a good example
- take a class to improve your riding skills and knowledge

- ask the police to enforce bicycle laws
- encourage your school or youth agencies to teach bicycle safety (on-bike)
- start or join a local bicycle club
- become a bicycle safety instructor



Need some guidance?
These resources might help...

Great Resources

STREET DESIGN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
444 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 249
Washington, DC 20001
Tel: (202) 624-5800
www.aashto.org

Institute of Transportation Engineers
1099 14th Street, NW, Suite 300 West
Washington, DC 20005-3438
Tel: (202) 289-0222
www.ite.org

Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP)
P.O. Box 23576
Washington, DC 20026
Tel: (202) 366-4071
www.apbp.org

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

Federal Highway Administration
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/index.htm

EDUCATION AND SAFETY

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20590
Tel: (202) 366-1739
www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/

League of American Bicyclists
1612 K Street NW, Suite 401
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: (202) 822-1333
www.bikeleague.org

National Bicycle Safety Network
www.cdc.gov/ncipc/bike/default.htm

National Safe Kids Campaign
1301 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004
Tel: (202) 662-0600
www.safekids.org

PATHS AND TRAILS

Rails to Trails Conservancy
1100 17th Street SW, 10th Floor
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: (202) 331-9696
www.railtrails.org

National Park Service
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
1849 C Street, NW, MS-3622
Washington, DC 20240
www.nrc.nps.gov/rtca/rtca-ofh.htm

HEALTH

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity
4770 Buford Highway, NE
Atlanta, GA 30341-3724
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa
Tel: (770) 488-5692

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
Childhood Injury Prevention
4770 Buford Highway, NE
Atlanta, GA 30341
www.cdc.gov/ncipc

ADVOCACY AND USER GROUPS

Thunderhead Alliance
1612 K Street, NW, Suite 401
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: (202) 822-1333
www.thunderheadalliance.org

League of American Bicyclists
1612 K Street, NW, Suite 401
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: (202) 822-1333
www.bikeleague.org

National Center for Bicycling and Walking
1506 21st Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: (202) 463-6622
www.bikewalk.org

Surface Transportation Policy Project
1100 17th Street, NW, 10th Floor
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: (202) 466-2636
www.transact.org

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

Bikes and transit: www.bikemap.com

Bicycle information: www.bicyclinginfo.org

Bicycle-related research:
www.tfhr.gov/safety/pedbike/pedbike.htm

Bicycling Magazine: www.bicycling.com/

Bicycle touring:
Adventure Cycling Association
P.O. Box 8308
Missoula, MT 59807
(800) 755-2453
(406) 721-8754
www.adv-cycling.org

GET YOUR MESSAGES OUT

The greatest message in the world is useless if no one sees or hears it.

GETTING YOUR MESSAGES OUT MEANS:

- Identifying the most effective, appealing ways to reach your audience
- Identifying ways to reach your audience that fit within your budget
- Identifying ways to reach your audience that work best for your message
- Considering the potential unintended effects your message may have on others besides your audience – who will receive it
- Working with the news media effectively

EXPLORE THE DISSEMINATION TOOLS AT YOUR DISPOSAL

This section addresses considerations for finding valuable, creative ways to get the word out and provides particular detail on working with the news media. Your goal should be maximum exposure for your message. To build awareness and motivate people to take action, you want your target audience to see, hear, or read your message repeatedly in a variety of different places over time. To decide what tools to use to get your messages out, you will apply what you learned in earlier research and consider several other factors. Ask yourself these questions.

❖ **What are the most effective, appealing vehicles that reach the audience?** Think about what you know about your audience members. Consider the places they frequent, their daily activities, and their media consumption. A list of potential outreach options should include a wide variety of communication vehicles. For example:

- Print materials (fact sheet, brochure, newsletter)
- Information posted on the internet (a web site of your own, information on the city or town site)
- A slide presentation for use at group meetings
- A speech by a local leader

- Posters (placed in settings relevant to your audience such as parks, schools bus shelters, doctors' offices, factory lunchrooms, grocery stores, libraries, senior centers, gyms, etc.)
 - An ad in a newspaper or magazine, or commercial on the radio or TV
 - An article, column, or guest editorial in a newspaper or magazine
 - Banners at shopping malls or sporting events
 - Collateral materials such as t-shirts, baseball caps, water bottles, refrigerator magnets, buttons, post-its, or key chains
 - A staffed table at a health fair, new hospital opening, or farmer's market
- ❖ **What can you afford?** Some communication vehicles, such as professionally produced television and radio advertising, can be expensive. Others, such as writing opinion pieces or making a slide show, require more work on your part than direct expense. The rule of thumb is to use a variety of means for reaching your audiences.
- ❖ **What communication vehicles work best for your message?** Not all message opportunities are created equal. Some simply work better for given audiences than others. For example, if your message to active adults is "a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity every day," you might focus on the local gym rather than senior centers. But, if your message is "invite a friend to walk to school on *Walk to School Day* and every Wednesday thereafter," perhaps the local senior center is just the place to recruit adult volunteers to accompany the children.
- ❖ **What unintended effects could your message have - particularly for non-target audience members?** Unintended effects can be positive, such as bringing people you never expected to your event, or negative such as offending or stigmatizing a group of non-audience members. The best defense against negative unintended effects is a careful research process that includes testing messages and materials with diverse individuals, and careful thought.

The table on the following pages describes common message dissemination channels. It includes a variety of options and wide range of costs. Use these starting points for your own brainstorming about message dissemination strategies.

COMMON WAYS TO DISSEMINATE MESSAGES

TYPE	PROS	CONS
PAID MEDIA		
Television spot – Usually 15-, 30-, or 60-seconds long. Most run 30 seconds.	Reaches a broad audience Audio and visual impact	Expensive to produce Expensive to air Short amount of time in which to deliver message
Radio spot – Paid radio spots are typically 60 seconds.	Expensive, but cheaper than television Narrower target Can be produced quickly Typically longer than television spots	Audio impact only Narrow reach
Print ads – Ads in newspapers, magazines and other publications	Reach very specific audience, often including opinion leaders Short lead time, immediate impact	Very short life span (for dailies) Often misses younger and lower socio-economic people
Outdoor – Includes billboards and other outdoor signage in places such as stores, busses, trains, or benches.	Can reinforce messages also placed elsewhere Can repeatedly expose commuters to message Transit space can be inexpensive compared to other forms of media Possibly high exposure	Limited message space Weather/graffiti damage Very difficult to target narrowly
MEDIA COVERAGE		
Placing stories in print or broadcast media	Does not require out-of-pocket costs like buying print space or air time Can achieve good reach Credibility with readers/viewers Can be particularly helpful for reaching policy and decision makers, who are often attuned to news media	Limits on the extent to which you can control the message, as you will not be writing the story Feature placement requires contacts and may take more time
Obtaining free print space or air time for public service announcements (PSAs)	Less expensive than buying ads or air time Can provide copy (instead of pre-made ads) for radio announcers to read – less expensive than producing spots Print PSAs can be inexpensive to produce	PSAs can be expensive to produce (especially television and radio) and distribute No control over if and when your message will air, and thus over how well it will reach your target audience

COMMON WAYS TO DISSEMINATE MESSAGES continued		
TYPE	PROS	CONS
POINTS OF INTERACTION		
Placing a message near where people will be deciding whether to be active, vote for a policy change, etc.	Exposes audiences when they are well positioned to act on your advice	Limited space for a message Sometimes difficult to gain access to the point of interaction
MOVIE TRAILER / SLIDES		
Movie Trailer / Slides – Video and/or still photos shown before movie begins	Targets heavy movie goers (including hard-to-reach teens) Advertising trailers can have high impact (audio and visual on a large screen)	Production and placement of trailers can be expensive Slides before movies may not reach large audience Somewhat inefficient: few theaters allow targeting to specific kinds of movies Some film distributors do not allow ad trailers
PRINT MATERIALS		
Informational brochures, posters, newsletters, paycheck stuffers, and flyers	Can be inexpensive to produce Longer life Some types support detailed messages	Not an “interruption” medium, so recipients must want to be reached Needs to be disseminated Duplicates may be provided to the same individuals
ONLINE VEHICLES		
Web sites – Many programs build sites; some sites are aimed at specific audiences	Can be relatively inexpensive Information always available to those who seek it Can be updated quickly Unlimited message area Can promote your issue/message through partners’ websites	Must use promotional efforts to drive traffic to site Maintenance and monitoring required May limit audience or miss certain demographic or socioeconomic groups
Web Banners – Click-through banners can link commercial and partner web sites to the program.	Broadens exposure on new media Can range from inexpensive to expensive to produce	“Click-through” rates typically low Small message space May limit audience or miss certain demographic or socioeconomic groups

COMMON WAYS TO DISSEMINATE MESSAGES continued		
TYPE	PROS	CONS
SPONSORSHIPS		
Payments to be promoted as a sponsor of a concert, sports contest, or other event. Goal is to win exposure while associating the campaign with something popular, credible, exciting, or in some other way viewed positively.	Typically turn-key promotional opportunities (You can just pay money and the event staff will handle the rest) Associates program's "brand" with well-liked celebrities, brands, or events Many want nonprofits to be associated with their event and may provide free benefits	Can be expensive Association could be seen negatively by some audiences Limited reach versus mass media
COLLATERAL MATERIALS		
Programs may create all sorts of other promotional materials, such as t-shirts, key chains, or refrigerator magnets.	Can provide continued – albeit limited – exposure to target audience Provides benefit for people involved in activities	Need to distribute High cost for limited exposure

Table adapted from: *Buckle Up America Online Strategy Booklet* @ http://www.buckleupamerica.org/strategy/social_marketing/index and *Making Health Communication Programs Work: A Planner's Guide*. Available online at <http://oc.nci.nih.gov/services/HCPW/HOME.HTM>

EARNED MEDIA - TELEVISION, PRINT, AND RADIO STORIES

Many news stories are broadcast or written because someone close to the story alerts the media and persuades a producer or reporter that the information is valuable to his or her viewers, listeners, or readers. In order to be ready and able to enlist the media's help, you must understand how the media works, and be prepared and willing to reach out to people who work in media.

UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA AND BEING PREPARED

The prospect of working with media can be daunting. Program planners are sometimes wary of working with the media because they worry that journalists can be antagonistic. Indeed, the journalist's role as devil's advocate is what we most often see on televised press conferences and news shows. But journalists also have a keen sense of responsibility to their communities and the issues they cover. They are acutely aware of the reach of the media, and they take this seriously. There is nothing naive or unprofessional about asking for the help of a local reporter in letting the community know about opportunities to be more active and the good work that you and your program are doing.

In many cases, your media outreach will include these steps:

1. Prepare a media list.
2. Identify a news hook that will appeal to reporters, such as a *Walk to School Day*.
3. Send background information with your news, including your contact information (such as a media kit; see below for more information on kits). Be sure to include photographs, graphics, and relevant artwork that could supplement your story.
4. Follow up with each reporter or producer by telephone. Be sure you know exactly what you want to say beforehand, keeping in mind that reporters are busy and very often on tight deadlines. Know what you are asking the reporter to do: cover an event, take a photo, interview spokespeople, focus on the political aspects of an issue, write about program needs (volunteers, donations)?
5. Focus on your key messages once you have a reporter's interest (e.g., encouraging families to participate in *Walk to School Day*, *Colorado Walking Wednesdays*, letting kids know just how much fun it can be to get active, or listing the physical, social, and psychological benefits of physical activity and the civic benefits of an active community).
6. Offering additional relevant information, such as public health statistics, facts about the decline of school-based physical education programs, or unique human-interest stories about families that now walk to school.

To get started, research some fundamental information before you try to enlist the media or place a story. At a minimum:

- Research the television, radio, and print outlets that reach your target audience. This may require some exploration with the outlets themselves to learn who their viewers, listeners, and readers are. You may have an instinctive sense of some of these facts (e.g., the local AM 24-hour news radio stations probably have good reach with commuters). There are other details you will likely need to learn depending upon your audience, e.g., what are the most popular radio stations and listening times for parents in your community.
- Identify which reporters cover issues relevant to your story, i.e., sports, education, health, community events.
- Maintain a list of current contacts and individuals in the media with whom you would like to work, including fax/phone/email addresses and notes about their main interests and preferred ways that you contact them. Find out their deadlines. Good relationships with those in the media will serve you well over time.

- To begin to develop your media list, check your local library for copies of *Bacon's Publicity Checker* and the *Editor and Publisher Yearbook*, both of which list media outlets across the country. The following table has ideas on who your media contacts may be – and whom your media list should include.

IDEAS FOR POTENTIAL MEDIA CONTACTS

IDEAS FOR MEDIA OUTLETS TO CONTACT...	CONTACTS AT EACH OUTLET MAY INCLUDE...
PRINT MEDIA	
<p>Newspapers (dailies, weeklies, monthlies, college/university papers and any small community newspapers, such as shoppers; circulars, real estate ads, commuter papers, or papers targeted to specific audiences such as women, specific ethnic groups, or older people)</p> <p>City and regional magazines</p> <p>Local trade and business publications, including newsletters</p>	<p>General editor, for smaller papers or weeklies</p> <p>Editors of regional community-oriented sections (usually larger newspapers)</p> <p>Assignment or lifestyle editors</p> <p>News and metro/community reporters who may cover education, environmental, or policy news</p> <p>Health and consumer reporters who may cover hard news (new statistics on health risks) as well as feature stories</p> <p>Newspaper and magazine calendar editors who list community-based events</p> <p>Columnists who cover local events or consumer and health-related issues</p>
RADIO MEDIA	
<p>Local radio stations (including news, talk shows, call-in and local community affairs/public affairs programs)</p> <p>University radio stations</p>	<p>Assignment editors or news directors</p> <p>Producers of education, health, community, and public affairs shows</p> <p>Note: <i>Call the local radio and TV stations to find out which of their programs are best suited for your story.</i></p>
TELEVISION MEDIA	
<p>Local television stations (including news, talk shows, call-in, and local community affairs/public affairs programs)</p> <p>University television stations</p> <p>Local cable television stations</p> <p>Public broadcasting stations (which may have relevant education, health or policy programming)</p> <p>State or local bureaus of national television networks</p>	<p>Assignment editors</p> <p>Producers of education, health, community, and public affairs shows</p> <p>On-air talent with a particular interest in education, health, physical activity, or community events</p>

UNDERSTAND THE MEDIA'S GOALS AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The key to successful media relations over time is often based on establishing productive relationships with media professionals. Here are some hints for doing that.

- Be conscious of reporter's deadlines. Give reporters advance notice of events. Deliver any requested information quickly, and well before their deadlines. Place calls early in the day. By late afternoon, many writers and broadcasters are working against that day's looming deadlines and won't be as receptive to your call.
- When possible, meet reporters, editors, and producers face-to-face.
- Be prepared for meetings and conversations. Bring written materials that support your messages to leave as background information. Be clear in your own mind your program's main messages so that you can be clear in conversations.
- Select an appropriate media spokesperson (i.e., one who knows the topic well, displays genuine enthusiasm and commitment, speaks well, and is a quick thinker).
- Send a thank-you note to your media contacts after a meeting and after they cover any of your program's activities.
- Besides covering a story, consider having members of the media take part in your event. For example, TV or radio stations sometimes co-sponsor events. Or, you could invite an on-air personality to participate.
- Make yourself available to the media as a contact for questions in the future about your area of expertise.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE "NEWS"

Before you contact any media, be careful to ensure that your story is, in fact, newsworthy. Creating and pitching one bland announcement after another to your local media can actually mean *less* coverage if your media contacts stop paying attention to your calls and materials. Work to consistently deliver newsworthy stories that meet criteria such as the following:

CRITERIA MEDIA WILL USE TO JUDGE THE STORIES YOU PITCH

WILL THE STORY...	ASK YOURSELF, "IS THE STORY..."
Appeal to the media outlet's audience?	Moving, important, or surprising to the media outlet's key audience?
Address issues that directly affect or are relevant to the community?	Local? Is there a problem, solution, or activity happening at the local level? Can you tie your story to national data using local statistics?
Stimulate debate?	Controversial? This increases the chance that it will be covered Are members of the community asking for significant changes in the way something is done? Is there opposition?
Generate high ratings or increase media audience?	About a hot issue? Driven by a celebrity or other influential person?
Include fresh angles that will sustain public interest?	New? Is there a new event or activity happening? Tied to new data or a report being released on the national level?
Distinguish the media outlet from its competitors?	Exclusive? Can you interest a media outlet by offering them the first crack at your story?

PREPARE WRITTEN MATERIALS – A MEDIA KIT

Before reaching out to the media, prepare materials that describe your program so reporters have a sense of what your program does and what its goals are. Your media kit will likely contain some standard materials about your program as well as materials that you tailor because of the particular media outlet or news hook you are focusing on. All materials should be a brief and easy to understand (no jargon or acronyms) as possible. Citations should be provided for all statistics so that reporters have the necessary source if they want to use the statistics in a story.

A media kit need not be packaged in a fancy way. In fact, many reporters say they like short and concise. However, if it does not stand out from the other materials the reporter receives, it might not get read. Let your imagination, creativity, and good taste guide decisions about packaging and the "look" of your kit. Certainly, though, use your program letterhead and/or logo for all materials and make sure your contact information is on each piece of the kit as the various materials may get separated as they are passed around the newsroom.

STANDARD MEDIA MATERIALS

- **Fact sheets**, which set the context for the issues you're dealing with and amplify them, especially in ways relevant to your community. For example, provide data on the positive impact that walking can have on children's performance in school, or the potential benefits of a few key changes within the community to improve conditions for walking. Think of these as background information to help a reporter give depth and breadth to your story.
- **Biosketches or organizational summaries**, which describe key people involved with your program and/or organizations that are offering services, facilities, or funding.
- **Visuals**, which add color, human interest, or depth to your information. These could be photos, graphs of statistics that describe the problem, a timeline showing your program's successes, posters, maps, or other visual materials that represent your program. Printing them in a camera-ready format and having electronic versions available make it easier and more likely the media outlet will use them.
- **Public service announcements**, if you are asking media outlets to place them for you, or copies of paid ads and collateral materials.

ADAPTABLE MEDIA MATERIALS

- **A pitch letter**, which is mailed along with the kit and highlights why your issues are pertinent to the media outlet's audience. The letter should be only about one page long and should spark interest by:
 - ❖ Showing the human side of an issue
 - ❖ Outlining the benefits of your program to the reporter's audience
 - ❖ Including facts and figures pertinent to your community
 - ❖ Mentioning some key message points about your program
 - ❖ Offering your spokesperson for interviews
- **A news release**, which announces something newsworthy. It gives the reporter the reason to pay attention to your materials *now*. A good release addresses the five Ws of any news story: who, what, where, when, and why (or how) in the opening or lead paragraph, since many people will not read any further.

- **A media advisory**, which serves as a brief invitation to members of the media for an event. The media advisory provides only who, what, when, where, and why. Unlike a press release, it does not provide a lot of supporting or background information.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE FORMAT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **CONTACT:** Name of Contact
(XXX) XXX-XXXX
Email address

ATTENTION GRABBING HEADLINE, CENTERED AND CAPITALIZED

Subtitle To Further Expand On Headline If Needed

ANYTOWN, STATE (Month Day, Year) – The **lead paragraph** should begin with the place or location where the news is being released. Following the location and date, explain who, what where, when. Your opening paragraph should be compelling enough to make the reader want to continue. Use 1 to 1 ½ inch margins and double or 1.5 line spacing for the entire release.

Your **second and third paragraphs** should support information in your lead paragraph. Here use quotes from experts and/or program spokespersons directly related to the information you’ve already provided.

The most important information should be at the top of your release and less important information further down. Remember that the more localized you can make your release, the greater chance it has of being used by newspapers.

The **last paragraph** of your release should be a “boilerplate” that describes your program in general and any partners/sponsors.

General rules to keep in mind: try to limit the length of your release to 2 to 2 ½ pages at most. One page is even better. Use short sentences and paragraphs. If your release is longer than one page, place the word “-more-” centered at the bottom of the first page. Always add three number signs “###” to signal the end of your release. As with all media materials, print your press release on your organization’s letterhead. Always proofread your release carefully.

###

SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

RULES OF THUMB

- The purpose of a media advisory is to convince members of the media to attend your event. Make sure the event title and description is compelling and newsworthy.
- Send your media advisory to your contacts a few days before the event (3-4 days prior works best – if your event is on a Monday or Tuesday, send out the advisory the previous Wednesday or Thursday).
- Never exceed one page – keep descriptions to a few short, important sentences.
- Make calls to your media contacts the day before your event to make sure they received the advisory. Ask if they plan to attend and offer more information as appropriate.

MEDIA ADVISORY – ON YOUR ORGANIZATION'S LETTERHEAD

Date XX, Year (When you are sending advisory)	CONTACT: Name of Contact (XXX) XXX-XXXX Email address
HEADLINE THAT ANNOUNCES EVENT (CENTERED, BOLD, AND ALL CAPS) <i>Short Sentence or Reason for Event</i> <i>(Directly under headline, centered, in italics)</i>	
WHAT: Describe your event/program and sponsoring organization	
WHERE: Provide event location, including address, city, and state.	
WHEN: Date and time of event (e.g., Wednesday, October 8, 2003 8:00 AM MST)	
WHO: Include names, titles, and organizational affiliation of speakers and key individuals attending the event.	
WHY: Explain why the event is happening and why it's important to members of the community; why should the media attend – why is it news?	
###	

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS AND INTERACTIONS WITH THE MEDIA

Keeping track of your results means that you can track what you've achieved and which reporters are particularly open to your message. It also allows you – to some extent – to measure the reach of your messages by calculating the reader/listener/viewership for the stories about your program. You can use such compilations as one tool among many to demonstrate the effectiveness of your program's outreach to those who ask. Tracking media interactions (past and ongoing) is important in another way. Doing so enables you to be highly organized in thanking reporters for covering past stories, noting specific reporters' interests, and following up effectively.

Two methods of tracking results include: (1) tracking the media "hits" your program achieved, and (2) establishing a system for keeping up with media outlets that have interacted with your program in any way.

In your compilation of "hits", include copies of print stories, and tapes or scripts/summaries of broadcast stories. You should also include copies of the press materials and pitch letters which generated the interest, to use as models for future activities. Track interactions by using tracking or call sheets such as the example shown below.

SAMPLE MEDIA TRACKING FORM

DATE	CONTACT NAME & TITLE	NAME OF ORGANIZATION & PROGRAM	TOPIC INTERESTED IN COVERING	RESULT	NEXT STEPS
4/05 Called 10 AM	Janet Willis Producer	WTSD TV "Community Talks"	Children Walking to School. Walk to School Day. Walking Wednesdays.	Interview set for 5/05 6 AM -Live broadcast	Send Background materials. Follow up call 4/20/05

OPINION PIECES AND PSAs

In addition to striving to earn coverage via stories in the press, you may be able to get placement for a letter to the editor, a guest editorial, or a public service announcement.

OPINION PIECES - LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND OP-ED PIECES

A letter to the editor should be in response to something else that appeared in the newspaper such as an article or editorial or even another letter. This means reading your local print media and looking for opportunities such as:

- Stories about school transportation/bussing issues
- Health stories about obesity, osteoporosis, increases in diabetes, or other issues that are a good fit with the arguments for increased physical activity and active living
- Budget or planning meetings where physical activity facilities might be a topic
- Stories covering youth and what the community can do to reduce crime, substance abuse, reckless driving, gangs, etc.
- Stories covering family life and offering suggestions for how parents can stay in touch with their kids
- Studies about the impact of increasing traffic congestion, accidents near schools, and/or pollution
- Timely issues such as holiday shopping or graduation gifts where you can put in a plug for gifts that encourage activity instead of sedentary behavior.

Sometimes you can *create* opportunities by tying in to other events. For example, the Colorado State Legislature has proclaimed October as *Colorado Pedestrian Month* and every Wednesday as *Walking Wednesday*. Schools throughout Colorado also participate in *International Walk to School Day* each October. In addition, the National Health Observances Calendar, available at www.healthfinder.gov/library/nho/nho.asp, lists a wide range of health-related observances, such as National Osteoporosis Prevention Month. You might be able to tie a letter to one or several of these commemorative weeks, depending upon the details of your campaign.

Keep it short and simple, and be sure to follow the paper's guidelines for submitting a letter to the editor. Make sure you mention your organization in the body of the text, where it is less likely to be edited out.

Op-eds (guest editorials) typically appear opposite the editorial page in the newspaper; some papers set aside days of the week or particular pages for materials written by readers (“My Turn” spaces, for example). An op-ed should relate to an issue of interest to the community, opening with a general statement and moving to more specifics. It should include a call to action or other definitive point of view – that’s why they are called *opinion* pieces. The length should be about 500-600 words. It should be signed, and a brief bio of the author should be included. The cover letter should provide your contact information and let the editor know you are available to provide more information.

Try your hand at writing a guest editorial that encourages those in your community to do their part to make it an activity-friendly one, i.e., creating a community where residents are comfortable walking and bicycling.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSAs)

PSAs are unpaid advertisements that promote the programs of government or nonprofit organizations serving the public interest. PSAs can be a powerful and economical way to reach audiences. For a message to qualify as a PSA, it must be: non-commercial in nature, brief (generally 15, 30, or 60 seconds), and on behalf of a nonprofit organization, charity, or other community group. We term PSAs “economical” because the airtime or print space they occupy is given gratis by a media outlet. However, developing PSAs can be expensive.

PSAs are more successfully placed when they:

- Have a strong public service appeal that will benefit most of the station’s or paper’s audience
- Are locally relevant to the station’s viewing area or paper’s circulation range. This can be achieved by tagging the ad with a local organization name, and/or phone number and web site.

To place your PSA, work directly with the public affairs directors at TV and radio stations. A sample letter to a public affairs director is included at the end of this section.

RADIO: Because radio stations are no longer required to use PSAs, competition is intense for the time they choose to donate. However, most media managers want to respond to their community’s concerns and are especially interested in communicating timely and relevant information on public health and the well-being of children. This is where you can play a critical role by meeting or talking to your local station managers to explain an upcoming event or, more generally, the impact of physical inactivity and the importance of disseminating information on active living.

In some cases, you may provide a pre-recorded ad. In many cases, radio stations are willing to do a less expensive “live read”, meaning you provide the text, and an on-air personality

reads it. In fact, some radio stations may prefer to use live-read announcer scripts for brand identity purposes. In addition, when announcers and disc jockeys read the PSA, the audience identifies the familiar voice and recognizes that the information is a public service message meant to benefit their community and listeners.

If your PSA is related to an event, make sure you reach out to the public affairs directors early. Plan ahead because media managers usually need 2-4 weeks to place a radio PSA into a broadcast rotation cycle. Encourage stations to air the PSAs at times when the highest numbers of people are likely to be tuning in: for radio, the morning or evening “drive time” (5:00 – 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.).

PRINT: Newspapers and magazines have a limited number of pages and publish on a certain schedule and frequency, so placing print PSAs can be challenging. As with radio, successful print placement depends on how well you market or pitch your issue locally. One way to do this is by using statistics or facts on physical activity in your community. For example, how many people in your community are affected by inactivity? How many face environmental barriers to active living?

If you hope to take advantage of such free advertising, it always helps to have your announcement ready for print, or “camera-ready”. That means that the paper or magazine can simply drop it into the layout without having to do additional work of typesetting or laying out the ad. Many organizations provide media with ads in different sizes, for example in one or two column-widths, so that the paper or magazine can use a size that best fits their available space. It’s always wise to check with the publication and produce your ad in their desired format.

You may want to start making calls to newspapers as early as 2 months in advance to pitch a print PSA. In general, call newspaper contacts 2-3 weeks before the date you’d like to see the PSA published. Again, make your calls a few weeks in advance of any event to encourage print placements to appear in the days leading up to the event.

TELEVISION: As with print and radio PSAs, you should work with the public service director to place public service announcements on local television stations. Local relevance and potential benefit to the stations' audiences is key to appealing to these gatekeepers and getting placement for your PSAs.

A little-known option for getting broadcast PSAs placed is to work through the state broadcaster association. These organizations offer Non-commercial Sustaining Announcement Programs (NCSA), in which you pay the broadcaster association a fee to guarantee that your PSA will run. In a large state, for about \$30,000 for a one-month program, the state's broadcaster association will guarantee that 70% of its member television and radio stations will each air the spot 15 times, with an equal split among prime time, daytime, and other time slots. This program is available only to government agencies or nonprofit groups. At the end of each month, the broadcaster association sends a performance report outlining when and where the ads ran. This is often an option when there isn't enough funding to run a paid campaign.

SAMPLE LETTER TO A PUBLIC SERVICE DIRECTOR

The sample media pitch letter on the following page can be tailored to sell your community as a place where physical activity and an active lifestyle are fully supported. Every community is unique, so use the sample below as a guide – promote your own community by describing new programs or infrastructure that promote physical activity and encourage active living. *(Be sure to personalize the letter and use your organization's letterhead.)*

RULES OF THUMB:

- A pitch letter to media is essentially a sales letter – its purpose is to interest a reporter or editor to cover an event or issue, conduct an interview, and write or produce a story.
- Identify the appropriate media contact (in this case, probably a lifestyle, health, education, or city/community reporter). For local or community newspapers, one reporter or editor may cover multiple beats – if you are not sure who the appropriate contact is, place a call to the media outlet's main number or assignment desk to find out.
- Begin your pitch letter with a strong opening paragraph to grab the reporter's interest – use statistics or compelling facts and be sure to include the who, what, where, when, and why in the first few paragraphs.

- Write in a manner that's direct and to the point while still friendly and creative. Keep the reporter and his/her audience in mind – why should he or she be interested?
- A pitch letter should be one page or shorter in length. Try to limit your letter to 400 words or less. End the letter by telling your contact you will follow up with a phone call in the next few days. Provide your phone number and email address.
- As you state in your letter, call your contact to follow up and determine interest. Be prepared to answer questions about your topic, and don't forget to offer additional information and materials (photos, fact sheets, etc.).

BOTTOM LINE

You know your audiences, what you want them to do, and what you need to say. Different media carry your messages to different audiences. Variety is important, as is repetition, so try to deliver your message frequently and through a number of different media and community channels.

SAMPLE LETTER TO PSA DIRECTOR – On Your Organization's Letterhead

Date

Media Contact's Name

Address

Dear Mr./Ms. _____:

In the **first paragraph**, grab the reader's attention by using an interesting fact or statistic about walking, physical activity, or active living, and tie it to local issues. For example, "Despite the clear health benefits of physical activity, two-thirds of American adults do not meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendation that adults engage in physical activity at least five days a week for 30 minutes or more. However, new science shows that accumulating 30 minutes of moderate activity per day – by engaging in everyday activities like walking, bicycling, gardening, or taking the stairs instead of the elevator – can yield dramatic health benefits throughout the lifespan. Yet there are obstacles to walking in our community."

Second and third paragraphs provide program event information. For example, "Through a new *Walk to School* campaign, [Name of your organization] and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation want to encourage families to engage in physical activity not just as a leisure-time endeavor, but as a routine, convenient part of everyday life."

Describe your community's program and benefits it offers; provide unique points and necessary details. If possible, describe a personal story or real life example of how the health of a family improved through walking their children to school.

Last paragraph describes the relevance to the media audience. [Name of program], your [readers, viewers, listeners] will be inspired to become more regularly active in their daily lives, therefore improving their overall health and quality of life. With your help, we can get the word out! I will follow this letter with a phone call in the next few days to discuss your interest and provide you with any further information or materials you may need.

Sincerely,
[Name, Title]

Enclosures

"Get Your Messages Out" adapted from *Promoting Active Living Communities*
by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE - On Your Organization's Letterhead**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****CONTACT:** YOUR NAME
ORGANIZATION
PHONE NUMBER
EMAIL**LOCAL SCHOOL CHILDREN, PARENTS AND
COMMUNITY LEADERS TO PARTICIPATE IN WALK
TO SCHOOL DAY ON OCTOBER 8, 2003**

(Name of school planning event or number of schools in your area who are planning events) in (City where the school is located) will be joining schools from around the country to celebrate Walk to School Day on October 8, 2003.

This is the seventh year this national event has been held. Last year, students, parents, and community leaders from all 50 U.S. states walked to school together that day. The idea is to walk to school together with a purpose — to promote health, safety, physical activity, and concern for the environment. Walkers from the U.S. will be joining many countries from around the world to celebrate the fourth International Walk to School Day.

Approximately (number of students who will be walking in event) students from (name of school(s) planning an event(s) will be walking to school that day along with parents, teachers, and community leaders such as (names and titles of community leaders who will be participating in your walk).

The event will begin at (the time that your event will begin) with kids, parents, and community leaders walking from (location where walkers meet). Other special activities associated with the walk include: (list special activities associated with your walk such as a school assembly following the walk, having the children photograph the walking conditions of their neighborhood with disposable cameras, having the kids carry home-made signs, etc.)

Community sponsors who donated items to enhance our event include: (name of community sponsor) who donated (item donated by community sponsor), and (name of community sponsor) who donated (item donated by community sponsor).

Information on Walk to School Day in the United States is available at www.walktoschool.org

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SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE - On Your Organization's Letterhead**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****CONTACT:** YOUR NAME
ORGANIZATION
PHONE NUMBER
EMAIL**COMMUNITY TO SPONSOR
WALK AND BIKE TO SCHOOL DAY
OCTOBER 8, 2003**

On Wednesday, October 8, 2003, (name of school) will be hosting *Walk and Bike to School Day*. (Name of school) has been participating in *International Walk to School Day* since (year).

Parents, children, community leaders (add names) are invited to walk and bike to school with their children on October 8. Neighbors and community members are invited to walk and bike as well.

(If you are hosting staging areas, walking school buses, or bike trains, publicize and explain them here).

Walk and Bike to School Day is being sponsored by (name of School and/or sponsors). The event is a popular program that is getting more children to walk and bike to school. It is an international movement that aims to make everyday walk and bike to school days. More children walking and bicycling means better health benefits for them and the environment, and reduced traffic congestion and pollution for everyone.

The programs work by getting teams at schools to organize walking school buses and bike trains that promote and facilitate walking and bicycling to school. The teams work together with local officials, parents, and school children to map routes to schools and make the routes safer through physical improvements such as painting crosswalks, removing debris from sidewalks, and having adults accompany groups of children on their journey to and from school. The program also includes bicycle and pedestrian safety education to teach children the skills they need to be safe in traffic.

Information on *Walk to School Day* in the United States is available at www.walktoschool.org

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SAMPLE STATEWIDE PRESS RELEASE - On your Organization's Letterhead**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****CONTACT:** YOUR NAME
ORGANIZATION
PHONE NUMBER
EMAIL**COLORADO PEDESTRIAN MONTH****OCTOBER 1-31, 2003****WALK TO SCHOOL DAY****WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2003**

Walking is fun and important to children's lives – and millions of people across the world plan to send that message to their communities and beyond when they participate in Walk to School Day on Wednesday, October, 8, 2003.

Colorado's goal is to engage children and adults in activity and in the process highlight the need for communities to make their streets safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. "Another purpose of the walk is to help reconnect children and adults with the simple joy of taking a walk together, a practice that can produce many valuable benefits," said Gay Page, Bicycle/Pedestrian Program Manager at the Colorado Department of Transportation.

This year, participants representing more than 2,000 schools in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico will join walkers in 28 other countries for the event. Beginning at the first hour of the first event, internet users may view the progress of the events as they happen by clicking on www.iwalktoschool.org. Walkers will post quotes and send electronic photos of their communities' events as they are completed.

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center at the University of North Carolina, through funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, created and is hosting world wide web sites for the day's events.

"October is Child Health Month and walking your child to school is a terrific way to obtain physical activity and discuss safety in your own neighborhood," said Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the CDC.

National statistics indicate that the percentage of overweight U.S. children and adults has more than doubled in the last 20 years, putting more Americans at risk for heart disease, diabetes and other serious health problems associated with obesity.

“Most parents think the safest way to get their children to school is to drive them up to the school door,” Page said. “Unfortunately, the ‘drive everywhere’ mentality has created more and more congestion at schools and is contributing to the sedentary lifestyles that are starting to have major health consequences for even our youngest children.”

The national Web site (www.walktoschool.org) includes resources such as health information, specifics on walk events, and a downloadable checklist to help determine how friendly a community is for walking. Events planned for this year’s Walk to School Day include:

Brighton, CO: Three schools have signed up, and organizers expect several hundred children and adults will participate. Students will meet at designated locations to walk to school with city leaders.

Mancos, CO: City leaders are planning to kick off a community Walking Wednesday program with Walk to School Day.

Morrison, CO: The PTA is leading the charge for the first year of their Walk to School program – expecting over 500 participants.

Also, organizers said the “walking school bus” has become a popular idea: A designated adult supervisor “picks up” each student, house by house, on foot. The group of students walks to school along a set route.

Last year, nearly 3 million children worldwide participated in the day. In some U.S. communities, information gained from neighborhood “walkability” assessments prompted cities to repair or build sidewalks, add crossing guards and make other improvements. In California, Walk to School initiatives contributed to the passage of legislation designating a portion of transportation funds specifically for the creation of safe routes to school for walkers and bicyclists.

“Walk to School Day is a wonderful opportunity to heighten awareness among families, educators and community leaders across the country about the importance of pedestrian safety and promoting a more pedestrian-friendly environment in communities nationwide,” said Dr. Jeffrey W. Runge, administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The day is a perfect opportunity for families to spend a little extra time with their children and show how walking can be used not only for getting to school but for other transportation as well, said Mary E. Peters, administrator of the Federal Highway Administration. “FHWA, in cooperation with states and localities, recognizes the need to provide facilities so that walking to

school and to other destinations can occur not only one day a year, but each and every day of the year,” she added.

In June 2002, the *International Walk to School Day* initiative won a Stockholm Partnerships Award for innovative solutions for sustainable development in metropolitan areas.

In 1997, the Partnership for a Walkable America established the event in the United States. Member agencies involved in this year’s event include the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, the National Safety Council, America Walks, Shape Up America!, the Institute of Transportation Engineers and the Governor’s Highway Safety Association

Information on *Walk to School Day* in the United States is available at www.walktoschool.org

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The materials on the following pages can be used to supplement your press releases. It is always advisable to give the press background information and ideas for sidebar articles, feature stories, graphics, photos, etc.

QUICK FACTS

KIDS NEED TO MOVE

Obesity rates among children have more than doubled in the past 20 years, according to the National Longitudinal Study of Youth. Even worse, rates of obesity are much higher among minority children than among white youth, suggesting a grave social inequity in the availability of safe, healthy recreational opportunities.

Add walking to the mix. Physical activity recommendations for children suggest that they need a variety of activities each day - some intense, some less so, some informal, some structured. Walking or cycling to and from school is an ideal way to get some of that activity at no extra cost to the child or family.

Walking to school is a missed opportunity. Roughly, 10 percent of children nationwide walk to school regularly. Even among those kids living within a mile of their school, only 25 percent are regular walkers.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

The Surgeon General of the United States recommends a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week for all Americans to help them live longer, healthier lives. One of the easiest ways to get that is a brisk one and a half to two-mile walk.

Just 30 minutes of activity a day is enough to reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease (the number one killer of both men and women in America), diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, clinical depression, and some forms of cancer. To put it simply, with a daily two-mile walk you'll feel better, look better, and be better!

Break it up! Your 30 minutes of activity can be accumulated with a 15-minute walk to school in the morning and a 15-minute walk home in the afternoon-and still provide the same health benefits, according to the Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health.

Walking works. Walking just one mile in 20 minutes will burn roughly the same number of calories as:

- Swimming the breaststroke for 9 minutes.
- Running a mile in 10 minutes.
- Bicycling for 16 minutes.
- Playing baseball for 25 minutes.

Be sociable. Nearly nine out ten parents who walk their children to school see it as an ideal way to meet new people, according to a survey in the United Kingdom. Many said that the school gate was a better place to meet new people than pubs, clubs, evening classes, or the supermarket.

SAFETY BY THE NUMBERS

Approximately 25,000 children are injured as pedestrians by motor vehicles each year.

Therefore, some of the best ways to increase the safety of a child's walk to school are to:

- Provide safe, well-maintained walkways separate from vehicles;
- Teach children to cross streets at marked crossings, and provide ample, well designed, accessible, and, when necessary, monitored crosswalks;
- Slow traffic in neighborhoods and near schools.

###

OVERWEIGHT IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

The Surgeon General's Call To Action To Prevent & Decrease Overweight & Obesity

THE PROBLEM OF OVERWEIGHT IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

- In 1999, 13 percent of children ages 6 to 11 years and 14 percent of adolescents ages 12 to 19 years in the United States were overweight. This prevalence has nearly tripled for adolescents in the past two decades.
- Risk factors for heart disease, such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure, occur with increased frequency in overweight children and adolescents compared to children with a healthy weight.
- Type 2 diabetes, previously considered an adult disease, has increased dramatically in children and adolescents. Overweight and obesity are closely linked to type 2 diabetes.
- Overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults. This increases to 80 percent if one or more parent is overweight or obese. Overweight or obese adults are at risk for a number of health problems including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and some forms of cancer.
- The most immediate consequence of overweight as perceived by the children themselves is social discrimination. This is associated with poor self-esteem and depression.

THE CAUSES OF OVERWEIGHT

- Overweight in children and adolescents is generally caused by lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating patterns, or a combination of the two, with genetics and lifestyle both playing important roles in determining a child's weight.
- Our society has become very sedentary. Television, computer, and video games contribute to children's inactive lifestyles.
- Forty-three percent of adolescents watch more than two hours of television each day.
- Children, especially girls, become less active as they move through adolescence.

DETERMINATION OF OVERWEIGHT IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

- Doctors and other health care professionals are the best people to determine whether your child or adolescent's weight is healthy, and they can help rule out rare medical problems as the cause of unhealthy weight.
- A Body Mass Index (BMI) can be calculated from measurements of height and weight. Health professionals often use a BMI "growth chart" to help them assess whether a child or adolescent is overweight.
- A physician will also consider your child or adolescent's age and growth patterns to determine whether his or her weight is healthy.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

- Let your child know he or she is loved and appreciated whatever his or her weight. An overweight child probably knows better than anyone else that he or she has a weight problem. Overweight children need support, acceptance, and encouragement from their parents.
- Focus on your child's health and positive qualities, not on your child's weight. Try not to make your child feel different if he or she is overweight, but focus on gradually changing your family's physical activity and eating habits.
- Be a good role model for your child. If your child sees you enjoying healthy foods and physical activity, he or she is more likely to do the same now and for the rest of his or her life.
- Realize that an appropriate goal for many overweight children is to maintain their current weight while growing normally in height.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- Be physically active. It is recommended that Americans accumulate at least 30 minutes (adults) or 60 minutes (children) of moderate physical activity on most days of the week. Even greater amounts of physical activity may be necessary for the prevention of weight gain, for weight loss, or for sustaining weight loss.
- Plan family activities that provide everyone with exercise and enjoyment.

- Provide a safe environment for your children and their friends to play actively; encourage swimming, biking, skating, ball sports, and other fun activities.
- Reduce the amount of time you and your family spend in sedentary activities, such as watching TV or playing video games. Limit TV time to less than two hours a day.

HEALTHY EATING SUGGESTIONS

- Follow the USDA Dietary Guidelines for healthy eating (www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines).
- Guide your family's choices rather than dictate foods to eat.
- Encourage your child to eat when hungry and to eat slowly.
- Eat meals together as a family as often as possible.
- Carefully cut down on the amount of fat and calories in your family's diet.
- Don't place your child on a restrictive diet.
- Avoid the use of food as a reward.
- Avoid withholding food as punishment.
- Children should be encouraged to drink water and to limit intake of beverages with added sugars, such as soft drinks, fruit juice drinks, and sports drinks.
- Plan for healthy snacks.
- Stock the refrigerator with fat-free or low-fat milk, fresh fruit, and vegetables instead of soft drinks or snacks that are high in fat, calories, or added sugars and low in essential nutrients.
- Aim to eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Discourage eating meals or snacks while watching TV.
- Eating a healthy breakfast is a good way to start the day and may be important in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

IF YOUR CHILD IS OVERWEIGHT

- Many overweight children who are still growing will not need to lose weight, but can reduce their rate of weight gain so that they can “grow into” their weight.
- Your child’s diet should be safe and nutritious. It should include all of the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) for vitamins, minerals, and protein and contain the foods from the major Food Guide Pyramid groups. Any weight-loss diet should be low in calories (energy) only, not in essential nutrients.
- Even with extremely overweight children, weight loss should be gradual.
- Crash diets and diet pills can compromise growth and are not recommended by health care professionals.
- Weight lost during a diet is frequently regained unless children are motivated to change their eating habits and activity levels for a lifetime.
- Weight control must be considered a lifelong effort.
- A physician should supervise any weight management program for children.

###

STATE OF COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Bicycle/Pedestrian Program
4201 East Arkansas Avenue DTD
Denver, Colorado 80222
303-757-9982
FAX 303-757-9727
bicycleinfo@dot.state.co.us



OCTOBER IS COLORADO PEDESTRIAN MONTH

31 SAFETY TIPS (ONE PER DAY)

The following safety tips are brought to you by the Bicycle/Pedestrian Program at the Colorado Department of Transportation. For complete information about the rules of the road and trails in Colorado, request the Colorado Bicycle Manual from bicycleinfo@dot.state.co.us or 303-757-9982.

1. Motor vehicle drivers have a responsibility to act in ways to make the roads safe for all users including pedestrians and bicyclists. Scanning for pedestrians and bicyclists should be a normal part of your driving routine, as is scanning for other cars and trucks.
2. By law, motorists and bicyclists are required to yield to pedestrians – even if the motorists and bicyclists have a green light. It is your responsibility to know and obey all traffic laws.
3. Motorists should always drive slowly in school zones or when children are playing near a roadway. Young children do not have well-developed peripheral vision, often have trouble determining the source of a sound, and can't judge the speed and distance of oncoming vehicles. They may hear a car coming, but look the wrong way. They typically lack a sense of danger and are easily influenced by peers. Many crashes happen when one child takes a risk and a second child follows and is hit by a vehicle.
4. Parents: Group children along school routes for better visibility and driver awareness. When larger numbers cross together, it makes motorists more aware of kids crossing, increases driver compliance with stopping for crosswalks, and helps justify the installation of more extensive crossing protection devices. Look for adequate shoulder or sidewalk areas to provide refuge.

5. Parents: Children are not small adults. They often act before thinking and may not do what parents or drivers expect. They assume that if they see the driver, the driver sees them. They are shorter than adults and can't see over cars, bushes, and other objects.
6. Before crossing a street, pedestrians should always
 - Stop at the curb, edge of the road, or corner before proceeding;
 - Look left-right-left, and over their shoulders for turning vehicles; and
 - Continue to check for traffic while crossing the street.
7. Make eye contact with drivers. Until you are sure, assume motorists do not see you. Expect the unexpected and watch for cars pulling out from driveways and at intersections. Don't take a walk signal, a green traffic light, or a driver for granted. Crossing safely is your responsibility.
8. Walk on the sidewalk or trail, not in the street. In areas where no sidewalk exists, walk facing traffic so that you can see cars coming. Keep as far away from traffic as possible. (Note: Bicycles are vehicles and by law, must always ride with the flow of traffic).
9. Wear bright-colored clothing, especially near dawn or dusk. If you're walking at night, you should wear reflective clothing and carry a flashlight. Reflective arm and leg bands and flashing LED lights attached to your clothing will help make you more visible to motorists. You need to be seen to be safe.
10. Always carry identification, medical information, and money for a phone call. Think ahead and be prepared. Having a windbreaker in your pack is a good idea because of Colorado's unpredictable weather – sunny in the morning and thunderstorms in the afternoon.
11. Crosswalks: Although crosswalks won't protect pedestrians from oncoming traffic, they do serve to guide pedestrians across the street. Cross only at corners or marked crosswalks. If there is a crosswalk button, press the button and wait for the walk sign to indicate that it is your turn to cross the street. Motorists are reminded to look out for and yield to pedestrians in the road when they see the bright, white lines of a crosswalk.

12. Right Turn On Red: At intersections where Right Turn On Red is permitted, motorists should always check for, and yield to pedestrians before turning.

Pedestrians should use extra caution and always look for turning vehicles before stepping off the curb. Pedestrians should not take “NO RIGHT TURN ON RED” signs for granted – they should always check for vehicles before stepping off the curb.

13. A pedestrian is any person on foot or any person using a wheelchair. A pedestrian struck by a car traveling at 40 mph has a 15 percent chance of survival. At 30 mph, there is a 55 percent chance of survival. At 20 mph, there is an 85 percent chance of survival. (Source: US Department of Transportation)

14. Pedestrians and bicyclists should always make eye contact with drivers. Until you are sure, assume motorists do not see you. Expect the unexpected and watch for cars pulling out from driveways and at intersections.

15. Walk; don't run, across the street. This gives drivers time to see you as you enter the roadway.

16. Choose the route with the fewest streets to cross.

17. Obey all traffic signs and signals.

18. Don't walk between parked cars to cross a street. Motorists can't see you because the cars block their view. You have to be seen to be safe.

19. Refuse to ride with strangers and never go for a walk with a stranger. Only walk with someone who your parents say is okay.

20. Be aware that cars may not stop even if the pedestrian has the right-of-way.

21. Step into the street only if you do not see cars moving toward you.

22. Listen for the sound of car motors, car doors, sirens, and horns before you step into the street.

23. Never run into the street to catch a ball or chase a toy, a friend, or a pet.
24. Don't cross in the middle of the street unless there is a crosswalk and signal or a crossing guard.
25. Use intersections with signals and pedestrian buttons whenever possible.
26. Use caution when walking near large vehicles by keeping in mind the fact that the driver has "blind spots" that make it impossible to see pedestrians.
27. Wait until the bus leaves the bus stop before trying to cross the street. Don't cross in front of, or behind a bus standing at a bus stop. As the bus moves away from the curb, the driver's attention will be directed at vehicle traffic, looking for a gap in traffic big enough for the bus. Stay on the sidewalk until the bus leaves the stop.
28. Back away from the edge of the street corner when a large vehicle approaches for a turn. The long distance between the front and rear wheels of the truck mean that the rear wheels may "off-track" and run across the pedestrian area at the curb. A skilled driver knows just how the wheels must track in order to make a safe turn, but pedestrians must still be alert and move away from the curb.
29. On shared-use paths, ride, skate, or walk with the flow of traffic as far to the right side of the trail as practical.
30. On shared-use paths, don't block the trail. Groups should be in single file when other trail users are present and should never use more than one-half of the trails to allow for the flow of traffic.
31. On shared-use paths you need to know who yields to whom.
 - Bicyclists, skaters, walkers, and others yield to equestrians.
 - Bicyclists and skaters yield to walkers.
 - Bicyclists yield to skaters.
 - Downhill users yield to uphill users.
 - Faster users yield to slower users.

✓ CHECKLIST ~ WALK (OR BIKE) TO SCHOOL

STEP 1: IDENTIFY INTEREST

1. Talk with parents and neighbors to identify who would like to participate in the *Walk to School* program.
2. Talk to teachers, principals, and other school officials about the program.
 - ☐ Does the school already have a program?
 - ☐ What are the school transportation rules?
3. Contact other potential partners:
 - ☐ Local health department
 - ☐ Police/fire departments
 - ☐ Transportation department
 - ☐ Recreation or fitness centers
 - ☐ Local businesses

STEP 2: INFORMATIONAL MEETING

1. Notify parents, neighbors, school officials, and community members about the meeting.
2. Discuss the following items at the meeting:
 - ☐ Recruiting volunteers and assigning tasks
 - ☐ Identifying and securing resources
 - ☐ *Walk to School Survey/Walkability Checklist*
3. Pick a time, date, and place for the *Walk to School* planning meeting.
4. Register your school on the Walk to School Day website: www.walktoschool.org

STEP 3: ASSESSMENT

1. Provide a *Walk to School Survey* to parents.
2. Obtain a map of the neighborhood.
3. Assess the safety and walkability of the neighborhood using the *Walkability* and *Bikeability Checklists*.
4. Examine the results of the survey and checklists.
 - ☐ Identify areas that are safe or dangerous.
 - ☐ Map the locations of families who want to participate.
 - ☐ Identify potential routes to the school.
 - ☐ Calculate the number of children who use each mode of transportation
 - ☐ Record the names, ages, telephone numbers, and addresses of children whose families want to participate.
 - ☐ Contact volunteers who want to contribute to the program.

STEP 4: PLANNING MEETING

1. Agenda action items should include:
 - ☐ Present results of survey and checklist.
 - ☐ Define program goals and objectives.
 - ☐ Develop an action plan with priorities and deadlines.
 - ☐ Assign tasks to volunteers.
 - ☐ Develop a timeline and organizational chart that includes tasks, deadlines, and persons responsible.
 - ☐ Send the chart to all participants.
2. Decide what safety precautions must be taken.
3. Organize adult leaders' schedules.
4. Send out parental consent forms.
5. Conduct a practice walk to school.

STEP 5: IMPLEMENTATION

1. Sponsor a kick-off event (refer to "WTS Day" section for more information).
2. Invite the media and/or local celebrities to be present at the kick-off (refer to "Media" section).

STEP 6: EVALUATION

1. Monitor the progress of the program.
 - ☐ Address concerns of participants.
 - ☐ Keep the school informed about participation, problems, and improvements to the program.
2. Reevaluate the program each term.
 - ☐ Informally ask kids and parents what they liked about the program and what can be improved.
 - ☐ Complete the *Walk to School Evaluation*.

STEP 7: FUTURE PLANNING

1. Keep your program going.
 - ☐ Plan for the next school term's program.
 - ☐ Restart the program every term.
2. Look for ways to expand the program
 - ☐ Promote the success of the program to other neighborhoods, schools, and communities.
 - ☐ Help people in other neighborhoods start their own programs.
3. Take steps to secure a walkable community.

☑ STEP 1: IDENTIFY INTEREST

TALK WITH PARENTS AND NEIGHBORS TO IDENTIFY WHO WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE *WALK (OR BIKE) TO SCHOOL* PROGRAM

- ❖ Share information about the program.
- ❖ Find out who is interested in working as part of a team to start a program.
- ❖ Highlight successful programs.
- ❖ Discuss the benefits of a *Walk to School* program:
 - Increased physical activity
 - Increased safety in the neighborhood (refer to *Walkability and Bikeability Checklists* in the “Tools” section)
 - Decreased traffic congestion and speed near schools
 - Increased knowledge of safe walking and biking behavior
 - Reduced air pollution
 - More community cohesiveness

TALK WITH TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND OTHER SCHOOL OFFICIALS ABOUT THE PROGRAM

- ❖ Contact the school principal to talk about the program and the parents’ interest in the program.
- ❖ Ask who at the school might be able to help plan the program (physical education teachers, health teachers, etc.).
- ❖ Ask the following questions:

Does the school already have a similar program?

If so, contact the organizers of that program to find out what they are doing and how they implemented it in their school, neighborhood, or community.

What are the school transportation rules?

Some schools:

- May require informed consent forms from parents or guardians stating that the school is not responsible for children until they are on school grounds.
- May require children to have signed permission slips before they leave the school with anyone other than their parents or legal guardian.
- Receive funding based on the number of children who ride the bus and therefore may be concerned about supporting a program that may reduce this funding.

CONTACT OTHER POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Partners could include: Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), health departments, police and/or fire departments, SAFE KIDS Coalitions, community traffic safety programs, faith-based organizations, civic clubs, recreation departments, community centers, senior centers, local businesses, local fitness councils, etc. (refer to Partners table on next page.)

Ways to recruit partners:

- Talk to friends, family members, and neighbors
- Write an article for the school newsletter
- Circulate flyers
- Make presentations to local PTAs, walking and biking clubs, senior groups, recreation centers, city councils, and others

Gaining support from community organizations will establish credibility for your program and can be essential for overcoming barriers that may develop.

- ❖ Schedule a meeting with or write a letter to potential partnering organizations that may have an interest in the program and may want to become involved in assessing, planning, implementing, evaluating, or expanding the program.
- ❖ Provide information about the program and explain the problems you would like to see addressed.
- ❖ Ask for support as you assess your neighborhood and plan to implement the program.

PARTNERS**WAYS TO HELP**

Parents, PTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize events, contests, and classroom activities • Publicize the program • Recruit volunteers
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate as Walking School Bus or Bike Train leaders (high school students)
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use classroom assignments to help gather information • Bring program information into the classroom • Remind students of the events • Act as positive role models
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that contests or events are compatible with school calendar and school policy • Set aside time for classroom lessons, assemblies, and bike rodeos
School officials, PTA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a meeting place (classroom) • Provide resources (copy machine and fax machine) • Assist with school publicity • Provide motivation
Neighbors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer for events and classroom activities • Act as crossing guards or Walking School Bus “drivers”
Local health departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good source of information and support • Help you develop your program • Possible source of funding
Police departments, fire departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas of loitering, high crime, unsafe traffic spots, etc. • Present safety workshops or seminars • Provide traffic and pedestrian information • Help control traffic • Set up crossing guards to and from school • Enforce traffic laws in your community
Local transportation department, traffic engineering division, department of public works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource for transportation statistics • Responsible for improving the safety features and walking/biking routes to and from schools • Possible source of funding
Businesses and community groups (Chambers of Commerce)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donate food and prizes • Help publicize the event or program • Assist with mapping process • Provide volunteers
Elected officials (city councils, board members, politicians)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support by participating in events • Make decisions on street improvements • Allocate local resources • Develop supportive policies or legislation
Recreation centers, YMCAs, local fitness councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide space for meetings or events • Recruit and provide volunteers • Provide information on physical activity

✓ STEP 2: INFORMATIONAL MEETING

HOLD A *WALK TO SCHOOL* INFORMATIONAL MEETING

1. Notify interested individuals about the planning meeting.

- Send a *Walk to School* introduction letter to parents, neighbors, and community members explaining the program and announcing the meeting. Include people who do not have children because the program will affect all neighborhood residents.
- Post flyers throughout the neighborhood (in libraries, grocery stores, recreation centers, etc.) Get children involved by asking them to design and distribute the flyers.
- E-mail or call individuals who expressed an interest in participating.
- Advertise in the school newsletter or community newspaper.
- If your neighborhood already has a formal neighborhood organization that meets regularly, this is a great way to introduce the *Walk to School* program, announce the meeting, and recruit volunteers.

2. Present *Walk to School* information to meeting attendees.

- Assign tasks that need to be completed during the assessment phase (Step 3).
- Write down the names of people who are willing to volunteer for each task and agree on a reasonable target date for completion (not everyone will volunteer, but assume that everyone would like to help – ask what skills they have or offer to teach them how to do a certain task). Some people may not be able to volunteer their time, but they may be interested in providing computers, copy machines, or names of other volunteers.

	VOLUNTEER	COMPLETION DATE
Distribute <i>Walk to School Survey</i>		
▪ Make copies of the survey	_____	_____
▪ Give to parents (mail, e-mail, in person)	_____	_____
Obtain a map of your community	_____	_____
Complete the <i>Walkability Checklist</i>		
▪ Plan neighborhood walkability assessment	_____	_____
▪ Participate in the assessment	_____	_____
▪ Work with a local public works department on the <i>Walkability Checklist</i>	_____	_____
Examine survey and checklist results		
▪ Plot routes to school on the map	_____	_____
▪ Develop a participant roster	_____	_____
▪ Contact volunteers	_____	_____
Prepare results for planning meeting	_____	_____

3. Pick a time, date, and place for the *Walk to School* planning meeting.

✓ STEP 3: ASSESSMENT

PROVIDE A *WALK TO SCHOOL SURVEY* TO PARENTS

Distribute the *Walk to School Survey* (refer to “Tools” section for sample survey) to everyone in the neighborhood. Mail or e-mail it, go door-to-door, and meet with neighbors in person to ask them questions on the survey, or hand it out at the informational meeting (Step 2). To get a sufficient response, specify a deadline for returning the surveys to the designated address (listed on the survey).

Results of the *Walk to School Survey* can be used to:

- ❖ Demonstrate a need for a *Walk or Bike to School* program.
- ❖ Gain information about how to structure your program to meet the needs of each child and family.
- ❖ Provide information about barriers to program participation, safety concerns, and the location of families.
- ❖ Compare with future survey results (ideally, the survey should be conducted again at the end of the school year to see how many people have changed the way they travel to school since the program began).

OBTAIN A MAP OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND SCHOOL AREA

It is best to work with your county or city planning, public works, or transportation offices to obtain a good community map. In addition to this map, look at maps from parks and recreation offices, local bicycle shops, and auto clubs – each one may tell you something different about your community. When contacting any of these offices, let them know your neighborhood is conducting a survey. Find out if they have staff, such as a pedestrian coordinator, who can help look at the walkability of your neighborhood.

TAKE A WALK AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND SCHOOL TO ASSESS SAFETY AND WALKABILITY

1. When you assess the walkability
 - a. Get together with other parents, neighbors, and children and use the *Walkability Checklist* (refer to “Tools” section) to evaluate the walking and bicycling routes from your neighborhood to the school. Walk with a stroller, wheelchair, skateboard, or wagon to help determine whether the path is accessible for parents with young children and persons who may use wheelchairs or walkers.

- b. Get young people and older adults to help with the checklist. They may see problems that others miss.
 - c. Invite the media along for your walk. Point out issues related to the safety of your neighborhood.
2. Once the *Walkability Checklist* has been completed, meet with the appropriate person at the local public works department to develop a game plan for making improvements.
 - a. Walk along the route and point out concerns you identified while completing the checklist.
 - b. Discuss the problems identified and any others that public works officials noticed.
 - c. Talk about how these problems can be fixed.
 - d. Secure a commitment or appropriate timelines for fixing problems.
 - e. Follow up this meeting with a letter identifying the problems discussed and any corrective actions that were agreed upon.

USE THE RESULTS OF THE *WALKABILITY CHECKLIST* AND *WALK TO SCHOOL SURVEY* TO PLAN YOUR PROGRAM

- ❖ Use color coded markings on the map to indicate
 - Homes of children who will be participating in the program
 - Safe street crossings, bus stops, bicycle paths, walkways
 - Dangerous areas (unsafe crossings, gang hangouts, drug dealing corridors, etc.)
- ❖ Identify potential safe and convenient routes to and from school on the map.
- ❖ Add the number of children who walk or ride a bicycle, school bus, public bus, car, or other vehicle to and from school.
- ❖ Develop a participant roster that contains names, ages, grade levels, telephone numbers, and addresses of children in the neighborhood. *The ages of the children will help determine the appropriate adult-to-child ratio.*
- ❖ Contact volunteers who have expressed an interest in helping with the program and ask how they would like to contribute (refer to “Partners” table in Step 1 for ideas on volunteer tasks). Ask them to attend the *Walk to School* planning meeting to learn more about what needs to be done and how they can help.

☑ STEP 4: PLANNING MEETING

HOLD A *WALK TO SCHOOL* PLANNING MEETING

At this meeting,

- ❖ Present results of the *Walkability Checklist* and *Walk to School Survey*.
- ❖ Define goals and objectives for your *Walk to School* program. Sample objectives:
 - Increase the number of children who walk or bike to and from school from 10 to 20.
 - Plant trees along the walking route.
 - Contact the public works department about fixing sidewalks, putting in streetlights, painting crosswalks, etc.
- ❖ Develop an action plan, with priorities and deadlines, for correcting walkability concerns. Use the results of the *Walkability Checklist* and the discussions with the public works department.
 - Do not try to address every problem at once.
 - Identify those issues that need immediate action and then prioritize the others. You may want to consider making small changes immediately, such as adding traffic signs, crossing guards, and pavement markings, and removing graffiti. Long-term changes, such as getting sidewalks, may require more effort, time, and money and should be prioritized as long-term goals.
 - Make sure deadlines are reasonable for volunteers.
- ❖ Assign tasks to volunteers. Write down the names of people willing to volunteer for each task and agree on a reasonable target date for completing the task.

	VOLUNTEER	DATE
○ Set up a committee for correcting walkability concerns identified in the survey or checklist.	_____	_____
○ Set up a committee to discuss safety precautions.	_____	_____
○ Organize adult leaders' schedule.	_____	_____
○ Organize a practice walk.	_____	_____
○ Plan a kick-off (Step 5).	_____	_____
○ Evaluate the program (Step 6).	_____	_____

Older adults in the community are ideal volunteers for the program. They are usually enthusiastic about participating in something that benefits the community and children, and are more likely to be home during the times that children would be walking to and from school.

- ❖ Send all participants a timeline and organizational chart that includes the tasks, who will complete them, and when they will be completed. Include contact information for all participants on the chart.

DECIDE WHAT SAFETY PRECAUTIONS MUST BE TAKEN

Use information from the transportation department, local police department, and local SAFE KIDS Coalition to consider safety precautions for your program. Consider these precautions:

- ❖ Decide on the number of adults needed to supervise the children walking to and from school.
 - A good ratio is one adult per six children.
 - With younger children (ages 4-6), you may want to keep the ratio of one adult per three children.
 - With older children (10 and older), you may want to have a larger ratio.
 - Each situation is different and depends on the children who participate.
 - A very large group may be divided into sections.
- ❖ You may want to ask parents to wear specific badges or tags identifying them as the adult leaders for that day's walk.
- ❖ Decide how long the group will wait for each child in the morning. Plan what to do if a child is late.
- ❖ Decide how long the group will wait for each child after school. Plan what to do if a child must stay after school or misses the group to walk home. Adult leaders should be advised to never let a child leave school with anyone else unless the parent has provided the leader with instructions to do so.
- ❖ Adult leaders should learn pedestrian safety rules so that they can demonstrate appropriate behavior to the children and be aware of possible dangers when walking. Organizations that may be able to provide pedestrian safety training are your local transportation, police or health departments, and/or SAFE KIDS Coalition.
- ❖ Adult leaders must remember that they are setting an example for the children and should model appropriate safety habits. For example, adult leaders should actually turn their heads from left to right to left instead of just moving their eyes back and forth as experienced walkers often do before crossing.
- ❖ Before the first day, you may want to remind neighborhood residents that the *Walk to School* program will begin soon.
 - Send them a map of the route the children will be walking to and from school.
 - Ask them to take extra caution as they drive during the morning and afternoon hours when children are walking.
- ❖ It may alleviate some concerns if adult leaders agree to undergo a voluntary background check. Contact your local law enforcement agency on background check rules and procedures.

ORGANIZE ADULT LEADERS' SCHEDULES

Use the information from the *Walk to School Survey* (refer to “Tools” section for sample survey) to find out which parents want to lead a walk to school. You may suggest that these volunteers meet separately to work out schedules and develop a calendar. The following questions should be discussed:

- ❖ Where should the children wait for pick-up (at the end of their driveway, in the lobby of their apartment building, at a specific bus stop, or at another location)?
- ❖ Where will the children meet at the end of the school day for the walk home (by the front doors, flagpole, bike rack, etc.)?
- ❖ Who will serve as a backup when an adult leader is unable to walk at the last minute, and how will these changes be communicated?
- ❖ What will you do in case of severe weather? Similar programs have continued to operate even if it is raining or snowing, but on days when the weather becomes potentially hazardous, you should reconsider walking. The group should be very specific about what they define as severe weather.
- ❖ How long will the group wait for a participant before continuing the walk?
- ❖ What is inappropriate behavior, and what are the consequences?

SEND OUT PARENTAL CONSENT FORMS

Check with the school to find out specific rules on parental consent policies. By signing the form, parents are simply giving permission for their child to participate in the *Walk to School* program.

CONDUCT A PRACTICE WALK TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Children, parents, and adult leaders should do a practice walk to and from school. You may decide to schedule the practice walk on a weekend or evening so all parents and children can participate. This practice walk will:

- Determine how long it takes to get to and from school
- Identify any problems that might occur
- Allow for problems to be corrected before the kick-off day
- Enable parents to show their children what behavior they expect during the walk
- Provide an opportunity for children, parents, and adult leaders to meet each other

☑ STEP 5: IMPLEMENTATION

SPONSOR A *WALK TO SCHOOL* KICK-OFF EVENT

A kick-off event is a great way to get people excited about the program. Some suggestions for the kick-off include:

- ❖ Inviting members of the community, such as local law enforcement officers or local celebrities, to participate in the event and walk to school with your group.
- ❖ Providing breakfast foods.
- ❖ Giving away educational materials, reflector badges, etc.
- ❖ Sending out a press release (refer to “Media” section for sample press releases).
- ❖ Inviting members of the media to be present at the kick-off to prepare a story on your program – this coverage may encourage others to begin programs in their neighborhoods.

Refer to *Walk to School Day* information in the “Introduction” section for other ideas on planning a kick-off event.

International *Walk your Child to School Day or Week* is a great time to kick off your program! For more information, visit www.walktoschool.org.

☑ STEP 6: EVALUATION

AT THE END OF EACH TERM, EVALUATE YOUR PROGRAM

- ❖ Ask students, teachers, parents, school administrators, and other individuals involved with *Walk to School* what they think of the program.
 - What did they like?
 - What did they think could be done better?
 - How would they improve the program?
- ❖ Collect success stories and use them in a newsletter or a follow-up letter to send to all partners (transportation department, health department, schools, etc.)
- ❖ Complete the *Walk to School Evaluation* (refer to “Tools” section for sample evaluation). Use this evaluation to see how your program is working and how to improve it.

MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF YOUR PROGRAM

- ❖ Monitor and address participants’ concerns and revise walking routes, program objectives, and strategies as necessary. This is important to:
 - Confirm that the program is meeting its goals and objectives.
 - Identify successes and barriers.
 - Generate additional support for the program.
 - Help others who are planning a *Walk to School* program.
- ❖ Keep the school and partnering organizations informed about participation, barriers, and improvements to the program.

☑ STEP 7: FUTURE PLANNING

KEEP YOUR *WALK TO SCHOOL* PROGRAM GOING

Plan for the next school term's program, as children may be moving into other schools. New parent organizers and leaders will be needed. When the new school term begins, create a feeling of excitement among the walkers by planning a special outing or doing something on the first day of school.

After the program is under way, it is important to keep morale high and motivate participants, especially as the weather becomes colder and the days shorter. To keep the neighborhood excited about the program, it might help to include daily activities or weekly and monthly contests. You can also distribute informational letters about the program at a parent-teacher conference or ask the editor of your child's school newsletter to include an article about the program.

Local organizations may want to be a part of the program. For example, check with your local health department, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, or the American Lung Association. These organizations may be willing to sponsor, provide helpful information, or acknowledge volunteers for participation.

American Diabetes Association: www.diabetes.org
American Heart Association: www.americanheart.org
American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org
American Lung Association: www.lungusa.org

LOOK FOR WAYS TO EXPAND YOUR *WALK TO SCHOOL* PROGRAM

- ❖ Promote the success of the program to other schools, neighborhoods, and communities by:
 - Including articles in the school newsletter or community newspaper
 - Posting your own newsletter at the school
 - Presenting your program at the next PTA meeting
 - Asking a local TV news station to do a story
 - Writing an editorial for your local paper
- ❖ Conduct an informal statewide travel-to-school survey to find out how children get to and from school. You may be surprised at how many children are driven to school and how infrequently they walk. This survey may get your school interested in expanding the program.
 - Request that teachers ask their students to raise their hands to indicate how they got to school each morning for a week.
 - Have teachers record the responses and take the results to their administrators.

- ❖ Help other neighborhoods start the program. You can help by guiding them through the specific steps that were difficult, by sharing ideas of things that worked, and by explaining how you overcame barriers. Remember that every neighborhood, school, or community is different and will have varying barriers and successes.

PLAN THE PROGRAM ON A LARGER SCALE

You may want to plan a program for the entire school system or district. Many of the steps for organizing a larger scale program are similar to the neighborhood program, but there are a few other considerations:

- ❖ Present the program to your school's PTA.
- ❖ Once you have established interest, form a committee that includes representatives from all participating groups, such as parents, crossing guards, the school principal, physical education teachers, students, and the transportation committee.
- ❖ Include all students in the program--not just the ones who live within walking distance of the school. Everyone can gain from the message of a *Walk to School* program and participate in different ways. Be creative: have school-wide contests for walking the most in a week or month or include pedestrian safety, air pollution reduction, physical activity, and related topics in the school curriculum.
 - Use pedometers to measure steps.
 - Study the health benefits of daily physical activity.
 - Learn warm-up and stretches appropriate for walking.
 - Keep physical activity logs of walking time or steps.
- ❖ Have each neighborhood come up with a name for its group that distinguishes it from other programs. Design signs for each group that will help young children identify the group at the end of the school day such as *Walk to School Park Hill* or *Walk to School Bromwell*.

TAKE STEPS TO SECURE A WALKABLE COMMUNITY AND ESTABLISH LONG-TERM GOALS

Once community members experience the neighborhood as pedestrians, they will pull together to change the streets to accommodate children and adults who want to walk or bike. Changing the structure and lifestyle of your community can be difficult. It will be necessary to write letters to city council members, county commissioners, and other elected officials. Examples of more extensive changes that can be made include changing the dimensions of an intersection in order to reduce traffic speeds, putting in more sidewalks, and altering the structure and flow of traffic. Work with your local public works department to implement traffic-calming measures. Many organizations offer materials and support to promote the design of healthy, walkable communities. The following is a list of resources:

WALK TO SCHOOL RESOURCES

Center for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov

International Walk to School Day: www.iwalktoschool.org

Kids Walk to School: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration: www.nhtsa.dot.gov

National SAFE KIDS Campaign: www.safekids.org

National Walk to School Day: www.walktoschool-usa.org

Safe Routes to School Clearinghouse: www.4saferoutes.org

WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

Organizing a *Walk to School Day* can be fun and rewarding for everyone. Each school finds its own method of creating a safe environment for kids to walk and bike to school. Below are some suggestions that can make your day go smoothly. Find out what works for you. Remember to give each of your volunteers something to do. If everyone does a little, then no one is burdened with too much work.

BASIC NEEDS

- ☐ Collaborate with the school administration, teachers, and the PTA to organize the event.
- ☐ Arrange for crossing guards and/or adult monitors.
- ☐ Notify police.
- ☐ Have a greeter(s), a table, and garbage cans.
- ☐ Have someone buy or get donated food if you're having treats. (Some grocery stores can reserve items for you if you get in touch with them well in advance.)

WALKING SCHOOL BUSES AND BIKE TRAINS

- ☐ In neighborhoods—publish a “bus” route with “stops”.
- ☐ Assign at least two adults for each “bus or train” with a dozen children.
- ☐ For school-wide parades—establish staging areas north, south, east, and west of the school where people can “catch the bus” and walk or bicycle together.
- ☐ Assign at least five adults to each staging area: one to coordinate the buses and trains; two for walking; and two for biking.
- ☐ Invite other parents, neighbors, and community leaders to walk or bike along.

PUBLICITY

- ☐ Send home flyers.
- ☐ Hang posters around the school, neighborhood, churches, and recreation centers.
- ☐ Post signs on roads (e.g., Drive Slowly Children Walking, Stop for Pedestrians in Crosswalks).
- ☐ Send out e-mails to parents, community leaders, the media, etc.
- ☐ Phone parents and volunteers to remind them of their tasks.
- ☐ Put announcements in the school newsletter.
- ☐ Have the principal make ongoing announcements 1-2 days before the event.
- ☐ Notify teachers and ask them to remind students.
- ☐ Send out press releases and invite the media to participate.
- ☐ Have students make signs and flags to carry (similar message to signs above).

RECRUIT ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEERS FROM:

- ☐ Senior groups
- ☐ Biking or hiking clubs
- ☐ Other community groups
- ☐ Recreation centers

THE KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

INVOLVE THE PEOPLE WHO CAN CREATE CHANGE

- ❖ Contact your mayor, city council representatives, school district superintendent, school board members, police chief, and city traffic engineer to join you.
- ❖ Think big—invite the governor, federal and state legislators, and state department of transportation officials to participate. Let them know that the media has been invited.
- ❖ Urge them to take part in the event with their own children or others.

MAKE IT A COMMUNITY PROGRAM

- ❖ Enlist the help of parents, teachers, local business people, neighborhood associations, and other community organizations when coordinating your event.
- ❖ Contact parent/teacher organizations, local emergency medical services, and city police, fire, and public health departments.
- ❖ Ask local businesses to donate food or prizes for participants.
- ❖ Ask a local business near your school to let you use its parking lot as a staging area.

PUBLICIZE AND PROMOTE THE EVENT

- ❖ Use e-mail, backpack mail, phone calls, and flyers to get the word out.
- ❖ Send a press release to the news media. Follow-up with phone calls to local media outlets. Include:
 - Which state or community leaders will take part in the event.
 - The number of children and parents who are expected to walk.
 - Which other community groups are involved.
 - Best locations and exact times to join the walk.
 - Pictures with a news release to local papers immediately following the event.
- ❖ Send flyers home to parents well in advance of the event. Be sure the Walk and Bike to School Day is announced daily at school the week before so that students will be ready and excited.
- ❖ Have students create posters advertising the event.

STEPS TO PLANNING *WALK TO SCHOOL DAY*

STEP 1

- ❖ Log on to the national *Walk to School* web site at www.walktoschool.org. Register your school and event coordinator on the site. For more information, check out the “Resources” section of the web site.
- ❖ Learn more about *Walk to School Day* and find other participants in Colorado registered on the web site by clicking the “Who’s Walking?” button. Then click on Colorado on the U.S. map to see the communities and schools that are participating throughout the state.
- ❖ Read the “Walk to School Initiatives” booklet that provides a simple overview about why this event is important and the many ways people use *Walk to School Day* to change their communities.
- ❖ Read “Frequently Asked Questions” in the “Introduction” section of this tool kit.

STEP 2

- ❖ Contact the three P’s (principal, police, and parents) and propose a *Walk to School Day* in your community.
- ❖ The school principal can give you the school’s commitment.
- ❖ The local police department is a valuable resource and will ensure that safety is a priority.
- ❖ Parents can add energy and enthusiasm and make the walk work.
- ❖ Use the “Walk to School Initiatives” booklet to generate ideas for *Walk to School* programs!

TIPS FOR TALKING TO THE THREE P'S

- ❖ Make sure that the school principal and administrators, the police, and parents understand the ways that they and the community will all benefit from participating in *Walk to School Day*.
- ❖ Remember to explain the benefits of *Walk to School Day*. Children and parents will be active, healthy, and spend time together; traffic and congestion will be reduced; streets near the school may be safer and air quality better as a result; and everyone will have fun.
- ❖ Give them printed information. Make copies of the eight-page booklet, “Walk to School Initiatives.” This concise summary makes a clear and compelling case for the importance and value of *Walk to School Day*. By handing someone a document, you give the person something to read and digest after you’ve finished talking.
- ❖ Approach people as potential partners. Don’t just ask for permission - propose partnerships. This means that they can contribute their perspectives and feel ownership in the event.
- ❖ Start with a simple premise. Describe the basic idea of *Walk to School Day*. Very simply - parents and children being encouraged to walk to school on that one day to celebrate walking as a healthy, safe, enjoyable way for children to get to school.
- ❖ Encourage others to build on the idea. Often those you’re talking with will want to add to the simple idea. Encourage this, and recognize that each may have a different agenda. For example, school administrators may be concerned with dwindling transportation budgets and see walking as an economical alternative. The police may focus on the opportunity for pedestrian and driver safety education, while parents might like the chance for their children to be more physically active.
- ❖ Prepare key points in the areas of health, safety, and access. Give potential partners a factor on which to base their involvement. These could be national statistics, such as the recent doubling of obesity rates among children, or local issues, such as budget cuts in physical education programs. Look at “Quick Facts” in the “Media” section of this tool kit or check statistics at www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physicalactivity.htm.
- ❖ Leave the conversation agreeing on a clear next step. Don’t walk away until the person has either committed to supporting *Walk to School Day*, or to another concrete step. That could be as simple as reading the material you’re leaving behind and discussing it with you again. Make an appointment for that follow-up conversation before you leave.

STEP 3

- ❖ Invite elected and public officials, and get them to commit to improve walking conditions. They represent the fastest way to make change happen. The media helps publicize problems such as unsafe crossings, etc.
- ❖ Hold a press conference at the start of your walk or at school when people arrive. This is a great time for a formal proclamation by elected officials. Urge school and public officials to commit to specific steps they'll take to make it easier to walk all of the time.
- ❖ Check out the many different officials who have participated in walking events.
 - City Council members
 - City managers
 - City mayors
 - Police Departments
 - Fire Departments
 - Health Departments
 - Hospital community outreach departments
 - United Way community services
 - City transportation divisions
 - P.E. teachers
 - College students
 - Elementary school teachers
 - School principals
 - PTA members
 - Pedestrian advocacy groups
 - Bicycle coalitions
 - SAFE KIDS Coalitions
 - Safe Communities program
 - Recreation departments
 - Fitness Councils
 - Sierra Club
 - Cardiovascular Health Agencies
 - Ped/Bike coordinators
 - State departments of transportation

STEP 4

- ❖ Register your school online at www.walktoschool.org.
- ❖ Why an event on October 8? Because that's when everyone will be walking. There will be hundreds of events around the U.S., and the media and public officials will be aware of this national movement. By registering, you make your event known and provide your contact information to any local and national media hoping to cover this important story. And when the media covers your event, they help spread the word of the great health, safety, environmental, and social benefits of more children walking to school every day. You'll also get automatic updates on event plans and available resources for putting on your walk.
- ❖ Visit www.iwalktoschool.org for information on international happenings.

STEP 5

- ❖ Decide what type of event fits your school and community.
- ❖ You can plan your walk any way that works for your community. Check out the www.walktoschool.org web site for some common approaches to consider.
- ❖ Customize your walk for your community. Here are four common approaches communities have taken to implement *Walk to School Day*.
 1. Everyone walks one specific route. Invite elected officials, parents, and children to meet in a specific neighborhood at a designated point and walk to school together. You can even have buses drop students who live further away at the designated walk location. This is a good approach if general conditions aren't conducive to walking, or if you're looking for the greatest visual impact for news media coverage.
 2. Multiple groups walk from different neighborhoods. Designate several specific routes children, parents, and local officials will take from various neighborhoods. Suggest starting times so that kids along the way can join the passing crowd, and all will converge on the school at the same time. Some communities designate the best choices as Safe Routes to School (Read more at www.transact.org/Reports/sr2002). This is a great way to launch *Walking School Buses* from those neighborhoods (read more at www.walkingschoolbus.org).
 3. Hold a welcoming event at school. Whether you have formal walking groups, or simply urge children and parents to walk from their own homes, you can hold a welcoming event at school. Invite public officials to say a few words, and if willing, address parents' suggestions on improving walking routes. The welcoming event can be formal, for the press, or at an informal coffee or chat.

4. What about schools located too far away or in a dangerous area? In communities where most of the students travel farther than a walkable distance or where the walking conditions are simply too dangerous, you can still have a *Walk at School Day* – just do it on the school playground. Specific recess time, physical education or even class time can be dedicated to getting out and walking together. It's an activity that all children can enjoy, and the walks can be tied into a variety of classroom activities.
- ❖ Classroom teachers can get involved by incorporating walking into their curricula. Ideas for classroom participation include:
- Art, Computer Class - Create posters promoting *Walk to School Day* and safe driving, walking, and bicycling messages.
 - Geography - Survey and create maps of walking routes to school.
 - Health - Measure walking time accumulated by students; study health benefits of physical activity. Use pedometers to measure steps.
 - Physical education – Have students do physical conditioning. Learn walking warm-ups and stretches and do some progressively longer walks in class to prepare for *Walk to School Day*.
 - Mathematics - Keep logs of walking time or steps; calculate speeds and distances, individual and group averages, trends and statistical analyses (do boys or girls walk more?).
 - Physics - Study the biomechanics of walking. For example, measure stride lengths-do they vary with height, weight, age, or leg length? How does walking speed depend on step speed and stride length?
 - Biology - Look for plant or animal species, or inventory indigenous species along walking routes. Catalogue seasonal changes in the flora and fauna.
 - English - Write press releases and public service announcements to promote *Walk to School Day*. Write essays or keep a diary about walking experiences.
 - History – Walk to historical locations in your community and study their significance.
 - Social Sciences - Photograph important things about your community observed while walking to school. Is there anything you would change? What can you do about it?

STEP 6

- ❖ Give your event a mission. Each *Walk to School Day* takes on the character of its community and most participants find that having a mission has a more lasting impact on the event.
- ❖ Teach pedestrian and bicycle safety. The Colorado Bicycling Manual (official bicycle and pedestrian rules of the road and trails in Colorado) is free from the Colorado Department of Transportation Bicycle/Pedestrian Program. Email your UPS shipping address and the quantity needed to bicycleinfo@dot.state.co.us.
- ❖ Contact your local SAFE KIDS Coalition to support your efforts (www.safekids.org).
- ❖ Use the *Walkability and Bikeability Checklists* included in this tool kit to measure your neighborhood's "walkability" and "bikeability". These tools will help you notice where changes need to be made such as intersection improvements or the need for additional crosswalks, etc. These types of capital improvement projects should be incorporated into the community's long-range goals.
- ❖ Change driver behavior.
- ❖ Get kids moving.
- ❖ Find out why obesity rates among American children have doubled in the past 20 years. Learn more about the importance of keeping our children moving (read more at www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physicalactivity.htm).
- ❖ Find out who in your state and local public health department is doing work to promote physical activity and fight obesity among children (See CDC state-by-state listing at <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/DNPAProg/>).
- ❖ Read about tips on organizing meetings and planning at www.nps.gov/phso/rtcatoobox/ (currently unavailable to Netscape users).

STEP 7

- ❖ Promote the day and urge everyone to take an active role.
- ❖ Write a Public Service Announcement (PSA) to be read on local radio and television.
- ❖ Write a press release using the sample we have provided in the "Tools" section.

- ❖ Generate sponsorship ideas. Following are local places you might solicit for *Walk to School* sponsorships or support, and what they might contribute:
 - Grocery store, coffee shop, or bakery: breakfast foods and drinks for kids and parents when they arrive at school.
 - Office supply: school supplies for children's prizes (pencils, erasers, etc.)
 - Sporting goods/Outdoor recreation stores: tennis shoes, book bags, baseball hats, reflective material, and small prizes for random drawings for participants and children who walked farthest, most often, etc.
 - Kiwanis, Rotary or Lions clubs, community service groups: Volunteer to be crossing guards and walk with groups of children, organize safe driving activities or host a reception at school.

WHAT NOW?

This is a great start for a successful *Walk to School Day*. But, if you want to do more, read the “*Walk to School Programs*” section of this tool kit. Communities are doing amazing things to keep *Walk to School* alive, and to make permanent improvements so that everyone can enjoy walking.

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

ON YOUR ORGANIZATION'S LETTERHEAD

WALK TO SCHOOL DAY **OCTOBER 8, 2003**

Whereas: International Walk to School Day will be held on October 8, 2003; and

Whereas: This event, taking place around the world, will focus on the benefits of walking or biking rather than driving to school, creating cleaner, safer, and environmentally healthier schools for children; and

Whereas: This day affords parents the opportunity to spend more time with their children, reduces car use and traffic hazards, promotes physical activity, and contributes to a safer community.

Therefore: We, the (YOUR School District), do hereby proclaim October 8, 2003 as "Walk to School Day" and encourage everyone to participate in this very worthwhile event.

SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

ON YOUR ORGANIZATION LETTERHEAD

COLORADO PEDESTRIAN MONTH

OCTOBER 1 - 31, 2003

WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

OCTOBER 8, 2003

COLORADO WALKING WEDNESDAY

Now that school is in session, more children are walking to and from neighborhood schools - many of them during the busiest time of the day. A time of the day when many motorists are rushing to work or heading home after a tiring day at work. It is vital that the safety of our children is addressed by making walking safer in our community. Each year, an estimated 5,700 pedestrians are killed; one out of seven of those are children.

Whereas, hundreds of children could be saved each year if every community takes steps to make pedestrian safety a priority.

Whereas, parents and caregivers should teach children about pedestrian safety and become aware of the difficulties and dangers that children face on their trip to school each day.

Whereas, community leaders and parents should determine the “walkability” or “bikeability” of their community by using the *Walkability or Bikeability Checklists*.

Whereas, the community should make a plan to make immediate changes to increase the safety of children who are walking in our communities and a list of suggestions for improvements that can be done over time.

Whereas, children, parents, and community leaders are joining together nationwide to walk to school and evaluate pedestrian safety in their community.

Now Therefore, Be It Resolved that (YOUR ORGANIZATION, NAME & TITLE OF OFFICIAL) proclaims October is “Colorado Pedestrian Month”; and October 8, 2003 is “Walk to School Day”; and every Wednesday is “Colorado Walking Wednesday”.

All Coloradans are encouraged to consider the safety of pedestrians today and every day.

- The **ENFORCEMENT APPROACH** uses local law enforcement to ensure drivers obey traffic laws.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Materials in this tool kit have been adapted from the following publications:

- ❖ *Promoting Active Living Communities* by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
- ❖ *Safe Routes to School* by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
- ❖ *Kids Walk to School* by the Centers for Disease Control.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Since many of you may be organizing a *Walk to School Day* for the first time, here are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions.

❖ WHAT IS WALK TO SCHOOL COLORADO?

Walk to School Colorado is a vision that communities create pedestrian and bicycle friendly neighborhoods where it is safe for all children to walk or bicycle to school.

Do you remember walking or bicycling to school? Wouldn't it be great if all children in Colorado could have those same happy memories? Well, they can. All you have to do is organize a *Walk (or Bike) to School Day*, a *Colorado Walking Wednesday* program, or a *Walk to School* program in your neighborhood.

The idea is simple; parents, teachers, and neighbors walk to school with their children on *Walk to School Day*. It is fun and energizing, the simple joy of walking to school, plus you get the day off to a healthy start and renew your community spirit with friends and family.

For most communities though, one day isn't enough. What they really want is for children to be able to walk to school every day, which can lead to permanent changes like better sidewalks, safer street crossings, and improved driver and pedestrian behavior. So take the leap to launch a *Walk to School Day*, you can't imagine what you might be starting!

❖ WHY WALK TO SCHOOL?

- Kids need to move! Children need a variety of physical activities each day, and walking or bicycling to school is an ideal way to get moving.
- Active kids get better grades and have fewer discipline problems.

- Children learn how to be safe in traffic as pedestrians and bicyclists.
- We breathe cleaner air due to fewer trips by car, resulting in less air pollution.
- There is less traffic in neighborhoods and near schools.
- It increases community spirit.
- It's FUN!

❖ **WHAT IS THE DATE OF THE 2003 *WALK TO SCHOOL DAY*?**

The 2003 *Walk to School Day* is Wednesday, October 8, 2003.

❖ **WHAT IS THE DATE OF THE 2004 EVENT?**

The 2004 *Walk to School Day* is scheduled for Wednesday, October 6, 2004.

❖ **HOW DO I ORGANIZE AN EVENT?**

It's easy! Start by reading the "Steps to Planning a *Walk to School Day*" in the "Walk to School Day" section of this tool kit, and register online at www.walktoschool.org.

❖ **WHY SHOULD I REGISTER MY EVENT?**

By registering online at www.walktoschool.org, you are letting the world know that your community is walking! In addition, your email address is automatically added to the *Walk to School Day* mailing list so that you can receive email updates and other useful information about the upcoming national and international events.

❖ **HOW CAN I CONTACT OTHER EVENT COORDINATORS IN MY AREA?**

The official *Walk to School* web site (www.walktoschool.org) maintains a comprehensive list (by state and city) of the registered events in your area. Log on to access the contact information for other *Walk to School Day* coordinators in Colorado.

❖ **WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?**

Involve members of the community who are interested in creating a safe environment for walking and bicycling. The following people are typically involved in *Walk to School Day*: kids, parents, grandparents, care-givers, teachers, principals, superintendents, mayors, city council members, local police departments, local fire departments, local celebrities, community organizations, and more!

❖ WHAT IF IT'S TOO FAR TO WALK?

Many families and communities are located in rural areas, but that doesn't stop them from walking! Have parents and children meet at designated staging areas about a mile from school - from the staging area, they can walk as a group to the school. Or, hold your walk during lunchtime at the school track. The idea is to get walking! Improvise and customize your walk to fit your community.

❖ HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Many organizers don't spend a cent on *Walk to School Day*. It doesn't cost anything to walk to school – it just requires some planning. If you would like to provide snacks or prizes, talk to local businesses and ask them if they'll sponsor your event by donating cash, prizes, juice, and/or snacks.

❖ WHEN SHOULD I START PLANNING MY EVENT?

It's never too early to start planning your event. You can plan it months ahead or even days ahead (depending on the size of your event). The earlier you start planning, the more time you'll have to promote and publicize the event.

❖ HOW DO I GET PARENTS AND OTHER SCHOOLS TO PARTICIPATE?

Spread the word! Make sure everyone knows when *Walk to School Day* is as well as any additional information about the walk such as time, place, route, etc. Promote your event well in advance by sending home letters or flyers to parents, informing them about *Walk to School Day*. You can copy the *Walk to School Day* brochure in this tool kit or develop your own using the official *Walk to School Colorado* logos (also in this kit). Make sure kids know about *Walk to School Day* by making announcements on the school intercom or by reviewing pedestrian safety tips and the health benefits of walking, in class, prior to *Walk to School Day*.

❖ WHAT KIND OF ACTIVITIES SHOULD I PLAN FOR THAT DAY?

Many organizers plan a morning of activities which are “kicked-off” by the walk itself. This could include a breakfast gathering at the school, an assembly about pedestrian safety or healthy behaviors, or a special presentation given by the local police or fire chief. The possibilities are endless.

❖ DO YOU HAVE ANY MATERIALS FOR *WALK TO SCHOOL DAY* ORGANIZERS?

You may copy any of the resources included in this tool kit or download materials from www.walktoschool.org.

❖ WHAT ARE THE *WALKABILITY AND BIKEABILITY CHECKLISTS*?

The checklists provide a simple set of questions that adults and children can use to examine their neighborhoods and measure how friendly their streets are for walkers and bicyclists.

❖ HOW DO I GET THE LOCAL NEWS MEDIA INVOLVED?

The media can help spread the word about *Walk to School Day*. Call your local media (television, radio, and newspaper) to invite them to your event. Use the materials in the “Media” section of this tool kit to help develop your communication plan.

❖ HOW CAN I INCORPORATE WALKING TO SCHOOL IN MY COMMUNITY'S EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES?

Many communities have adopted the *Walking School Bus* as a way for kids to walk to school every day. Other communities celebrate walking by keeping walking logs or by instituting a *Colorado Walking Wednesday* program. The Colorado State Legislature has declared every Wednesday throughout the year as *Colorado Walking Wednesday*.

❖ WHAT IS A *WALKING SCHOOL BUS*?

In a *Walking School Bus*, a designated adult supervisor “picks up” each student, house by house, on foot. The supervisor and group of students walk to school along a set route, enjoying fresh air, physical activity, and friendly conversation. To learn more about the *Walking School Bus* log on to www.walkingschoolbus.org.

❖ WHAT IS A BIKE TRAIN?

A bike train is the same concept as the *Walking School Bus*. Adult supervisors “pick up” students at their homes and they bicycle to school rather than walk.

❖ HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Register your school on the *Walk to School* web site (www.walktoschool-usa.org) and host *Walk to School Day* at your school in October or begin a *Walk to School* program on any date that works for your school.

❖ FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Gay Page
CO Dept. of Transportation
Bicycle/Pedestrian Program
303-757-9982
gay.page@dot.state.co.us

or
Taralyn Jensen
CO Dept. of Public Health and Environment
Physical Activity & Nutrition Program
303-692-2551
taralyn.jensen@state.co.us