

# Walk to School Day

## Action Kit



**SafeRoutes**

Alaska Safe Routes to School



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## Walk and Bike to School Day:

**A weekly, monthly, or single event that encourages students to walk and bike to school**

This event is the main activity that instills the Safe Routes to School program as part of the culture of your school. During a Walk and Bike to School Day, volunteers can host a greeting table with food and/or simple rewards for students who walk and bike to school. **Walking School Buses** or **Bike Trains** can be organized as a way to encourage groups of students to travel together. Special remote drop-off's for buses and parent drivers can also be organized for those students who live beyond a reasonable walking or bicycling distance from school.

**The regularity of the event's occurrence varies according to the school. Examples include:**

- Walk & Wheel Wednesdays (or similar weekly event through the school year)
- Trekking on Third Thursdays (or similar monthly event)
- Walk & Bike Challenge (1-5 times a week, for 4-6 weeks in the spring and/or fall)
- International Walk to School Day (every October) and/or International Bike to School Week (every May)

The more frequently Walk and Bike to School Days occur, the greater likelihood for a long-term increase in the number of students walking and bicycling to school.

**Walk and Bike to School Days encourage a healthy and active lifestyle and have the following outcomes:**

- Reduction in traffic congestion and vehicle speed near schools
- Reduction in air pollution (and associated child respiratory effects) and fewer greenhouse gas emissions
- Improved academic performance and classroom behavior
- Improved social networks between students – also between adults and students
- Students learn safe walking and bicycling behavior
- Students experience independence and build their self-confidence
- Reclamation of community streets so that they are safer for walking and bicycling
- A sharing of the joys of walking and biking

**For more information see back of this sheet and check out [www.dot.alaska.gov/saferoutes](http://www.dot.alaska.gov/saferoutes). Also, please contact:**

# Checklist for Walk and Bike to School Day

## 1. Get Partners:

- Find 2-3 interested volunteers to help coordinate the event
- Contact the school administration and PTO/PTA about the event and enlist their support
- Recruit teachers/volunteers for various roles (greeting students, leading walking school buses, meeting buses at the remote drop-off location, etc.)

## 2. Plan - work with partners to plan the celebration

- Decide what type of event fits your school and community.
- Determine whether the event will be weekly for a number of weeks, once a month, or one day.
- Decide what modes to use (e.g. informal or more formal Walking School Bus, Bike Trains, and/or remote drop-off site for buses).
- Develop banners and signs in addition to the posters available from International Walk to School Day Program: [www.walkbiketoschool.org](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org).
- Solicit funding or donations of food and other rewards. Contact Alaska Safe Routes to School Coordinator for available incentives list; Contact local businesses for donations of refreshments and/or other small freebies.

## 3. Register Your Event

- Register with the National Safe Routes to School Program: [www.walkbiketoschool.org/](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/)- to access additional materials and win prizes for your school

## 4. Promote Your Event!

- Post signs and banners at the school
- Send event flyer to parents through backpack mail
- Post event announcement in school newsletter and website
- Ask principal to make loudspeaker announcements and/or send e-mail preceding the event

Potential Partners to Involve		
School:	Community:	Local Government:
• Principal & other admin.	• Community members, includes retired people	• Elected city/town/county officials and/or state rep
• PTA/PTO rep	• Neighborhood association members	• Traffic engineer
• Parents & students	• Local businesses	• Local planner
• Teachers (start w/Physical Education & Health teachers)	• Local pedestrian, bicycle and safety advocates	• Public health rep
• School nurse	• Hospitals	• Public works rep
• Transportation director	• Health Clubs	• Law enforcement rep
• School Improvement, Wellness, and/or Safety committee	• Service Clubs (e.g. Rotary, Kiwanis)	• EMS/Fire Department rep
• School crossing guards		
• Facilities/custodian rep		
• Service learning team		

# Checklist for Walk and Bike to School Day

## At the Event

For Coordinators	For Students	For Adults
Distribute Walkability and Bikeability Checklist	During the Walk, students can carry signs made for the event	Celebrate students' participation as they cross the schoolyard
Note Problem Areas	Participate in races, relays or other fun events	Supply healthy juice and snacks, stickers, pencils, etc.
Collect Checklists and Collate Results	Make a presentation on why they like to walk or cycle to school	Take photos of the event and enjoy the day!

## After the Event

Post results of any contests or competitions, and award the prizes.
Plan other special days to encourage students and staff to walk or cycle to school. Or start a Safe Routes to School program in your school.
Have students write about the highlights of their day or draw a picture to show what the day meant to them.
Evaluate checklist results. Try to find specific locations or issues that were noted by substantial numbers of participants and list these. Involve students in reading checklists and tabulating and summarizing results.
Prioritize problems - not everything can be fixed at once. But a prioritized list is a great place to begin. List the problems that have come up the most in the walkability checklist, and discuss which seem to be the most important. Rank the problems first according to which would positively affect most kids if they could be fixed. Then rank those according to which seem easiest to fix. Initially target low cost, high impact solutions for the community to take action right away.
<b>Contact Alaska Safe Routes to School for grant information and possible funding for these projects!</b>



## Walk to School Day Recruiting Volunteers

**Unsure of how to recruit new volunteers? Here are tips to motivate people to say "yes"!**

1. **Don't confuse recruitment with publicity.** Sending out a flier or email notifying a long list of people about unfilled volunteer positions is information, but not necessarily an invitation to come forward. Never assume everyone "knows" what help is needed or whether she or he is right for the job.
2. **Be clear** on what you want people to do before you recruit them.
  - Writing volunteer job descriptions forces you to be specific.
  - Avoid the vague approach of "Do you want to volunteer?" This can lead to all sorts of incorrect assumptions about what the tasks might be. Instead try: "Would you be willing to be in charge of a walking school bus?" It is more appealing to be asked to become a leader or some other definable role, than an indistinguishable "volunteer."
3. **Be honest.** Tell prospective volunteers about the time and effort the role entails, even if you think it may sound like a lot. Don't minimize the work with comments such as "This will only take a few hours" or try to sway people into acceptance with "Why not try it and see what you think?" If you need someone several hours every week, or for a full year's commitment, or willing to drive 25 miles each time, say so. It may take longer to find someone willing to fill the position, but once you do, you'll have the right person.
4. **Define** the training, supervision and support the volunteer will have. Many people are understandably cautious about being thrown in to sink or swim. If they know they are going to get help while they learn the ropes, they'll be more likely to give volunteering a try.
5. **Identify and express the positives of volunteering.** Explain how much kids will benefit from their help but talk unapologetically about personal payoffs, too. Be aware that people have different reasons for volunteering. Some enjoy interacting with children, others want to learn a skill for career development? The list of possible motivations is extensive. You can share how you've grown personally from your own volunteer work and don't forget to point out that they'll have fun!
6. **Explain why** you decided to ask this particular person to help, what skills or personality traits make her or him a good candidate for the position. After all, you are implying this person has the talent to do the job, and that's quite flattering. In the long run, it is better to live with a vacancy for a while than to appoint someone who is unqualified or reluctant to make a full commitment to the work. A second-choice placement can negatively affect all the other volunteers on your team.
7. **Never recruit anyone by asking her or him to do it as a "favor" to you.** Instead, try to communicate that you don't want them to miss a marvelous opportunity to participate in an important project!
8. **Finally, the best way to recruit volunteers is simply to ask people to help.** If you never have the conversation, how can someone say yes? And if you are turned down, keep in mind that you have still helped by reaching out to new people and lending visibility to a worthwhile project.

# Walk to School Day

## Parent Survey/Permission slip

Dear Parents:

As part of *Walk to School Day*, we are asking you to **sign the permission slip at the bottom** and **complete the following survey** to help us gather information on walking and biking. Fill in the appropriate circle for each question completely. *Your feedback is very important to us!* Please return this form as soon as possible, but no later than \_\_\_\_\_, to your child's classroom teacher. Thank you!

1. What is the approximate distance from your home to the school?

- less than 1/2 mile                       between 1-2 miles  
 between 1/2 – 1 miles                 over 2 miles

2. How many children do you have attending this school?

- 1     3  
 2     4 or more

3. What grades are your children in?

- K     4  
 1     5  
 2     6  
 3

4. How do your children usually get to and from school?

### To School

- Driven (parent/caregiver)  
 Carpool  
 Bicycle  
 Walk  
 School bus  
 Other (explain)

### Home from School

- Driven (parent/caregiver)  
 Carpool  
 Bicycle  
 Walk  
 School bus  
 Other (explain)

5. If you usually drive your child, why do you make that choice?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Safety                            | <input type="radio"/> Carrying projects or musical instruments |
| <input type="radio"/> Convenience                       | <input type="radio"/> Tardiness                                |
| <input type="radio"/> Drop                              | <input type="radio"/> No safe place to cross the street        |
| <input type="radio"/> Too far to walk                   | <input type="radio"/> Scary people                             |
| <input type="radio"/> No sidewalks or not continuous    | <input type="radio"/> Lack of safe place to store bikes        |
| <input type="radio"/> High speed vehicles               | <input type="radio"/> No biking or walking route maps          |
| <input type="radio"/> Child is too young                | <input type="radio"/> Unfriendly dogs                          |
| <input type="radio"/> Concerns about crime              | <input type="radio"/> Paths are incomplete or not wide enough  |
| <input type="radio"/> Child would not obey safety rules | <input type="radio"/> Backpacks too heavy                      |
| <input type="radio"/> Concerns about bullying           | <input type="radio"/> Too many vacant buildings                |
| <input type="radio"/> Other                             |  |



6. Would you allow your child to walk or bike if:

- Accompanied by other children
- Accompanied by other parents
- Safe routes to school were mapped
- Crossing guards were more effective
- Safety training was provided for students
- Crossing guards were more plentiful
- Cars slowed down
- Improved sidewalks and bike paths
- Secure bike storage was available
- Paths were separated from traffic
- Safety Patrol was present
- Other

7. If more walking opportunities were available through school, would you participate?

- Yes
- No

**Walk to School Day  
Permission Slip**

My son/daughter, \_\_\_\_\_, has my permission to walk to school on  
**Wednesday, October x, 201x** for the *Walk to School Day* event.

\_\_\_ **I will**      \_\_\_ **I will not** be walking with my child to school.

My child will leave from:

- \_\_\_ home
- \_\_\_ walking school bus/bike train
- \_\_\_ school sponsored walk
- \_\_\_ other

I understand that if my son/daughter becomes ill or is injured during this trip, someone will attempt to contact me or an emergency contact at the numbers listed below:

\_\_\_\_\_ (phone #) \_\_\_\_\_ (Name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (phone #) \_\_\_\_\_ (Emergency Contact)

If I cannot be reached, I understand and agree that my son/daughter may be taken for medical assistance, and I agree that I will be solely responsible for any and all costs incurred as a result. I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless \_\_\_\_\_ (school name), the district, its board members, its employees and any volunteer for this event for any injury that occurs to my child which is not the result of action or inaction by the district or its representatives.

\_\_\_\_\_ (parent or guardian) \_\_\_\_\_ (date)







### **Informational Resources:**

Walking information:

[http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/education\\_teachingchildren.cfm](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/education_teachingchildren.cfm)

[http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/education\\_tip-sheets.cfm](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/education_tip-sheets.cfm)

<http://www.walkinginfo.org/>

Biking information:

<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/>

<http://www.ibike.org/education/safety-materials.htm>

[http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/saferoutes.shtml#Brochures\\_\\_\\_Publications](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/saferoutes.shtml#Brochures___Publications)

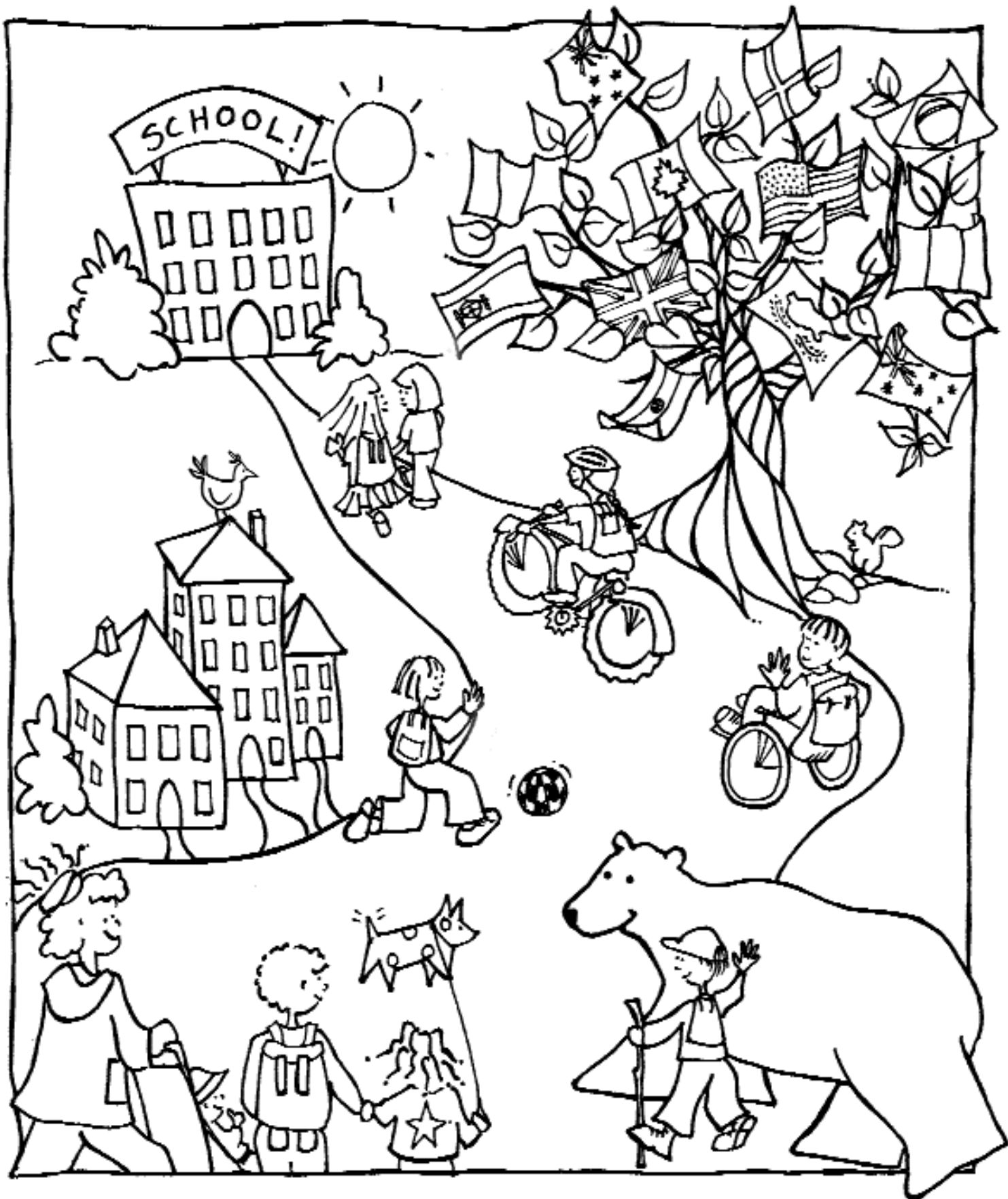
Safe Routes information:

<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/index.cfm>

<http://www.saferoutesportland.com/transportation/index.cfm?c=40511>

Engineering information:

[http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/engineering\\_tip-sheets.cfm](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/engineering_tip-sheets.cfm)



**It's Really Cool to Walk to School!**