Walk to School Day
2014
School Coordinator Guide

Safe Kids
Walk This Way

SAFE KIDS
LA CROSSE COULEE REGION

Proud Program Sponsor

FedEx

WISCONSIN Safe Routes TO SCHOOL
Safe Kids Walk This Way Program Summary
Safe Kids Worldwide and program sponsor FedEx developed Safe Kids Walk This Way in 2000 to bring national and local attention to pedestrian safety issues. This year marks the fourteenth anniversary of the Safe Kids Walk This Way program. What started as a pilot program in three U.S. cities has now grown to a global signature program widely established in ten countries: U.S., Brazil, China, India, South Korea, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Mexico and Canada.

Pedestrian injury is a leading cause of injury-related death in the United States for children ages 19 and younger, claiming the lives of nearly 500 children every year. Each year pedestrian fatalities comprise about 13 percent of all traffic fatalities. In 2012, there were 19,183 nonfatal pedestrian child injuries.

Thanks to generous funding from FedEx, Safe Kids Coalitions have the opportunity to reach out to students, parents and educators to build awareness for safe pedestrian behaviors, alert drivers to the pedestrian’s rights and raise concern about dangerous pedestrian environments.

Each year, parents and community leaders around the country joined together in celebration of Safe Kids and FedEx sponsored International Walk to School Day events.

This year, International Walk to School Day is on Wednesday, October 8, 2014.

However, many communities are celebrating International Walk to School Month throughout October! Although Safe Kids Worldwide and FedEx are only supporting the event on October 8, we encourage your school to incorporate pedestrian safety activities with your students during the entire month of October.

Safe Kids and Safe Routes to School
The Safe Kids Coalition of the La Crosse Coulee Region and the La Crosse County Safe Routes to School Program has partnered to hold Walk to School Day activities since 2008. With this collaboration of community partnerships, both groups aim to promote safety, engage children in physical activity and inspire health and concern for the environment.
**Description of School Coordinator’s Guide**

The purpose of the School Coordinator’s Guide is to assist schools with planning and coordinating of walk to school activities. In this guide you will find helpful tips and resources that will aid in planning successful walk to school and pedestrian safety activities.

**Dangers to Child Pedestrians**

When planning for International Walk to School Day, it is important to remember the reason Safe Kids, Safe Routes to School and FedEx participate in this annual event. Each year close to 500 children are killed as pedestrians. Most of these children are struck by cars. Daily, these children are confronted by traffic threats that exceed their cognitive, developmental, behavioral, physical and sensory abilities.

Trends in road design have created longer blocks, encouraging kids to cross mid-block. In addition, many streets have expanded to four lanes or more, further complicating road crossings. Rounded street corners also add to potentially hazardous conditions for pedestrians because they increase crossing distances at intersections and allow cars to maintain speed while turning.

School parking lots pose significant traffic threats to arriving and departing children, including double-parked or speeding vehicles, their lack of directional signage or markings, and confusion over right-of-way.

Besides increased safety, there are many additional benefits for children and parents who walk to school together. Traffic congestion near the school is reduced, children learn to incorporate exercise into their daily routine, and parents and children spend quality time together.
Follow these simple steps for implementing a successful Walk to School Day

**Determine the Schedules for Each School on Walk to School Day**
The majority of pedestrian-related injuries occur between 3 and 8 p.m. Many children are driven to school in the morning but walk home or to an after-school facility in the afternoon. During afternoon events, volunteers can participate in activities such as the loading of buses, serving as crossing guards and safety patrols, and reinforcing safe pedestrian behaviors to children. Below is a list of different activities that may take place at your International Walk to School Day event.

- Volunteers convene at school to greet children and travel to nearby locations where they will walk with children to school, serve as crossing guards or safety patrols, and talk to kids one-on-one about pedestrian safety.
- School assembly, classroom activities or both that teach children safe pedestrian behaviors.
- Volunteers convene at school and are assigned to various locations surrounding the school to help with the flow of child pedestrian, motor vehicle and bus traffic.
- Volunteers greet children, walk with them for a block and teach them about pedestrian safety.
- Volunteers lead a school assembly, classroom activities or both to teach children safe pedestrian behaviors.
- Work with the administrators at your partner school to decide the appropriate schedule for the event.

**Identify Common Routes Children Take to Each School**
Once school partners are secured, with the help of school administrators, identify the routes students commonly take to and from school. Then designate locations where volunteers can gather and wait for students who are walking to school. Once locations with the highest pedestrian traffic and most environmental dangers are selected, choose a centrally located meeting place (usually the school) to gather volunteers and distribute materials such as pedestrian safety brochures and walkability checks (if used), signs, banners, and retro-reflective materials.
Promote the Event to School Administrators, Teachers, Parents and Students

It is critical to promote this event to the entire school community. Incorporate some of the suggestions below and be sure to determine the logistics of the event in advance.

**Principals or School Administrators**
- Ask if you can present information about the event at gatherings such as a teacher’s meeting, a fall parent/teacher night, or a PTA meeting.
- Seek permission to send parents written materials such as a letter, pedestrian safety brochure, and/or a walkability check, either through their children or in conjunction with another school mailing.
- Request permission to hold a news conference on school grounds the day of the event.
- Find out what space is available for the news event.
- Submit an article for a school newsletter that encourages parents and students to join.

**Teachers**
- Secure ten minutes on the agenda of a teacher’s meeting. Give an overview of the events and pedestrian safety activities and ask if any teachers would like to help.
- Encourage teachers to incorporate the walk into classroom exercises prior to the event.
- Provide teachers with a list of key pedestrian safety messages.
- Ask teachers to encourage student productions of pedestrian safety-related skits or cheers to be presented in a school assembly, if possible.
- Decorate the hallways prior to Walk to School Day with student-created artwork focused on pedestrian safety messages.
- Host interactive activities for kids in an assembly or through several stations in the gym, cafeteria or hallway.
- Ask teachers to implement the Pedestrian Safety curriculum.

**Students**
- Educating children about being safe pedestrians is a key component of the program.
- Work with teachers, school administrators and parents to disseminate key pedestrian messages on a regular basis. Teaching and reinforcing these messages can help kids learn safe behavior that will last a lifetime.
- Host a poster contest or other creative outlet for children to describe pedestrian safety to their peers.
- Conduct classroom or school assembly programs using pedestrian safety lessons.
- Develop a contest among the grades for the most participation on IWTSD.
- Walk with students from the older grades around the school, and ask them to fill out a walkability check and take pictures of some of the dangers for children walking.
- Invite students to participate in the ongoing school safety committee.
Parents or Caregivers

It is very important that parents with children who walk to school are included in prioritizing pedestrian safety issues for their children. In order to make parents aware of the issue consider the following tactics.

- Get on the agenda for the first PTA/PTO meeting of the coming school year to present the proposed pedestrian safety program to parents.
- Encourage parents to reinforce pedestrian safety messages to their children at home.
- Encourage parents to volunteer on IWTSD.
- Parents can increase the momentum for improving child pedestrian safety.
- If translation services are needed to help ensure full participation, ask a parent who is bilingual to volunteer his or her skills.
- Designate some of the volunteers to support locations that do not have crossing guards.

Take Care of Last-Minute Logistics

Here are some tips to ease last-minute logistical issues.

- Schedule volunteers to arrive at least an hour prior to the first school bell.
- Provide a three- to five-minute briefing of events, activities and timing to volunteers.
- Ask volunteers to walk to their designated stations at least 30 minutes prior to the first bell.
- Volunteers greet students and parents who arrive at their location and accompany them along the remainder of the route to school.
- When the walk is over, ask volunteers to help clean up.

Suggested Invitee List

Extend invitations to the following people in your community:

- FedEx volunteers
- Police officers
- Firefighters
- Emergency medical services personnel
- School principal
- School board members
- PTO members
- Mayor
- City planner/engineers
- City/county administrator
- Council members
- Health/fitness advocates
- Environmental groups
- Parents
- Local media
- Crossing guards
- Student safety patrols
- Teachers
- Nurses
- Federal and state legislators
- State transportation officials
- School bus drivers
- School district superintendent
- Police chief
- Pediatricians
Best Practices from International Walk to School Day

- Poster, coloring, and essay contests
- Held an event with a parade, press conference, fire trucks, mounted police, and police cars
- Organized bicycle giveaways with helmet fittings
- Provided healthy snacks after students decorated sneakers and t-shirts as promotional items for the “Walk to School Day” event
- Kids sat in the driver’s seat of FedEx delivery trucks to understand the visibility limitations
- Co-hosted a Pedestrian Awareness Week involving a walking scavenger hunt
- Held a bike rodeo and in-class discussions were incorporated into the lesson plan
- Organized Olympic style pedestrian safety stations including: 1) Take the Pedestrian Safety Pledge 2) Crosswalk Practice 3) WTW Bean Bag Toss and 4) Driver Visibility with a FedEx truck
- Held a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for a newly installed stretch of sidewalk
- Threw a pizza party for the class that had the most students walk to school over the course of a week
- Crossing guard appreciation breakfast, assemblies, and awards
- FedEx employees, parents, teachers, school officials, and Safe Kids volunteers escorted children to school
- FedEx employees gave safety lessons to students in classrooms
- Distribution of t-shirts, zipper pulls, buttons, signs, stickers, coloring books, and banners
- Whole school safety walks to identify hazards
- Included parents in a walkability study
- Gave out healthy snacks, water, blinking lights, t-shirts, and pedometers to children
- Teachers focused on pedestrian safety curriculum a week before the event
- Pedestrian safety fair and all-school assembly
- Safety lessons through PE classes
- Create “tool kits” for all volunteers with safety information and activity suggestions
- Letters, fliers, and activity sheets sent home with all students to publicize the event
- Put up posters in each classroom before activities
- Walking school buses
- Photos were taken of children walking and displayed in schools afterwards
- Performed school surveys, speed assessments, and environmental surveys
- “Safety Festival” with education stations including crafts, safety education, and giveaways

Helpful Tips from Experience
✓ **Preparation**
  - Start planning early!
  - Laminate the Signs! Increased durability allows for reuse and prevents damage in case of rain
  - Weather makes a huge difference in turnout so be prepared with a backup plan!
  - Signs, posters, and other materials from past years can be reused
  - Work with the PTA early on
  - You can never have too many volunteers
  - Working with the school principal is an instrumental part of the planning
  - Be flexible!

✓ **Popularity**
  - Kids enjoy handouts and holding signs during the walk
  - Reflective giveaways are always popular
  - Students really are interested in learning about pedestrian safety!

✓ **Publicity**
  - **Actively** encourage media presence
  - Posters can be effectively displayed at schools leading up to the event
  - The Tip Sheets do an excellent job of concisely presenting the important information
Pedestrian Safety Messages

Tips for Teaching Kids How to Be Safe Pedestrians

- Children under 10 should never cross the street alone. Hold the hand of an adult when crossing.

- Older children should always cross streets at the corner, using traffic signals and crosswalks whenever possible.

- Stop at the curb or the edge of the road before crossing the street.

- Look left, right and left again for traffic before crossing, even if crossing with the light. Continue to look while crossing. Watch for cars that are turning or backing up.

- Make eye contact with drivers before crossing in front of them. Don’t assume that because you can see the driver, the driver can see you.

- Wear bright-colored clothing. When walking at dawn, dusk or in bad weather, carry a flashlight and incorporate retro-reflective materials on clothing, footwear and accessories. Children should walk with adult supervision at night.

- Do not run into the street or run while crossing.

- Walk facing traffic, as far to the left as possible, when sidewalks are not available.

- Do not play in driveways, unfenced yards, streets or parking lots.

- Cross the street at least 10 feet in front of a school bus.

- Put electronic devices down when crossing the street.

- When using a cell phone, stop on the sidewalk and find a safe area to talk. Look up and pay extra attention when using headphones and turn the volume off when crossing the street.
Suggested Interactive Activities

General Activities
1. Refer to the pedestrian safety lesson plan in this guide.

2. Invite each grade level or classroom to write a safety cheer that incorporates pedestrian safety messages and to perform it at the school assembly.

3. Recruit the upper grade levels to write a skit about pedestrian safety and perform it at the event.

4. Ask each classroom to make posters including the rules for pedestrian safety. Display these at the event and hold a contest, if possible.

5. Set up individual booths highlighting different pedestrian safety tips around the school gym, in a vacant parking lot, on school grounds or in the hallway for children to visit.

School Assembly or Classroom Activity to Demonstrate Retroreflectivity

Retroreflective materials help drivers see (at greater distances) traffic signs, crosswalks and children’s clothing, footwear and accessories. In more scientific terms, retroreflection occurs when light rays are returned in the direction from which they came. Retroreflective material causes a large amount of reflected light to be returned directly, or “bounced back,” to its original source, making this material 1,500 times brighter than white clothing. Since very little light is scattered, retroreflective material appears brightest to an observer (such as a vehicle driver) near the original light source, such as a vehicle’s headlights.

Tools needed:
FedEx volunteer or firefighter uniforms
Flashlights

Give a presentation to the entire student body, if possible. When discussing the importance of retroreflectivity, call four student volunteers wearing dark shirts, two uniformed FedEx volunteers and two fire and police officials to the stage. Ask them all to walk slowly across the
stage while volunteers walk *behind* audience members with flashlights at eye level so students in the audience can see the impact of the reflective materials on the FedEx and police/firefighter uniforms, compared to the children wearing no reflective materials.

Ask children to look at their shoes, backpacks and clothing to determine if they are wearing retroreflective materials. Invite several children to come to the front and “model” their retroreflective gear.

**NOTE:** It is critical to the success of this demonstration that you have a number of volunteers roaming the aisles with flashlights held directly behind students’ heads at eye level, to ensure the light crosses the line of vision for each student. Otherwise, the reflection will not “bounce back” to him or her.

**Mock Street Scene Activities**

1. Design mock streets with intersections in the hallway, gymnasium, playground area or vacant school parking lot using yellow tape. As the children walk the “streets,” they must obey the rules of the road. Some children could wear special T-shirts or clothing to portray themselves as vehicles.

2. Children in the lower grades can ride big wheels with bike helmets and act as vehicles in traffic. A crossing guard can stop them to let the children cross at a mock intersection.

3. Draw lines with chalk or lay strings on the sidewalk to show the child the inside edge of the sidewalk and the outside edge of the sidewalk. Explain to the child that they should always walk on the inside edge, closest to the grass or houses.

4. If a working red light can be obtained from public works, it could be set up to simulate different traffic/pedestrian scenarios. Other street signs (e.g., stop, yield) can be borrowed or created to enhance role playing.

5. Paint a bird’s-eye view of a block of a town on an 8’ X 10’ tarp. Children in a classroom can use this to practice safe pedestrian behaviors.

6. Use a collapsible school bus toy (sold at many toy stores) to help children practice making eye contact with the child "driver” inside before taking 10 giant steps and crossing the street. Make a cloth cover for the “bus” and paint it to look like a local city bus. Talk about waiting to cross until the city bus passes. Children may not differentiate between school and city buses.
**Put On the Brakes**

Take the children to an area where they can form a single-file line. This is the starting line. Ask the children to run at the sound of the whistle. After the children reach their maximum running speed, sound the whistle again. Explain to them ahead of time that when the whistle sounds the second time, they need to “put on their brakes.” After the activity, sit them down and explain to them that, like kids, cars cannot stop immediately. Kids’ brains hear the message to stop, but their feet take longer. As with cars, the brakes give the message to stop, but the tires cannot stop immediately.

**Driver’s Eye**

A FedEx truck or a school bus can be parked in a large open area. Carefully place objects in different areas surrounding the truck, making sure that some will not be visible from the driver’s seat. Suggested objects include wagons, cutouts of a person, and shopping carts. Have the children sit where the driver sits to see how far pedestrians or other objects must be from the truck to be seen by the driver.

**Foggy Vision**

Cut wax paper into 8 ½-inches by 11-inch pieces, and have the children hold them up to their faces. Have the children pretend that the wax paper is fog or rain, and explain that both fog and rain are dangerous. Neither drivers nor pedestrians see well in fog or rain.

**Crossing Guard**

Discuss the role of a crossing guard with the children. Arrange for them to “interview” the crossing guard. In the discussions between the crossing guard and the children, talk about the benefits of retroreflectivity (the crossing guard’s vest is a great example) and situations where a crossing guard may be able to help the students. Then give the children construction paper, glue and scissors to make vests like crossing guards wear. Brainstorm ways to make the vest reflective.

**Group Games**

1. Play “Simon Says” with a pedestrian safety-related theme.
2. Play “Red Light-Green Light” to emphasize the importance of obeying signals.
Pedestrian Safety Lesson Plan

Subject
Navigating Traffic Environments Safely

Age level
Recommended for grades 4 & 5

Background
Children see, hear and process information differently than adults and do not have the developmental skills to adequately deal with traffic. This puts kids under age 19 at a greater risk for pedestrian injuries than adults. After age 10 and during the preteen and teen years, kids are exploring the world more independently and are learning to navigate traffic without the supervision of an adult. This safety activity will give children an opportunity to learn about the traffic environment, driver behavior, as well as how to stay safe while crossing the street.

Kids today are raised with technology, so by the time they’re teenagers, they are already pros at texting and posting pictures. It is important to make safety part of the discussion about responsible use when a child gets his or her first MP3 player or phone.

Goal
The purpose of this activity is to prepare kids to walk safely around traffic, to be aware of their surroundings, learn the risks associated with crossing the street while distracted, and to learn about the safety resources that are present while they are walking. After participating in this activity students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of road safety/ traffic signs and safe crossing techniques.

Discussion Topics

- Define and discuss traffic.
- Ask students if they walk and some reasons why.
- Ask the class what might be dangerous about the street as a pedestrian.
- Ask students where to walk (sidewalk, side of street, facing traffic).
- Ask the students what the word “pedestrian” means. (Allow students time to try and describe the word.)
A pedestrian is a person traveling on foot, whether it be walking or running. It comes from the Latin word “ped” which means “foot”.

- Ask the students what the word “yield” means.

  Yield or give way traffic sign indicates that a driver of a vehicle must slow down and prepare to stop if necessary (usually while merging into traffic on another road) but does not need to stop if there is no reason to.

- Ask the students what phrase “Right – of – Way” means.

  The legal right of a person, or vehicle to pass in front of another.

- Ask the students who taught them how to walk in traffic and cross streets.
- Ask the students what they learned and what do they know already about pedestrian safety and have them make a list of their responses.
- Discuss why signs, signals and laws are needed to keep pedestrians safe while they are walking

  Signs indicate to drivers and road users the legal, recommended way to behave on the road.

  Signals are used so that vehicles, bicycles and pedestrian traffic are managed on the roads.

- Ask the children if they have seen any other children do dangerous or safe things while walking.
- Ask the children if they have seen drivers do dangerous or safe things while they are walking or in their cars? Have they ever felt unsafe while walking? Why?
- Ask the children to make a list of all the things that they can do, wear or use to make them more visible when walking on or near the road.
- Ask the children if some roads and streets may be harder to cross than others. Why?

**Distracted Pedestrians**

Students report that parents & teachers speak with them less about safety as they get older. We can remind pre-teens and teens that taking a moment to lower their cell phone, headphones or game player before crossing the street could be the difference between life and death. It’s a valuable discussion to have when talking about distracted driving—another important danger for pre-teens and teens looking forward getting their drivers’ licenses. Also, encourage students
to keep the volume down on headphones and keep their eyes on the road when crossing a street.

- Put your device down, look, and make eye contact with drivers before crossing. Remember to watch out for cars that are turning or backing up.
- Always walk on sidewalks or paths and cross at street corners, utilizing traffic signals and crosswalks.
- Be aware of others who may be distracted—and speak up when you see someone who is distracted.
- Teens account for 50 percent of child pedestrian injuries.
- If you need to use a cell phone, stop on the sidewalk and find a safe area to talk. Look up and pay extra attention when using headphones and turn the volume off when crossing the street.

*Be sure the following topics/rules are covered as you go over the students responses:

- Cross the street at the corner or at a crosswalk if there is one, and obey all traffic signals.
- Walk on a sidewalk; if there is no sidewalk; walk on the left side of the street, facing oncoming traffic.
- Walk with an adult until you are at least 10 years old.
- Only cross in front of a school bus when the driver says it is safe. Do not cross behind the bus or where the driver can’t see you.
- Hold an adult’s hand when you cross the street. Look left, right and left again before you cross and keep looking both ways until you reach the other side.
- If you walk when it is dark, wear light-colored clothing or clothing with reflective material so drivers can see you. A flashlight is also a good idea.
- If a toy or pet goes out into the street, ask an adult for help getting it back.
- When you are outside playing, play in a backyard or playground away from the street or parking lots.

If working with children under 10 years old, consider addressing these additional topics as this lesson plan is geared towards older kids walking alone:

- Discuss with the students why they should not walk alone until they are at least 10 years old.
- Discuss why younger children may need to walk with an adult and/or to hold a grown-up’s hand while they cross the streets.
• Ask the children who can help them to cross the street safely and have them make a list or say it out loud.
  o Parent, guardian, older sibling, crossing guard, police officer etc.
• Explain to the children why drivers will not be able to see them due to their smaller stature/size.
• Introduce the basic traffic signs to gauge the students level of knowledge and to explain the meaning of each sign.
• Explain to the children that it is difficult to judge the speed of cars, how far away they are and which direction traffic sounds are coming from.