

Subject

Safely Navigating Traffic Environments

Age level

Recommended for kindergarten to third grades (ages 4 – 8)

Background

Children see, hear and process information differently than adults. Younger children, for example, do not have the developmental skills to adequately assess traffic and speeds. This puts children a greater risk for road traffic related injuries, particularly while they are walking. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends that children always walk and cross streets with an adult prior to age 10. After age 10 and during the teen years, children begin to develop the cognitive ability to assess speed and distance.

Goal

The purpose of this lesson plan is to prepare kids to walk safely when in areas where cars, trucks, bikes and motorbikes all compete for the same space on the road. This will help kids become aware of their surroundings, learn the risks associated with crossing the street and understand traffic signs and signals. After participating in this lesson plan students will be able to demonstrate an increase in knowledge of road safety, traffic signs and safe crossing behaviors.

Pedestrian Safety Key Messages

How to Be a Safe Walker:

1. When crossing the street it's always a must, to walk along with an adult you trust.
2. Look left, right, left, and meet the driver's eye, to make sure you're noticed before you cross by.
3. It's best not to cross in the middle of the block. Go to the corner and use the crosswalk.
4. It's up to you to make the right call. Don't dart in the street to chase that ball!
5. Wherever you walk it's important that you look for cars that are turning and backing up, too.



When working with children under 10 years old, consider addressing these additional topics:

- Discuss with the students why they should not walk alone until they are at least 10 years old.
 - Explain to the students that it is difficult to judge the speed of cars, how far away they are, and which direction traffic sounds are coming from.
- 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 student who can help them to cross the street safely and have them make a list or say it out loud.
 - Parent, guardian, older sibling, crossing guard, police officer etc.
- Explain to the students 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.

Additional Discussion Topics:

- Define and discuss traffic safety.
 - *Traffic safety is about how to walk safely and navigate around other road users.*
- Ask students if they walk to school and reasons why they do or don't.
- Ask the class what might be dangerous about the walking environment in their community.
 - Ask students where they walk (sidewalk, side of street, facing traffic).
 - Have they ever felt unsafe while walking? Why?
 - What are some dangerous things that they notice in their neighborhood? (no sidewalk, uneven bricks, etc)
- Ask the students what they consider to be the responsibilities of a pedestrian, cyclist and drivers on the road. What should each do to stay safe and keep others safe?
 - *What does a safe street look like and what can they do to make themselves safe on any street?*
- Ask the students of the different types of traffic signs or signals they have seen, discuss each one mentioned. *Show examples of different types of signs with printed materials.*
 - Ask the students what the "yield" sign means. *How is this different from a stop sign?*
 - *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 is not required to stop. This is important to note because a car might not stop when you expect them to.*
- Discuss why signs, signals and laws are needed to keep pedestrians safe while they are walking.
 - *Signs tell 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.*
 - *Signs and signals help manage the flow of traffic so that it is safe for all road users to use together.*



Pedestrian Safety Lesson Plan

K-3

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- Ask the students if they have seen drivers practice unsafe behaviors? Were they following signs, signals, and rules of the road?
 - Ask the students if some roads and streets may be harder to cross than others. Why?
 - If there is no sidewalk, where is the safest place to walk and cross the street?
 - Ask the students if they have seen any other friends or classmates do dangerous or safe things while walking.
 - Ask the students if they have ever been hit by a car or know a friend or classmate who has?
 - Ask students about the dangers of crossing against the signal or at undesignated crossings, i.e. mid-block.
 - Ask the students 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.
 - Highlight making eye contact with drivers

For more information visit www.safekids.org

