



## Basic Walking Safety: Tips to Teach Road Safety to Kids

An important role of Walking School Bus volunteers is educating children on road safety. Some examples include:

- **Scanning the road environment.** This means children should be reminded to physically turn the head from side to side to compensate for their reduced peripheral vision.
- **To cross or not to cross a road.** This helps children to understand the decision making process. This may include counting the time vehicles take to travel from sighting to crossover point and comparing this to the time taken to cross the road with time to spare.
- **Hearing a traffic sound,** children should begin scanning until they have identified the source and whether the vehicle could be a threat to their safety.
- **If they do not have a clear view of the road in all directions,** then drivers probably cannot see them until too close to stop a collision.
- **Approach pathway ends and road boundaries with caution** and STOP, LOOK (behind-left-right-left), LISTEN, and THINK.
- **Improve children's concentration** by asking questions that cause the child to focus on a given potential or actual hazard.
- Being aware of the influence that children have on each other's behaviors.

### Safety Strategies

- Gather the group at least one yard back from the curb before crossing.
- Estimate the crossing time (depending on the number and age of children—remember that running is not allowed).
- Estimate the 'no-go' point (a point 20 seconds away in each direction).
- Cross the busy roads with small numbers of children (up to six).
- Cross **ONLY** when a **fresh** walk signal has illuminated, if applicable.

### Crossing Roads

- Do not allow children onto a road because a driver has stopped and waved them across. Wait for your signal.
- Holding them well back from the curb reduces the risk that this will happen.
- Do not commit groups of more than ten to cross-traffic road crossings.
- Do not assume motorists will stop.
- Do not attempt to stop traffic in order to cross a road.
- Communicate clearly before moving onto roads.
- Keep the sub-group together and maintain verbal contact.
- Regroup away from the crossover point so others can clear the road.

Source: *Let's Walk Together! Walking School Bus Training Manual Resources*, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.