Walk to School Day
Action Kit

Safe Routes
Alaska Safe Routes to School
# Table of Contents

Invitation ........................................................................................................3

To Do Checklist..............................................................................................4

   Before the Event .................................................................................4
   At the Event .......................................................................................5
   After the Event ...................................................................................5

Recruiting New Volunteers ........................................................................6

Permission Slip ............................................................................................7

Informational Resources ...........................................................................9

Coloring Sheet ...........................................................................................10

Coloring Page ............................................................................................11
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. 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.
   - 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/ 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

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Partners to Involve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal &amp; other admin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA/PTO rep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents &amp; students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers (start w/Physical Education &amp; Health teachers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Improvement, Wellness, and/or Safety committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School crossing guards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities/custodian rep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service learning team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Checklist for Walk and Bike to School Day

#### At the Event

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

#### 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.

**Contact Alaska Safe Routes to School for grant information and possible funding for these projects!**
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: "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?
   o less than 1/2 mile  o between 1-2 miles
   o between 1/2 – 1 miles  o over 2 miles

2. How many children do you have attending this school?
   o 1  o 3
   o 2  o 4 or more

3. What grades are your children in?
   o K  o 4
   o 1  o 5
   o 2  o 6
   o 3

4. How do your children usually get to and from school?
   To School  Home from School
   o Driven (parent/caregiver)  o Driven (parent/caregiver)
   o Carpool  o Carpool
   o Bicycle  o Bicycle
   o Walk  o Walk
   o School bus  o School bus
   o Other (explain)  o Other (explain)

5. If you usually drive your child, why do you make that choice?
   o Safety  o Carrying projects or musical instruments
   o Convenience  o Tardiness
   o Drop  o No safe place to cross the street
   o Too far to walk  o Scary people
   o No sidewalks or not continuous  o Lack of safe place to store bikes
   o High speed vehicles  o No biking or walking route maps
   o Child is too young  o Unfriendly dogs
   o Concerns about crime  o Paths are incomplete or not wide enough
   o Child would not obey safety rules  o Backpacks too heavy
   o Concerns about bullying  o Too many vacant buildings
   o Other
6. Would you allow your child to walk or bike if:
   o Accompanied by other children
   o Accompanied by other parents
   o Safe routes to school were mapped
   o Crossing guards were more effective
   o Safety training was provided for students
   o Crossing guards were more plentiful

   o Cars slowed down
   o Improved sidewalks and bike paths
   o Secure bike storage was available
   o Paths were separated from traffic
   o Safety Patrol was present
   o Other

7. If more walking opportunities were available through school, would you participate?
   o Yes
   o 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_tip-sheets.cfm

http://www.walkinginfo.org/

Biking information:

http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/

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


Safe Routes information:

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


Engineering information:

http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/engineering_tip-sheets.cfm
It's Really Cool to Walk to School!