



[www.sfsaferoutes.org](http://www.sfsaferoutes.org)

*Safe Routes to School SF promotes safe and active walking and biking to and from school.*

#### **DID YOU KNOW ...**

... that walking to school gives everyone a healthy start to the day?

... that fewer cars around the school makes the school safer, the students healthier and parents happier.

... 52% of all SFUSD elementary school students live within one mile of their school?

... every SFUSD school will be getting a bike rack in 2011?

There's an amazing opportunity to increase the number of children who get to school by foot or bike!



#### **More Information and Resources:**

- Safe Routes to School SF has developed walking/biking maps for the 15 schools participating in the program. To see if a map is available for your school, visit [www.sfsaferoutes.org](http://www.sfsaferoutes.org), click *Tools, Walking and Biking Maps*.
- [www.walkingschoolbus.org](http://www.walkingschoolbus.org)
- National Center for Safe Routes to School:  
[www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)

# Walking School Buses

Safety is one of the most common reasons parents who live within walking or bicycling distance to school are reluctant to allow their children to walk to school. Providing adult supervision may help reduce those worries for families. One way to help alleviate parents' concerns is to encourage parents to start a **walking school bus**.

A **walking school bus** is a *parent/caregiver-initiated* group of children walking to school with one or more adults. It can be as simple and informal as several families taking turns walking their children to school, or as structured as a route with meeting points, a timetable and a regularly rotated schedule of volunteers. Once you have an informal walking school bus established among several families, you may want to include more members of your community.

Getting started is easy.

1. **Invite families** who live nearby. Those who live far away and drive can park the car near the meeting point and join the walk from there.
2. **Pick a route and try it out!** When picking a route, make sure there are sidewalks and paths. Avoid busy streets where drivers speed, and pick a route where the environment feels safe. Use a route that avoids potential problems like loose dogs, the presence of criminal activity, vacant buildings or streets with poor lighting.
3. Decide **how often** the group will walk together.
4. **Have fun!**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend one adult for every six children. If children are age 10 or older, fewer adults may be needed. If children are ages 4 to 6, one adult per three children is recommended.

#### **Pedestrian safety skills should be reviewed or taught to adults and children:**

1. **Always look for cars.** Drivers are supposed to obey the rules and watch for people walking, but drivers don't always stop for people walking. Use eye contact and communicate with easy to understand gestures to tell drivers when you want to cross.
  - Remember that just because it is your turn to cross does not mean that it is safe to cross. Do not trust that cars will obey the rules or that turning cars will see you.
  - Look to see if cars are coming. Look left, right and left and then behind you and in front of you for turning cars.
  - Walk, don't run across the street.
2. **Choose the safest routes to walk** with the fewest and safest streets to cross. Avoid crossing busy or high-speed roads whenever possible.
3. **Walk along the street safely** using sidewalks or paths. If there are no sidewalks or paths, walk as far from the cars as possible and face traffic. Watch for cars turning or pulling out of driveways.
4. **Cross at signalized intersections** whenever possible.
  - Remember that just because it is your turn to cross does not mean that it is safe to cross. Do not trust that cars will obey the rules or that turning cars will see you.
  - Look to see if cars are coming. Look left, right and left and then behind you and in front of you for turning cars.
  - Walk, don't run across the street.
5. **If you must cross the street at mid block**, stop at the curb and look left, right and left again for traffic. Wait until no traffic is coming and begin crossing. Keep looking for traffic until you have finished crossing.
6. **If you must cross between parked cars**, stop at the curb and check to see if the cars are running or if anyone is in the driver seat. If safe, cross to the edge of the parked cars, and look left, right and left again before crossing.