

Starting a Walk and Bike to School Day



About Walk to School Days

- » Walk and Bike to School Day events are aimed at bringing forth permanent change to encourage a more walkable and bikeable America—one community at a time. Walk and Bike to School events can be as simple as a few kids and parents meeting to walk to school or very elaborate celebrations.
- » As a member of the school community, you have the power to fuel the Safe Routes to School Movement by encouraging safe and active transportation. Each school is unique, but all can take steps toward improving health, safety and quality of life for Philadelphia students.
- » Throughout the school year the Safe Routes Philly team of the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia helps to encourage schools throughout Philadelphia to get their own Walk to School Day going. The Safe Routes Philly Community Representatives are happy to meet with your school's PTA or community group to further discuss the possibilities. For more information, contact the Safe Routes Philly team at www.saferoutesphilly.org.

Partners

1. GET PARTNERS

PRINCIPAL, POLICE, PARENTS:

Successful events have the support and participation of the principal, police and parents. Ask them to be partners. The school principal can give the school's commitment, while the local police department ensures that safety is a priority. Parents add energy and enthusiasm and make the walk work.

OTHER WAYS POLICE HAVE HELPED WITH WALK TO SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- » Enforcement campaigns to address driver behaviors, such as speeding, failure to yield to pedestrians, etc.
- » On motorcycle, foot, bike or outside a patrol car, greeting kids as they arrive at school.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS:

Schools have gotten sidewalks fixed and new trails built in record time because of partnerships with public officials and other community leaders, such as mayors and city council members. Walk to School celebrations give leaders the opportunity to publicly support health, environment and safety initiatives, so consider finding ways to involve them.

CONSIDER ASKING OFFICIALS TO BE INVOLVED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS

1. Invite them to lead your walk.
2. Present them with the results of the walkability and bikeability checklists and ask for their assistance in making identified improvements.
3. Ask for an official Walk to School proclamation from the mayor or governor.



Law enforcement is a key partner for ensuring the safety of walkers and bicyclists, often taking the lead on events and serving as coordinators. Ask local law enforcement for assistance in controlling traffic on the route.



Contact Safe Routes Philly

We want to help you guys have fun; get in touch with the Community Representatives of Safe Routes Philly to help you register your event.

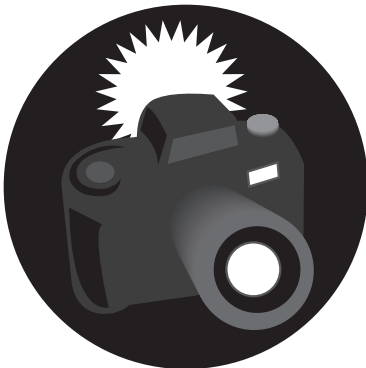
Finally Promote It and Do it!

TELL STUDENTS, PARENTS AND OTHERS HOW TO PARTICIPATE BY GETTING THE WORD OUT.

- » **MAKE ANNOUNCEMENTS AT SCHOOL**
- » **PUBLISH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER ARTICLES**
- » **SEND FLYERS HOME**
- » **POST SIGNS ALONG THE ROUTE A FEW DAYS AHEAD**

Business sponsors may want to hang signs in their stores. Media coverage of the event brings visibility to the event's purpose and any changes that need to be made to make it safer for kids to walk and bike to school. When media covers your event, they help spread the word of the great health, safety, environmental and social benefits of more children walking to school every day. Colorful signs held by smiling, walking children and adults creates a perfect photo opportunity.

Don't forget to take photographs of your big day!



Registering an event makes it known to media, the community and other participants. Register to get additional materials, including templates for printing stickers, certificates, puzzles and a weekly e-newsletter leading up to Walk to School Day with valuable tips for holding a great event.

Promote Your Event

SAMPLE OF WALK TO SCHOOL PROCLAMATION

OFFICIAL INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL DAY PROCLAMATION

Date

Contact: (Name, Organization, and Telephone Number)

Whereas, hundreds of children could be saved each year if communities take steps to make pedestrian safety a priority.

Whereas, a lack of physical activity plays a leading role in rising rates of obesity, diabetes and other health problems among children and being able to walk or bicycle to school offers an opportunity to build activity into daily routine.

Whereas, driving students to school by private vehicle contributes to traffic congestion and air pollution.

Whereas, an important role for parents and caregivers is to teach children about pedestrian safety and become aware of the difficulties and dangers that children face on their trip to school each day and the health and environmental risks related to physical inactivity and air pollution.

Whereas, community leaders and parents can determine the “walkability” of their community by using a walkability checklist.

Whereas, community members and leaders should make a plan to make immediate changes to enable children to safely walk and bicycle in our communities and develop a list of suggestions for improvements that can be done over time.

Whereas, children, parents and community leaders around the world are joining together to walk to school and evaluate walking and bicycling conditions in their communities.

Now Therefore, Be It Resolved that I, (Name, Title of Official) proclaim October 6, 2010, “International Walk to School Day” in (Name of City, State) and encourage everyone to consider the safety and health of children today and everyday.

Contact Safe Routes Philly for the word document to adjust letter to your schools needs.



Plan and organize through your wellness advisory board.



Hold a press conference at the start of your walk or at school when walkers arrive. Urge school and public officials to commit to specific steps they'll take to make it easier to walk all of the time.

Not sure who to invite? Check out the many different officials who have participated in walking events:

- City council members
- City Employees
- The Mayor
- Police chiefs
- Fire chiefs
- Ped/Bike coordinators
- PennDOT employees
- Governors
- Congressional representatives
- superintendents



SPREAD THE WORD AND GET HEARD



Hosting a high-visibility event brings greater awareness to the event's theme, whether that's increasing physical activity, making it safer for walkers, or the environmental benefits of walking instead of traveling to school by car.

Kid-made posters provide great visuals for those who see children walking to school and they make photos of events more appealing. Safety messages to walkers and drivers can be incorporated into signs.

For example, students could make **STOP for kids** or **CAUTION: Kids Walking to School**. Other simple messages used by other Walk to School events include: **SLOW DOWN** or **WATCH for KIDS WALKING**.

Cut posters in the shapes of traffic signs—red octagons for signs that say **STOP** or yellow pentagons for **CAUTION**. Attach signs onto a paint stirrer or yard stick so they're easy to carry and can be held high.

The point is to have great visuals that encourage those who are participating, inform those who are just passing by and provide a photo opportunity for media.

ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR THE CLASSROOM

- » **ART, COMPUTER CLASS:** Create posters promoting Walk to School Day and safe driving and walking messages.
- » **GEOGRAPHY:** Survey and create maps of walking routes to school.
- » **HEALTH:** Use pedometers to measure steps, or simply measure walking time accumulated by students; study health benefits of physical activity.
- » **PHYSICAL EDUCATION:** Do some physical conditioning. Learn walking warm-ups and stretches and do some progressively longer walks in class to prepare for Walk to School Day.
- » **MATHEMATICS:** Keep logs of walking time or steps; calculate speeds and distances, individual and group averages, trends and statistical analysis (do boys or girls walk more?)
- » **PHYSICS:** Study the biomechanics of walking. For example, measure stride lengths—do they vary with height, weight, age, leg length? How does walking speed depend on your step speed and stride length?
- » **BIOLOGY:** Look for specific plant or animal species, or inventory indigenous species along walking routes. Catalogue seasonal changes in the flora and fauna.

- » **ENGLISH:** Write press releases and public service announcements to promote Walk to School Day. Write essays or keep a diary about your experiences walking.
- » **HISTORY:** Study historical locations in your community by walking to them.
- » **SOCIAL SCIENCES:** Photograph important things about your community observed while walking to school. Anything you'd like to change? What can you do about it?

Online Resources

- » **SAFE ROUTES PHILLY** promotes biking and walking as fun, healthy forms of transportation in Philadelphia Schools. www.saferoutesphilly.org
- » **"INTERNATIONAL WALK AND BIKE TO SCHOOL IN THE USA":** <http://www.walktoschool.org/>—great resources promoting walk and bike to school day.
- » **NATIONAL CENTER FOR SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL:** <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/index.cfm> —great resources for walk and bike to school day, including banner ideas, logos, walkability and bikeability checklist, etc.
- » **NEIGHBORHOOD BIKE WORKS:** www.neighborhoodbikeworks.org—a youth organization that works to increase opportunities for urban youth through bicycling. NBW has five different locations throughout the city.

