



WALK AND ROLL TO SCHOOL GUIDEBOOK

Safe Routes to School





Table

of contents

02

It's time to walk and roll to school

03

A school champion

04

Steps to planning an event

06

Great ideas for your event

07

When walking or biking from home is not an option

08

Safety on the event day

09

Moving towards lasting change

Its time

to walk and roll to school

Walk to School Day and **Bike to School Day** are energizing events. It can remind adults and students alike of the simple joy of walking and bicycling to school. For many communities, these events lead to more walking and bicycling throughout the school year.

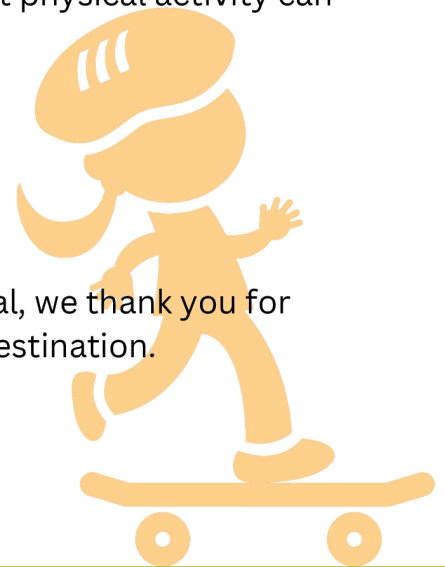
International Walk to School Day takes place every *October* during *Pedestrian Safety Month*. **National Bike to School Day** occurs in *May* as part of *National Bike Safety Month*. Each event is typically held on the first Wednesday of the month. Your school may host an event on the national days or you may choose a day during the month that best fits your school schedule.

The type of event hosted by schools can also vary depending on the school community. Whether October or May, **schools may host a just walk, a just bike, or a combination of walking and rolling event**. There is no right way to do it. Walk and Bike to School Day events come in all shapes and sizes. Start small or start big – the key is to find a good fit for your school community. Through hosting this type of event, schools are able to promote physical activity as well as build a sense of neighborhood and school spirit. Studies have shown that physical activity can positively impact:

- Academic achievement
- Student morning energy levels and attention
- Truancy and absenteeism
- Social bonding and connection to community

From your Regional Safe Routes to School team here at East Central, we thank you for encouraging students to use active transportation to get to their destination.

Jennie, Kim, and Kia



**For More
Information**



eastcentralsrts.org

Visit our website for educational and promotional materials.



click on

Click on the **Events** tab then click on **Walk or Bike to School Day**



scroll

Downloadable materials at the bottom of page

A school champion

Each event is led by a school champion who steps forward to lead the initiative at their school. A school champion can be a parent, teacher, administrator, community member, or even a student – the only requirement is being passionate about the benefits of active transportation! A school champion ensures they have spoken with their school's administration and gotten approval, then rally the support of others in their school community.



Confirm with the school administration you have their support to host an event.



Register your school with East Central WI Regional Safe Routes to School for a free toolkit or safety gear and incentives. Email Kim Dieck at kdieck@ecwrpc.org to let her know you will be hosting a one-day event.

Your school must fall within our seven-county region in Wisconsin to be eligible for a toolkit – Calumet, Fond du Lac, Menominee, Outagamie, Shawano, Waupaca, and Winnebago.



Find your team -Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day are often organized by an enthusiastic team of teachers, parents, administrators and students with support from community partners like grocery stores and bike shops.



Determine a date for your event. You may choose to celebrate on the nationally recognized date or a different day of the month that works best for your school.



Spread the word – make sure others in your school community know the school is hosting an event. Add events to the school calendars, include information in school newsletters, use our downloadable posters or have students make posters.



Plan event day activities – these can include safety instruction, school spirit celebration, or other creative ways to encourage an active commute to school.



Connect with other schools in your district to learn who else is participating and promote for the larger community.



Check walkbiketoschool.org for the date of each national event.

Steps to planning a Walk or Bike to School Day event

one month or more before

- **Obtain** the school principal's approval for an event and together **choose** a date.
- **Decide** if the event will encourage bicycling, walking, or both.
- **Determine** if starting point will be from individual homes or a central location (park, public parking lot, etc.)
- **Watch** for your toolkit to arrive if you registered your event with the East Central WI Regional SRTS program.
- **Notify** the school community of the upcoming event.

two weeks before

- **Invite** students and parents/guardians to participate.
- **Use** school communication to let families know of the event and encourage participation. Reproduce fliers found on our website: eastcentralsrts.org
- **Think safety.** Check with the school, the resource officer, or the local police department to see if there are any special safety issues. You may want to ask for police assistance with traffic along the route, possibly by accompanying a large group or providing traffic control at major crossings.
- **Recruit** volunteers to help distribute fliers and, if desired, greet bicyclist and walkers on the big day.
- Daily announcements will **build excitement** and encourage participation.
- **Determine** how you will distribute incentives to students on the day of the event.

Steps to planning a Walk or Bike to School Day event

one day before

- **Hype** up tomorrow's event, reminding students to walk/bike/roll to school.
- **Encourage** students to join neighbors, and invite parents and guardians.
- At the **end of the school day** make sure everything is ready to go for the morning.
 - Banner (with proper materials for hanging)
 - Incentives organized and system in place for distributing
 - Volunteers informed on their role

event day

- **CELEBRATE**
- Have students who walked/rolled **sign** a banner
- **Distribute** incentives
- If allowed by the school, **take photos** of riders and walkers. Once you have the school's permission, share your event photos on social media. Please remember to tag Safe Routes to School – East Central WI.



Great ideas for your event

- **Provide** nutritious breakfast or snack. Ask the PTO or another school organization for food donations.
- **Incorporate** a pedestrian or bicycling theme into a physical education class.
- **Wear** school colors while walking or biking and **invite** the school mascot to walk/roll to school also.
- **Form** a bicycle train. See www.walkbiketoschool.org/keep-going/ongoing-activities.
- **Ask** all participating students to sign a banner proclaiming “We Walked/Biked to School Today!”
- **Greet** students with fun music as they arrive at school and wait to enter.
- **Provide** parents with maps of suggested walking and rolling routes to school. Note crosswalks, crossing guards, sidewalks, and bike lanes.
- **Ask** students to help plan the event. Members of student council, student safety patrol, and other leadership groups can provide good peer role modeling.
- **Designate** an area for parents to “Park and Walk/Roll” so that children who live further away can participate. Some schools will allow school busses to drop off students at a meeting point so they can walk the remainder of the route with school staff.
- **Invite** local celebrities to walk or roll to school with students. Consider asking the mayor, superintendent, law enforcement, firefighters, and high school sport teams. If inviting others, give enough advance notice for them to plan accordingly.



When walking or biking from home is not an option

There are two main factors that get in the way of walking or biking to school. Some students live too far away to walk/bike and for others there is no safe route leading to school. If distance is an issue but there is a friendly route leading to school, then a remote meeting point can work well. If the school cannot be safely accessed by foot or bicycle, then consider holding an event on the school campus. These events can bring visibility to the reasons why students cannot walk or bike from home and provide a venue to talk about the needed changes.

Events with remote meeting points

- Look for a remote meeting point where families can meet and walk/roll the remainder of the route together. Pick somewhere with a parking lot that does not get much use in the mornings, such as a shopping center or church.
- Communicate weeks in advance so families have time to plan.
- Have staff head over to the alternate meeting point the morning of the event and walk/roll in with the students.



Walk or Bike at School events

Recess, physical education, or even class time can be dedicated to walking/biking together. Students can use the school field or playground. With a little planning they may also walk and roll around the school campus.

- Walk/Roll laps around the track or create a route around the school campus.
- Teach bicycle safety before, after, or as part of the event.
- Invite media to the activity and talk about the benefits of active travel to school and why students currently cannot.

Safety on the event day

and beyond

Be intentional on teaching safety. The safety skills students learn leading up to an event and practiced on their walk/roll to school are carried with them whenever and wherever they walk or bike. Whether you are planning a specific event route or families are walking/biking from their homes, these guidelines can help. To find the safest route to school, consider the following:

Places to walk or bike

Choose sidewalks or paths that are separate from traffic where possible, even if that means the trip will take a little longer. If there are not sidewalks or paths, make sure adults are available to walk/roll with students.

- Check local bicycle regulations for your community. Bicyclists can ride on multi-use paths, but cycling may not be allowed on sidewalks.
- When biking on a sidewalk, pedestrians have the right of way.
- When riding on the road, bicyclists should ride in the same direction as traffic.
- Parents should walk/ride with their children beforehand to evaluate the route and their child's skills. The parent and the child should both feel confident in their ability to walk/ride alone from home before they are allowed to do so.

Places to cross

Minimize the number of street crossings. Avoid busy, high-speed or multi-lane roads wherever possible. When available, cross at a location with an adult crossing guard. Dismounting and walking a bicycle at a crosswalk is the best option.

Pedestrian/bicycle friendly drivers

Look for places where drivers are paying attention, yielding to pedestrians and cyclists and respecting speed limits.

Make a safety plan for the event

Before the event, talk to the principal and other members of the planning team to identify potential issues and how to address them. Potential ideas include:

- Involving law enforcement. Depending on the community, it might be possible to temporarily close streets or have law enforcement direct traffic and assist with crossing students. Law enforcement officers can also use what they know about nearby traffic conditions to help design recommended walking and bicycling routes during event planning.
- If there are particular streets that should be avoided but alternate routes exist, create and distribute maps to show walking and bicycling routes. Use online mapping tools.
- Prepare participants with safety education. Students pedestrians and bicyclists can benefit from education about safe skills before the event. Some organizers get help from law enforcement, others have enthusiastic teachers willing to integrate lessons into their classroom, or PE time. Lesson plans are available at East Central WI Safe Routes to School.
- Give parents what their families need to know for safe walking and bicycling. See Tip Sheets on our website: eastcentralsrts.org
- Notify drivers about the upcoming event by using the school's changeable signage, through local community newsletters, fliers, yard signs and other communication channels. Remind drivers to slow down and yield to pedestrians and bicyclists.

Moving towards

lasting change

Start small

Start small. Have a walk or bike to school day once a month, or choose to a month to walk/roll once a week. The goal is to build awareness and increase participation.

Map

Map infrastructure that encourages walking and biking. Note on the map sidewalks, trails, quieter roads, crosswalks, crossing guards, and pedestrian signals. Provide these maps to families so they can plan the best route for their child.

Host

Host a Bike Rodeo. This is a fun and effective way to teach bike safety and encourage physical activity. Use a bike rodeo to teach proper helmet and bicycle fit, share state and community laws, provide bicycle safety inspections, and give students a chance to practice bike handling skills in various stations.

Organize

Organize a Walking School Bus or Bike Train. This is an organized group of students and adults who walk/bike to school together. The Walking School Bus and Bike Train have a designated route and students can join along the way. Determine the adult to child ratio and ensure an adult is at the beginning and end of the walking/biking group.

Train

Train parent and community volunteers who can help chaperone the Walking School Bus or Bike Train programs. Clearly outline their roles and responsibilities. Consider working with High School groups so older students can be the leaders and role models for younger students.

Educate

Educate students on basic travel safety knowledge. Outline student expectations for those utilizing the Walking School Bus or Bike Train.

