



Toolkit

**Creating a safer, healthier and cleaner
environment for children.**

Provided by:





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The City of El Monte's Safe Routes to School Program Toolkit was developed to promote and enhance the bikeability and walkability of school communities while keeping children safe.



FOREWORD

Parents, teachers, city officials and neighborhood groups are concerned with the health and safety of children. Many of today's children are not receiving enough physical activity to stay healthy and fit. Also, parents are concerned with traffic near their children's schools. The City of El Monte's Safe Routes to School Program is dedicated to addressing those concerns.

The Toolkit contains everything your school needs to move forward with a Safe Routes to School Program and increase the number of children walking and bicycling to school and find solutions to traffic problems near your school.

Contents

How to Use the Toolkit 5

Introduction to Safe Routes to School (SRTS) 6

Creating a Safe Routes to School Plan 9

The 5 E’s: Engineering, Enforcement, Education, Encouragement and Evaluation..... 16

Evaluation 21

Funding 23

Resources..... 24

Conclusion 26



HOW TO USE THE TOOLKIT

Section 1: Introduction to SRTS

This section gives an overview of SRTS including what it is, why it is important and a general discussion of how to implement a program in your community.

Section 2: SRTS Planning

Developing a SRTS Plan helps communities identify problems, recommend solutions and plan for a comprehensive SRTS program.

Section 3: Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and Encouragement Successful

Safe Routes to School Programs address each of these elements to make it safer for children to walk and bike to school and to increase the number of children doing so. Each school is unique so the activities undertaken will differ for each school depending on the issues identified during the SRTS planning process.

Section 4: Walk to School Day

Walk to School Day can be a first step to creating a comprehensive encouragement program and can build interest for SRTS programs.

Section 5: Evaluation

After a SRTS Plan is created, communities must be aware of how important collecting data before and after the program is to ensure continuous improvement and sustainability.

Section 6: Additional Funding and Related Programs

As soon as communities have created a timeline for implementing their SRTS plan, they will want to look at the many funding options.





INTRODUCTION TO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS)

Safe Routes to School is an international movement that promotes walking and biking to school. Its history stretches all the way back to the 1970s in Denmark, which had an alarming number of child fatalities due to road accidents. The movement did not officially reach the United States until 1997, when The Bronx received local funds to implement a Safe Routes to School Program to reduce the startling number of child accidents and fatalities around schools. The success of the program convinced other communities to adopt similar measures and by 2000, Safe Routes to School Programs had swept the nation from Chicago, Illinois to Marin County, California.

In 2005, Congress saw the importance of these programs and consequently signed into law a federally funded Safe Routes to School Program. The new law allocated money to all 50 states and the District of Columbia to create, implement and administer Safe Routes to School Programs. Federal Safe Routes to School funds can only be used for projects within two miles of an elementary or middle school (kindergarten through eighth grade). However, concepts in this Toolkit are applicable to other projects such as those of High Schools or outside the two-mile radius of a school.

Why SRTS?

The benefits of walking and biking to school are important to the entire community for many reasons:

Safer routes

One of the reasons parents do not allow their children to walk and bike to school is because the routes to school are too dangerous. Problems such as incomplete, poorly maintained or missing sidewalks and trails, congested streets and lack of traffic calming devices in the vicinity of schools discourage walking and biking to school. SRTS Programs help communities fix these problems in order to create safer routes so parents are comfortable allowing their children to walk and bike to school.

Healthier children

In the past thirty years, the number of active children in the United States has decreased and the number of overweight children has almost doubled. Kids spend too much time sitting indoors watching T.V. or playing video games. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children in the United States watch about four hours of television a day. Instead, children should be more active. The American Heart Association recommends that children participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. One of the ways to achieve this goal is by getting

students to walk and bike to school. SRTS Programs encourage children to be more active by walking and biking to school.

Cleaner environment

Emissions from cars pollute the air our children breathe and can cause serious health problems such as asthma and bronchitis. Motor vehicle use is now generally recognized as the source of more air pollution than any other single human activity (New State of the Earth Atlas). In order to decrease air pollution, communities should look to reduce the number of vehicles on the roads especially in the vicinity of schools. Fewer cars emitting pollutants will improve the air quality thus decreasing health problems in children. Safe Routes to School Programs decrease the number of cars in the vicinity of schools thereby creating a cleaner environment.

Other desired outcomes of Safe Routes to School

- Reduced fuel consumption
- Increased community security
- Enhanced community accessibility
- Increased community involvement
- Improved partnerships among schools, local municipalities, parents, and other community groups

How do we accomplish this?

In order to accomplish the goals of Safe Routes to School Programs communities must focus on the 5 E's: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement and Evaluation.

This comprehensive approach allows for communities to maximize the number of students walking and biking to school.

Engineering

Problems with the physical environment around schools such as damaged or missing sidewalks, lack of traffic calming measures or unsafe crosswalks prevent children from walking and biking safely and easily to and from school. These problems can be dangerous enough to cause child pedestrian injuries and fatalities. Clearly, a safe physical environment is necessary for enabling children to walk and bike to school. Therefore, Safe Routes to School funds can be used to make infrastructure improvements that will fix these



problems and make the physical environment safer for children.

Improving the physical environment near schools may be necessary for a successful Safe Routes to School Program but not necessarily sufficient enough to get students walking and biking to school. In addition to engineering, Safe Routes to School Programs use encouragement, education and enforcement to get students walking and biking safely and enjoyably to school.

Encouragement

Another key component to the Safe Routes to School Program is encouraging children to walk and bike to school. Convincing children as well as parents and guardians that walking and biking to school is safe, fun and healthy can be a difficult task especially since SRTS may interfere with a parent's already busy schedule or established routine of driving their child to school. That is why the Safe Routes to School Program offers activities and events that promote walking and biking to school that are fun, safe, and easy.

Education

Educating children and parents is an important part of Safe Routes to School. Children as well as parents need to learn about biking and walking safety and the benefits of walking and biking to school. Equally important is educating drivers about safe driving around schools. These programs will help ensure that walkers, bikers and drivers think about safety first.

Enforcement

Driver education and safety campaigns do not ensure the elimination of unsafe driving behaviors. Therefore, Safe Routes to School Programs should partner with the local law enforcement to make sure traffic laws are obeyed (this includes enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians in crossings, and proper walking and biking behaviors), and to initiate community enforcement such as crossing guard programs. Enforcement programs keep an eye on those individuals that disregard the safety of the community, especially around schools.

Each of these approaches is necessary for a successful program. By tackling the project from multiple angles, communities can maximize the safety of the routes to school and increase the number of students that use the routes. All of these techniques, however, cannot be applied without first implementing the fifth 'E.'

Evaluation and Sustaining a Program

Understanding the barriers and obstacles that prevent children from walking and biking to school are essential in implementing an effective Safe Routes to School plan. Evaluation techniques such as surveys will help communities see the current walking and biking behaviors and understand the attitudes that parents and children have towards walking and biking. With this information, communities can make the necessary adjustments (through Engineering, Education, Encouragement and Enforcement techniques) to change behaviors and attitudes. Also, evaluation of the program will be key to continuing Safe Routes to School, so being able to show improvements by comparing before and after data is important. Even more, evaluation can show what techniques did not work so that improvements can be made in the future.

Clearly, a successful Safe Routes to School Program is dependent on the use of all 5 E's.



Traffic Inducing Traffic

Where is Safe Routes to School taking place?

Safe Routes to School is not limited to any one location, demographic or size community. Safe Routes to School is taking place all over the globe from Canada to Great Britain to California. Schools of all different sizes and demographics are implementing Safe Routes to School Programs. From the populated urban streets of to the quiet neighborhoods, Safe Routes to School is already present all over California.



CREATING A SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN

The creation of a Safe Routes to School Plan is an important first step in developing a successful SRTS Program. A SRTS Plan details the methods your community and school plan to take to increase walking and bicycling to school. The Plan also shows the actions required to make it safer to bicycle and walk to school.

An important component of the SRTS Plan is community input. The more people involved with the creation of the plan, the better the chances the community will support it. Organize a SRTS Task Force. Make sure that elected officials, city staff and school administrators are involved. Hold public meetings and publish progress reports where people can read them (a simple Web site or Web log can be used).

A SRTS Plan helps your community and school set priorities and publicize findings to create community support. In addition, a plan will assist in submitting funding proposals should funding be needed for any elements of your plan.

Form a Task Force

Project Leader

The project leader is essential to keeping the SRTS Program moving forward. This person will be a champion for the program. The project leader can be a teacher, a principal, a parent or a local official. However, every SRTS Program needs someone who is responsible for ensuring progress is being made and who brings the organizational skills and enthusiasm necessary to make that happen.

Form a SRTS Task Force

The first step is to prepare a list of potential task force members and invite them to a kick off meeting.

- School principal
- Three or four interested parents
- School Board member
- Representative of the Parent Teacher Organization/ Association
- One to two teachers such as a physical education teacher, health teacher or nurse School transportation coordinator Neighborhood association member

- Local transportation or traffic engineer Representative from local police department
- Local bicycle and pedestrian club or advocate group representative
- City Council president or elected official that represents the neighborhood
- Staff of local health department
- Local Planning Organization (if applicable) Representative from local business

You may have other individuals or organizations that you want to invite to be a part of your SRTS Task Force. Once you have your list together, organize a kick-off meeting.

Send a letter to each person inviting him or her to attend the kick-off meeting. The letter should give a brief explanation of the purpose of the SRTS Task Force and what you hope to accomplish. Allow a few weeks between sending the letter and holding the meeting.

Even if all the invitees cannot attend keep them on your mailing list. You may need assistance from them in the future and it will be beneficial if they are informed of your activities.

Holding the Kick-Off Meeting

- Explain what Safe Routes to School is and its purpose.
- Talk about why you have gotten involved and what challenges you think the children face in your area in biking and walking to school.
- Let people know about health concerns, traffic congestion, and the decreasing trend for children to bike and walk.





- Give participants an opportunity to talk about their safety concerns. Write down the problems and ideas that are mentioned and summarize them at the end.
- Discuss the next steps the task force needs to take and develop a timeline.
- Assign tasks that need to be done by the next meeting.
- Set the date for the next meeting.

Tips for a Successful Program

- Involve potential stakeholders immediately so they have buy-in to the process and decisions.
- Appoint a Project Leader who is focused and has the motivation to keep the program moving and the other committee members interested.
- Develop a schedule and stick to it.
- Develop goals and refer back to them regularly throughout the process.
- Hold efficient meetings. Short meetings are better than long meetings.
- Hold open meetings. Advertise meetings along with other school functions so the larger community can attend. Be open to comments from people not on the committee.
- Be patient but persistent. Accomplishing your goals will take time.

- Celebrate your accomplishments as you go along. Recognize those that have invested time and energy into the program. This will keep people motivated to keep working.

Evaluate Existing Conditions and Identify Issues

Determine school enrollment boundaries

- Work with the school district to get the information necessary to create a map that shows school enrollment boundaries.
- Mark on the map the boundaries for where bus transportation is provided.
- Work with the school district to map the actual home addresses of enrolled students.

Walking and Bicycling Audit

Walking and Bicycling Audits are important tools helping to identify the current conditions in the vicinity of your local school. The maps that were created showing enrollment boundaries, bus eligibility and student locations will be important tools in conducting the walking and bicycling audit.

The audits require that volunteers walk and bicycle nearby streets that children could use to get to school.

The volunteers map any problems that are noticed. When all of the streets have been walked and biked these problems are compiled on one map. Make sure that the maps are simple and easy to read. Complicated engineering drawings can be difficult for the general public to understand. Volunteers may also want to take pictures along the way to further document problems.

School Facilities Assessment

An assessment also needs to be undertaken of the actual school area including building entrances, the drop-off/loading zone, and bicycle facilities.

- Look at the sidewalks, pathways and driveways on the school property. Are they properly maintained? Are they kept clear of snow and debris? Are they cracked or broken? Are there appropriate curb cuts?
- Look to see if secure bicycle parking is provided. Is the amount of bike racks sufficient for the school? Are the bike racks designed in such a way to be easy to use? Is any of the bicycle parking covered to protect bikes from rain? Is it located in an easy to find and secure location? Is it in a well-lit area?

Walking and Bicycling Audit Checklist

Safe Routes to School volunteers should look for:

Sidewalks

- Are sidewalks continuous? Are there gaps in the sidewalk network? Are there no sidewalks at all in some locations?
- Are the sidewalks maintained (broken, cracked, snow covered, standing water)?
- Are sidewalks obstructed (poles, signs, shrubs, dumpsters)?
- Are the sidewalks well lit?
- Are there accessible ramps for wheelchairs?

Street Crossing

- What is the width of the roads near the school?
- Are there crosswalks?
- What is the volume of traffic on the adjacent roads?
- Are there any traffic signals?
- Do traffic signals allow enough time for children to cross?
- Is there a pedestrian signal or warning?
- Do parked cars block the view of oncoming traffic?
- Are there accessible ramps for wheelchairs?

School Zone

- Are there advance signs indicating drivers are approaching a school zone?
- Are there signs specifying a school zone speed limit? If so, what is the speed limit?
- Are there any speed bumps, speed tables, traffic circles or other traffic-calming infrastructure in the area of the school?
- Is the existing signage faded, damaged or outdated?

Driver Behavior

- Do drivers yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk?
- What are the posted speed limits?
- Do drivers follow those speed limits?
- Are drivers speeding up to make it through traffic lights or driving through traffic lights?

Bicycle Specific

- Are bicycle route signs showing the recommended routes present?
- Are marked bike lanes or wide curb lanes available to accommodate bicyclists?
- Are separate bicycle paths available?
- Are the road or paths for bicyclists well maintained?
- Are bicyclists able to activate any traffic signals along the route?
- Do drivers give bicyclists space on the road? Are bicyclists following the rules of the road?

Other

- Are there abandoned buildings or cars along the routes to the school?
- Is loitering a problem?
- Do (actual or suspected) drug activity or other crimes take place in the area?
- Do any homes have scary dogs or loose dogs?
- Are there areas isolated from commercial or residential zones?
- Is there litter or trash?
- What is the air quality like?
- Are there railroad crossings?
- What is the landscaping like?
- Is it conducive to promoting walking and biking?

Note the positive

- Note items that worked particularly well when walking or bicycling the routes to discover the items that work well in your community.

- Noticing these items can help the group when it comes time to make recommendations.
- Walking and bicycling route audit materials
- Instruction sheet describing project and list of questions showing what volunteers should look for on route.
- Maps: smaller for doing audits and larger for compiling audits.
- Clipboards and writing utensils.
- Letter home to parents asking for volunteers.
- Letter to community and school officials letting them know of audits.
- Sample press release announcing audit.

Look to see where both buses and cars drop off children.

Student Drop-off Areas

- Are they designed so that students exiting and entering cars are able to do so safely?
- Are vehicles separated from pedestrians or are students walking in the street or across a parking lot to reach the school?
- Are there accessible curb ramps for wheel chair access? Do the ramps have tactile warning strips or textured concrete?
- What traffic control signs are in the area? Are there signs notifying vehicles that pedestrians are present?
- Is the area well lit?
- Does traffic move freely, or is the drop off area congested?

Bus Loading Zones

- Are bus driveways separate from parent pick-up/drop-off areas?
- Is traffic in the bus loading zone one-way?
- Is there a continuous curb and sidewalk adjacent to the drop-off/loading zone area leading into the school site?
- Is the area well lit?

Policy Assessment

- Determine if your school has any policies encouraging or limiting bicycling and walking to school.
- Find out what your school's physical activity requirements are (PE, recess, after school activities).
- Find out your school's Wellness Policy.

- Find out if your municipality has any bicycle and pedestrian ordinances or policies.
- Review what bus services are provided to the school, their routes and schedules and who is eligible to use them.

Surveys

Survey Parents

- Getting parents to return a survey can be challenging. Think creatively about how you can collect the information.
- Ideas from other schools include: Many schools send the survey home with the child and then remind the children to have their parents fill it out and send it in or send it back with the child.
- Students in middle school may be old enough to assist with the survey process. Have students interview their parents and fill out the survey as part of a class project. Not only does this give parents and students an incentive to do the survey since it is an assignment, but it can serve as a learning tool. If you do this, ensure that students have an opportunity to see the results and discuss them in class.
- Have parents fill out the survey when they arrive for parent-teacher conferences. You still won't get every parent to fill out the survey but are likely to get a higher return rate than a mailing. This can also be a great time to have a table with information on the SRTS project.



Survey and Involve the Students

- Have teachers do a hand count of how children got to school every day for a week.
- In addition, you may want to ask children what routes they like to use to get to and from school. Sometimes this can bring out interesting information. For instance, in one community children preferred to travel on a route that had berry bushes but the adults did not realize why the children used that route until they started asking them questions.
- Some schools have had children create posters depicting their trip to school. These posters are then displayed during community meetings to help keep the focus on children.
- A sample Parent Survey and Student Tally Sheet are included at the end of the Toolkit.

Teacher Input

Work with the Principal to find a time to make a presentation to teachers and other school staff about SRTS. Ask them what they have noticed about student attitudes, any unsafe behaviors they have witnessed, and any other concerns they may have. Ask if they teach any pedestrian and bicycle safety skills or include any transportation issues in their class curriculum.

This is a great time to gauge their interest in including transportation issues in their classroom. Find out if any teachers walk or bike to school and could serve as role models for the school.

Community Input / Parent Teacher Organization/ Association

Hopefully, you have representatives from your local neighborhood and PTOs/PTAs on your SRTS Task Force. If not, it will be particularly important that you gather input from them early in the process. They may already be working on some of the issues you find and may have strong opinions on what should happen on streets in the neighborhood. You may want to make a presentation at a neighborhood association meeting or invite neighborhood residents to a SRTS workshop.

Police Department

It is very important to have a representative of the local police department on the SRTS Task Force. The local police department can offer valuable input on what routes they feel are the safest and other safety issues worth considering. However, if a representative is not on the SRTS Task Force then set up a meeting with the local Police Chief to discuss SRTS.



Other

Crash data: Find the crash data for your community for pedestrian and bicycles. Look for crashes near the school and at the overall number of crashes for children in your community.

Traffic counts: Traffic counts measure the number of vehicles driving in the area of the school. A simple traffic count involves volunteers at each school entrance counting cars arriving during the half-hour before school begins. A more complex count tallies the number of cars passing the school and the number of students biking and walking to school. Your municipality may have automatic vehicle counters that can be installed near the school to get an accurate count of the number of automobiles traveling on the streets near the school.

Speed checks: Work with local law enforcement to see what speeds cars travel on the roads near the school.

Local business traffic: Make contact with local businesses that might create a lot of traffic. Find out their delivery schedules, work schedules or other issues that might affect traffic near the school.

Make Recommendations

The SRTS Task Force should analyze the collected information and look at needed encouragement, education and enforcement activities as well as engineering or physical improvements that are needed.

Once all the information has been collected from site audits, assessments and surveys, take time to analyze the information. Then present it to the community. Publish information in the school newsletter or use your own flyer. Invite the community to a SRTS forum to present the data, discuss issues revealed in the surveys and explain the SRTS Program. People who were surveyed or involved in the audits want to know what happened. You may also get useful ideas from people who are not on the SRTS Task Force.

Remember that some individuals may resist aspects of the program that require changes in their behavior. While these people can challenge the program, they can also contribute to its success. Facilitate a positive process where all concerns are heard. Criticism and dissenting opinions often lead to a better program.

Outline the variety of problems that SRTS programs address and request input and feedback in all those areas. Recommendations will fall into the following categories:

Engineering

Engineering includes a variety of design techniques that can reduce traffic volumes, decrease speed, and improve safety.

Enforcement

Enforcement enlists the help of local police departments to focus enforcement efforts in problem areas and increase community awareness of school safety issues.

Education

Education programs teach motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists about their responsibilities and about traffic rules, while promoting activities that encourage bicycling and walking.

Encouragement

Encouragement activities are a way to get students to apply what they've learned from the Education component in their daily habits.

The committee should use the feedback from the community to develop a list of options. Ensure that your plan includes a specific list of infrastructure improvements that are needed to increase biking and walking and improve safety. Also include the list of educational, encouragement and enforcement components that are needed in your community.

After you have created your list, decide which projects and activities should be pursued first. Keep in mind that some projects will take longer to put in place than others. Think about the ease of implementing the recommendation, the cost and the ability of the solution to make a difference.

Some things may be easily fixed, such as changing or adding signage or adding bicycle racks. Making these easier changes will allow the community to see some immediate results and help build support for more complex projects.

Projects such as constructing a new sidewalk or installing speed tables will require more time to gather support and funding.

These projects also take longer because they require planning, design and construction as well as cooperation among different levels of government. It will often take time for your project to be constructed. However, it is important to start building support for the project so that it is included in your community's plan.

Next Steps

Putting it all together

Slower traffic and a comprehensive non-motorized network create a more livable community where more people can choose to walk and bike with ease. When you create a SRTS Plan, make sure that the entire community has an opportunity to participate and comment on the plan. The more people involved in creating the plan, the better the chances that it will be accepted by the community.

Once you have completed your plan start immediately with events and activities in the school. Consider having a kick off event and invite the media, politicians, parents, school staff, the SRTS Task Force and, of course, children. You may want to hold the kick off in conjunction with an event such as International Walk to School Day, Bike to Work Week or Earth Day.

However, this is not the end of the work for your SRTS Task Force. Look at all the funding options that exist for the various programs and projects you want to undertake. Have committee members begin pursuing the necessary funding and keep your momentum going.

Remember engineering solutions take time but smaller projects and special events can generate immediate results. When people start seeing more children on the streets, the program will take on a life of its own. Most SRTS Programs experience strong support from their communities. When streets are safer for children, they are safer for everyone.

Safe Routes to School plan elements

1. Introduction
 - List of members of SRTS Task Force
 - Basic community and school information
2. Community vision and goals for local SRTS
3. Report of existing condition
 - Map of school enrollment boundaries
 - Walking and bicycling audit
 - Assessment of school facilities
 - School walking and bicycling policies
 - City pedestrian and bicycle ordinances
 - Surveys of students, parents, teachers, etc
 - Crash data, traffic counts, and speed checks
4. Issue identification
 - Information from audits, assessments and surveys
 - Recommendations for improvements
 - Engineering
 - Enforcement
 - Education
 - Encouragement
5. Next steps/Conclusion
 - Steps needed and a timeline to implement both the short-term and long-term recommendations

THE 5 E'S: ENGINEERING, ENFORCEMENT, EDUCATION, ENCOURAGEMENT AND EVALUATION

Different approaches are necessary at different schools to make it safer for children to walk and bike and to get more children to do so. However, most schools throughout use a combination of engineering, enforcement, education and encouragement to achieve their goals.

Engineering

The built environment is a large factor in whether children walk and bike to school. Well-designed and maintained facilities make it more likely that children will walk and bike to school and will improve safety for those that already do.

Not all improvements are expensive and some low-cost solutions are effective and easy to implement. For example, signs and paint are relatively low cost changes that can make a difference in safety. In addition, these smaller changes can help build momentum and support for larger more expensive changes such as new sidewalk, trails or traffic calming measures.

Law Enforcement

Engineering improvements alone will not guarantee a safer driving, bicycling and walking environment. For that reason Safe Routes to School Programs should partner with local law enforcement agencies to help ensure good driving, bicycling and walking behavior.

Although many people see enforcement merely as police officers writing tickets, your Safe Routes to School program needs to recognize that local law enforcement can be involved in a variety of ways. One strategy is to increase the presence of police officers around schools to discourage dangerous driving or other unlawful activity. Further, they can help evaluate traffic problems and create practical solutions. Police officers can also help educate students, parents and the community about safety issues.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Education

If children are already walking and biking to school or if you're looking to begin an encouragement program children should receive bicycle and pedestrian education.

Before beginning a bicycle education program it is important that the potential instructors are well trained. Instructors interested in teaching a one-day bicycle rodeo can take a free course titled Teaching Safe Bicycling through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Safety. In addition, the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin has developed a bicycle and pedestrian education curriculum for those who want to go beyond just a short rodeo.



Things to remember about children and bicycling:

- Children have a narrower field of vision than adults, about 1/3 less.
- Children cannot easily judge a car's speed and distance.
- Children assume that if they can see a car then its driver must be able to see them. However, children are easily hidden from view by parked cars and other objects.
- Children cannot readily tell the direction a sound is coming from.
- Children may be impatient and impulsive.
- Children can concentrate on only one the thing at a time.
- Children have a limited sense of danger.
- Children often mix fantasy with reality.
- Children imitate the (often bad) behavior of others, especially older children and adults.

When teaching bicycle skills ensure that all participants wear helmets. Teaching children the importance of wearing a helmet is critical and a habit that should be instilled at an early age. In addition, make sure your volunteers set a good example by wearing their helmets when riding.

Environmental and Health Education

Children and parents can also learn about the health and environmental benefits of walking and biking. The impact of motor vehicle use on air quality and the long-term health benefits of daily physical activity can be stressed.

Personal Safety Education

Many communities and schools use their Safe Routes to School Programs as an opportunity to teach children a variety of ways to stay safe. Fear of abduction or assault is a common worry for parents that prevent them from allowing their children to walk or bike to school. SRTS programs need to address parents' perceptions of this danger as well as teach children about the real dangers that exist. Many schools work with local law enforcement agencies to teach children about stranger danger. In addition, walking school buses can be started as a way to address parents' fears by creating a reliable way for children to walk to school under adult supervision. In addition some schools teach about bullying and violence prevention along with bicycle and pedestrian safety.



Educating Drivers

Parents, neighbors and other community members may drive near the school each day. All of these people can help or hinder safety near the school. For that reason it is important to educate drivers so that they travel at safe speeds, yield to pedestrians and bicyclists and stop at stop signs. This will help create a bicycle and pedestrian friendly environment near the school.

Many communities also sponsor yard sign campaigns with messages such as "Drive 25, Keep Kids Alive" that remind drivers to slow down. This is one way to encourage individuals to make their own commitment to driving the speed limit.

Radio or Public Service announcements during prime commute times can also be effective. Combining these with an overall media campaign that includes newspaper articles or television features can really make an impact both drawing attention to the importance of safe driving and highlighting your local SRTS program.

Special attention may need to be given to parents who frequently drive their children to school as all too often they contribute to safety problems. A variety of tools can be used.

Well established methods such as articles in backpack newsletters, on school Web sites and in e-mails sent to parents can be effective. Some schools hand out information flyers to parents as they drive up to the school. In addition, clear signage and pavement markings can guide parents safely through the school

area. In addition, a SRTS committee may want to invite the school PTO to address this issue as often times parents are unaware how their own driving behavior creates risks.

Encouragement

Encouragement is another key component of a Safe Routes to School Program. Convincing children as well as parents that walking and biking to school is safe, fun and healthy can be difficult especially since parents and children may be reluctant to alter their already established routine. That is why it is important to offer walking and biking activities and events that are fun, safe and easy. And, encouragement activities can often be easy as well as inexpensive to start. Communities often start their encouragement programs by holding a Walk to School Day event.

Walk to School Day

Each October, millions of children, parents, teachers and community leaders across the globe walk to school to celebrate International Walk to School Day. It is an energizing event, reminding parents and children alike of the simple joy of walking and biking to school. It also serves as an opportunity to focus on the importance of physical activity, safety, air quality and a more walkable community. Once children and parents discover the joys of walking and biking through such events, they are more motivated to continue on their own. This is why Walk to School events can be a great way to jump start a Safe Routes to School Program in your community.

Implementing a Walk to School Day

Getting Started

Find parents, teachers, local police and other key community leaders and supporters that will help organize and promote the event. Potential partners include PTA/PTO members, physical education teachers, school nurses, public health department staff or other community members with an interest in physical activity, safety or pedestrian issues.

Planning

Working with your partners, decide what type of event fits your school and community. Then choose a focus for the walk, such as promoting physical



activity, pedestrian safety or a cleaner environment and determine whether the event will last one day or a week. Consider involving local businesses, as they may be able to sponsor the event and provide participants with incentives.

Registering

Register your event online. By registering, you make the event known to media, your community and other participants. In addition, you demonstrate a commitment to changing transportation habits and provide an opportunity for data collection. You'll also get access to additional materials and information and the chance to win money for your event! Register at <http://www.walktoschool.org/>.

Promoting your event

Let students, parents and others know about your event and how they can participate. Make announcements at school, publish school newsletter articles and send flyers home. If possible, post signs along the route a few days ahead to let the community know about the event. Business sponsors may want to hang signs in their stores.

Media coverage of the event brings visibility to the event's purpose and can help build support for any changes that need to be made to make it safer for kids to walk and bike to school. When media cover 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. (Customize the materials provided to you on the CD to your school/community to help promote the event.)

Safety First: Convincing the Parents

Many parents are reluctant to allow their children to walk or bike to school on their own because of safety issues and many parents do not have time to walk or bike with them. Below are activities that put walking and biking safety first.

Walking School Bus

Alleviate parents' concerns for safety by organizing a walking school bus. By inviting adults to walk along with a group of children, parents will feel less concerned with their children walking to school (For more information on how to start a walking school bus, visit www.walkingschoolbus.org)

Bike Trains

A bike train is like a walking school bus except students ride their bikes to school. Bike trains, however, require students to learn and know bike safety rules and wear a helmet. Hold a workshop on bike safety before the event to teach bike safety rules. Also, there must be a smaller parent to student ratio for a bike train because more attention is needed on each student to ensure their safety.

Alternative Drop-offs

For students that live too far away to walk or bike to school, an alternative drop-off location can be designated so that these children still have the option of walking and biking to school. A good drop-off location must be big enough to allow safe drop-offs, be close to the school and have safe sidewalks connecting to the school. From the alternative drop-off location, parent volunteers walk or bike with the children to school.

Events and Contests: Convincing the Children

Convincing children to walk and bike to school on Walk to School Day may be difficult. Below are a list of events and contests that create enthusiasm for Walk to School Day or any day.

Class Competition

Classes can compete against each other based on walking and biking related activities. For example,

schools can reward the class that has the highest percentage of students walking and biking to school, the most miles walked or biked to school, etc.

Frequent Rider Miles

This contest rewards students for personal transportation choice. A student receives a tally card to mark his/her points. Students earn two points every time they walk or bike to school and one point every time they carpool or take the bus. When they earn twenty points, students turn in their card for a small prize and get another card. At the end of the contest, hold a raffle drawing of all the completed tally cards for prizes. Contact local businesses and ask them to donate prizes.

Poster Contest

Poster contests allow children to be creative and have fun while learning about better walking and biking safety practices. Use themes such as pedestrian safety or best biking practices and allow for students to compliment their artwork with creative slogans. Display copies of the winning poster around the community to advertise

Walk to School Day or Safe Routes to School.

Walk and Bike Across America

This contest allows students to get a broader perspective on the freedom provided by walking and biking. Students keep track of the distance that they walk and bike to school by calculating how far they live from school and multiplying that by the number of one-way biking and walking trips. If children are dropped off at alternative drop-off points near the school they calculate the distance they travel from there. Similar counts are made from home to the bus stop. Children could also be given pedometers for this project.

Each week at a designated time, the students add up the distance that the whole class traveled during that week and plot it on a map. Then they "travel" to a destination chosen by the class within those miles. Students become aware that they can travel great distances on foot or by bike. As your class continues to accumulate miles, the class can research new

destinations around the country. At the end of a designated time, the class that has traveled the farthest gets a special reward, such as a video or pizza party.

Hold an assembly

Hold an assembly with speakers on safe walking and biking. Have local dignitaries attend to emphasize the importance of physical activity. Invite parents to attend so they receive the message as well. You could also invite local bike clubs or teams to come speak about biking. Have them bring expensive, lightweight bikes to show the kids and have them wear their local club or team jersey. Racers can talk about what it takes to compete in bike racing, train over long distances and answer questions about how it works. If your local area has a long distance cyclist have them show the children how they hauled their clothes, tent and other

belongings by bike. No matter what, have them stress the importance of always wearing a helmet. They may even have a cracked helmet to show the children.

Going Beyond a Day

Safe Routes to School

Increasing physical activity among children, teaching safe walking and biking skills, reducing traffic and improving the environment around schools can not be achieved in one day. Addressing all these problems takes time.

Walk to School Day is only the beginning, yet it is a great way to start a long-term program. A Walk to School Day event can bring attention to existing obstacles for biking and walking as well as build community enthusiasm to make change. Use the momentum from the Walk to School Day to continue building a Safe Routes to School Program.

EVALUATION

Being involved with Safe Routes to School can be fun and exciting as people work to change behaviors and improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities. However, at the end of the day everyone wants to know if the programs and activities undertaken were successful. Decision-makers, grant administrators, and local advocates need concrete evidence that the program was a success.

For those reasons, evaluation activities are an important component of a Safe Routes to School Program and should be planned for from the beginning. Collecting data is important at the beginning of a project in order to identify and address areas of concern.

This identification of a problem is a powerful motivator for action to create safe routes to school. Ongoing evaluation helps keep a project on track, and to document changes at different points in time.

Many people may worry that doing an evaluation is only about showing whether their program and activities were a success or even worse a failure. However, in reality, evaluation is about looking for continuous ways to improve the program and get feedback on your work. No programs or activities are perfect, so evaluation gives SRTS leaders the knowledge needed to make continuous improvements.

Getting Started

Ensure that the program objectives that you set at the beginning of the planning process are reflected in your evaluation. Look back at the goals for your program as a starting point for your evaluation, as they will guide you in deciding what evaluation activities to undertake. Your original goals will also help you decide what you want to measure.

Just like in developing a SRTS Plan, involve as many stakeholders as possible in the evaluation process. Different stakeholders will be interested in finding out different pieces of information related to their specific areas.

When developing an evaluation plan, the SRTS Task Force must keep in mind the resources that are available. Consider not just how much money is

available for evaluation, but also how much time the Task Force can devote to evaluation activities.

- Ask your SRTS Task Force if any of them have professional experience with evaluation and, if so, utilize their expertise.
- If you have a college in your area consider contacting them to see if there are any college students who might be willing to assist with the evaluation.
- If your committee has the funding, you may be able to contract with a consulting firm to assist with the evaluation. Having the evaluation done by someone outside the Task Force can make the results seem more impartial and will add a new perspective that can be valuable.

Gathering Data

It is important that information was collected during the planning stages of your SRTS Program. Without this baseline information it is difficult to show success and do a thorough evaluation.

There are many sources of information that can be used in evaluating SRTS programs.

A SRTS Program may collect data on all of these issues or just the ones pertinent to their SRTS objectives. In addition, some of this data is more technical and will likely require assistance to collect. You will need to work with your community partners to collect data on changes related to issues such as air quality, crash rates and vehicle speeds. Some information will be easier to collect such as the quality of the pedestrian facilities or the total number of cars dropping off children in the morning.

In addition, your evaluation should include information on number of media articles or stories, total attendance at community or neighborhood meetings, and quantity of partners involved with SRTS Task Force. Measuring media attention, outreach efforts and new partnerships gained is also an important measure of success for a SRTS Program.

Surveys

You will want to use the exact same surveys that were used during the planning process for your evaluation

so that the information that you collect is comparable. From the beginning you should establish a schedule for doing surveying and stick to that schedule.

Observations

Observations are a good way to collect information for evaluation. When people respond to questions in a survey or in an interview they may be reluctant to respond in ways that won't be seen as acceptable or that might be viewed negatively. Observations can be used to gauge actual behavior such as speeding, number of cars yielding to pedestrians, number of cars dropping children off, etc.

Interviews

In addition, it may be valuable to take time to interview some key participants in the SRTS Program. Although you could survey a school principal or other key stakeholders you may find out more in-depth information by conducting an interview. If this is done it is important to prepare the questions before hand and ensure that the questions are focused on the information you are trying to gather. Remember to be prepared so you do not waste the person's time that you are interviewing.

Utilization

Once the evaluation is done it should be put to use. It should be used to help target changes in your activities. The evaluation may also help you find new directions for your program. The evaluation may also point to areas where you need to add emphasis.

The evaluation may also be a tool to get policy makers more interested in the SRTS Program. If your organization can show what affect your programs have already had, policy makers may be favorably impressed

and more interested in working with you on the issues. Your Task Force may want to try and arrange to make a presentation of the information to your school board or community's elected officials. A well-designed presentation with visuals can be a more effective method of getting your message across than simply sending the report.

Evaluation Report

Formal Report

A longer, more detailed report should be prepared that includes all the important information that was collected from the evaluation. This longer report should be available for funding agencies, policy makers, local advocacy organizations and Task Force members.

Executive Report

A shorter report should be made available for parents, teachers, and other stakeholders who will not have the time to read a long formal report but who are interested in the evaluation findings.

Press Release

A one-page press release summarizing the evaluation findings should be sent to the local papers to get the word out in the community.

It is important for all SRTS Programs to gather data. We realize that it can be hard to gather some of the data that has been discussed. In addition, the information can vary from month to month, and season to season. Data gathered from children can be inaccurate or incomplete. Nevertheless, as more people in more communities work on SRTS, everyone's data will add to the overall understanding of what works.

FUNDING

Parts of a SRTS program will cost very little money. Many of the SRTS activities can be carried out by parent volunteers, student volunteers, and school staff with minimal investment. For example, most Walk to School Day coordinators say they spend less than \$100 on their events. There are many low-cost engineering solutions that can be put into place in a relatively short amount of time such as new signs or fresh paint on crosswalks. However, funding for larger project or program efforts may be necessary. Successful implementation of district-wide programs, engineering/infrastructure improvement and enforcement strategies may require more significant investment.

SRTS programs and activities are eligible for federal, state, regional and local funding. Please consider partnering with local agencies and community based organizations when applying for funding.

There are several places to seek funding for SRTS program activities including:

Federal programs: Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (including funds allocated to SRTS), Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality, Surface Transportation Program, Recreational Trail Program and others.

- State SRTS programs.
- Environmental and air quality funds.
- Health and physical activity funds.
- County and city funding.
- School District funding.
- PTA/PTO budgets.
- Philanthropic organizations.

Additional Sources for SRTS Funding:

Highway Safety Improvement Program:

Provides funding for bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements, as well as education and encouragement programs.

www.dot.ca.gov/d4/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(CDC): Grants and contracts are available for programs and projects that support the mission of promoting health and quality of life by preventing and controlling disease, injury, and disability.

www.cdc.gov/other/about_cdcgov.html

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): Grants are available for environmental education projects that enhance the public's awareness, knowledge and skills to help people make informed decisions that affect environmental quality.

www.epa.gov

Active Transportation Program (ATP): The ATP consolidates existing federal and state transportation programs, including State Safe Routes to School (SR2S), into a single program with a focus to make California a national leader in active transportation.

www.dot.ca.gov/d4/

Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grants: Funds local and regional multimodal transportation and land use planning projects that further the region's RTP/SCS, contribute to the State's GHG reduction targets, and also assist in achieving the Caltrans Mission and Grant Program Overarching Objectives.

www.dot.ca.gov/d4/

Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) Grants: The Office of Traffic Safety distributes grants statewide to establish new traffic safety programs or fund ongoing safety programs. OTS grants may only be applied to non-infrastructure projects, such as Walk Safe, Bike Safe Train the Trainer Programs.

www.ots.ca.gov

RESOURCES

Safe Routes to School Clearinghouse

Peggy DaSilva
Center for Health Training
614 Grand Avenue, Suite 400
Oakland, CA 94610
Tel: 877-4SAFERT
www.4saferoutes.org

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign

1301 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1707
Tel: 202-662-0900
www.safekids.org

Safe Moves

2000 Doolittle Blvd.
San Leandro, CA
Tel: 408-374-8991
www.safemoves.org

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC) The University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center

730 Airport Road, Suite 300
Campus Box 3430
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3430
Tel: 919-962-2202
www.pedbikeinfo.org
www.bicyclinginfo.org

National Walk to School Day

www.walkstoschool-usa.org

International Walk to School Day

www.iwalktoschool.org

California Walk to School Day Headquarters CA Department of Health Services

E-mail: Walkday@dhs.ca.gov
Tel: 888-393-0353
www.cawalktoschool.com

Model Programs

Safe Moves

2000 Doolittle Blvd.
San Leandro, CA
Tel: 408-374-8991
www.safemoves.org

Marin County Safe Routes to Schools Marin County Bicycle Coalition

Wendi Kallins
PO Box 201
Forest Knolls, CA 94933
Tel: 415-488-4101
www.saferoutestoschools.org

California's Safe Routes to School Initiative

Anne Seeley
**UC San Francisco/CA Department of Health
Services**
PO Box 942732-Mail stop 675
Sacramento, CA 94234-7320
www.dhs.ca.gov/routes2school

Florida Traffic and Bike Safety Education Program

University of Florida
Linda Crider, Director
Pete Davidson, Program Assistant
Department of Urban & Regional Planning
PO Box 115706
Gainesville, FL 32611
Tel: 352-392-8192
www.plaza.ufl.edu/lcrider

Safe Routes to School Pilot Program

Dorthea Haas
Project Coordinator, WalkBoston
156 Milk Street
Boston, MA 02109
Tel: 617-451-1570
www.walkboston.org/

Arlington County Safe Routes to School Arlington County Public Affairs Division

2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 310
Arlington, VA 22201
Tel: 703-228-3969
www.civfe.org/schosafe.htm

The Bronx Safe Routes to School Program

Earlene Wilkerson, Outreach Coordinator
Transportation Alternatives
115 W. 30th Street, Suite 1207
New York, NY 10001
Tel: 212-629-8080
www.saferoutestoschool.org

League of American Bicyclists

1612 K Street, NW, Suite 401
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: 202-822-1333
www.bikeleague.org

The Center for Livable Communities

Local Government Commission
1414 K Street, Suite 600
Sacramento, CA 95814
Tel: 916-448-1198 or 800-290-8202
www.lgc.org

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

1100 17th Street, NW, 10th Floor
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: 202-331-9696
www.railtrails.org

Public Health Organizations

American Heart Association

7272 Greenville Avenue
Dallas, TX 75231
Tel: 800-AHA-USA1
www.americanheart.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

4770 Buford Highway, NE
Atlanta, GA 30341-3717
www.cdc.gov/ncipc

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Physical Activity–Kids Walk to School programs

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physicalactivity/htm.

The American Lung Association

1740 Broadway
New York, NY 10019
212-3115-8700
www.lungusa.org

Videos

Stop, Look and Listen with Willy Whistle/Walking with Your Eyes

“Willy Whistle” is a lively, animated character featured in this video designed to teach pedestrian skills to children. “Stop and Look with Willy Whistle,” the first segment of the video, is designed for children in kindergarten through third grade. The second segment, “Walking with Your Eyes,” teaches more complex pedestrian behavior for children in grades four through seven, and is supported by a teacher’s guide (6P0062).

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
Tel: 202-366-0910
www.nhtsa.gov

Ride Smart: It’s Time to Start

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
DOT HS 809 397 (January 2002)
Tel: 202-366-0910
www.nhtsa.gov

A Kids Eye View

Basics of Bicycling
Effective Cycling
League of American Bicyclists
Tel: 202-822-1333
www.bikeleague.org

California State Automobile Association

150 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102
Tel: 415-565-2305
www.aaafits.org
www.ottoclub.org

Jello in a Jar (excellent helmet safety video)
www.safekids.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id=104&folder_id=184

Bill Nye the Science Guy

http://asp.disney.go.com/Educational/TeacherStore/db/detailed_view.asp?product_id=68A37VL00

CD-ROMS

CycleSmart (Animated cycle safety training for elementary students.)

www.ingenuityworks.com

E-mail: info@ingenuityworks.com (please include your name and phone number.)

Tel: 800-665-0667 (toll free from United States and Canada)

604-412-1555

Fax: 604-431-7996

Safer Journey

Interactive CD-ROM for improving "Pedestrian Safety"; useful for elementary and middle school. It is available on CD-ROM and also can be viewed online at http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/ped_bike.htm; click on "Pedestrian Info" and then click on "Safer Journey."

Federal Highway Administration

400 7th Street, SW

Washington, DC 20590

Tel: 202-366-8044

Fax: 202-366-3222

Government Agencies

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

400 Seventh Street, SW

Washington, DC 20590

Tel: 202-366-0910

www.nhtsa.gov

Safe Routes to School Program

(California Department of Transportation)

PO Box 942873

Sacramento, CA 94273-0001

Tel: 916-654-5266

www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoute.htm

Federal Highway Administration

400 Seventh St., SW

Washington D.C. 20590

www.fhwa.dot.gov

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Atlanta, GA

www.cdc.gov

CONCLUSION

Safe Routes to School Programs are already underway in many schools and communities both large and small. Some schools are just starting by holding a Walk to School Day event while others are already making infrastructure changes and holding events throughout the year. What these communities have in common is a desire to increase the safety of children walking and biking to school and also increase the number of children who are walking and biking.

Bicycling and walking are important elements in a good transportation system. Constructing sidewalks, installing bicycle parking, teaching children to walk and bicycle safely all contribute to the safety and mobility in your community.

Once you have read through this toolkit start by forming a Task Force and developing a SRTS Plan. Once you have a SRTS Plan it will take enthusiasm and energy to keep moving forward. Hold a Walk to School Day or other fun events to keep enthusiasm high.

Remember, with a broad base of community support change is possible. Your work can achieve dramatic results in the safety and physical activity level of the children at your school and in your community.