

Step by Step: **Parents and Kids Make a Difference!**



Parents:

Do you remember when you were young and walked or cycled to and from school? Well, those days are back!



"Parents are concerned about heavy traffic and issues like child abductions. They see their vehicles as safe, but our school is trying to communicate that there are other ways to be safe, much healthier and environmentally friendly at the same time." *Principal, Bowmore Public School, Toronto.*

Did you know that two-thirds of Canadian children live within a 30 minute walk of their school, but less than one-third walk as a rule?

Traffic safety, fear of strangers and hectic lifestyles has forced many modern parents into their cars. But did you know that ASRTS programs contribute to community safety, healthier families, reduced traffic and cleaner air?

More families walking or biking to school results in:

- More parental "eyes on the street"
- Children getting to know their community better
- Parents getting to know other parents
- Children learning important road safety skills
- Regular physical activity becomes a part of your family's day

Fewer vehicles at school results in:

- No parking tickets and traffic headaches at school
- Increased safety for students
- Cleaner air around the school

When people walk regularly to school, and other local destinations, they start to recognize each other and friendships develop. It becomes easier to identify when strangers are present in communities.

And ... you can save \$money\$ in fuel costs.



Some of us are just too busy to walk our children to and from school every day. So try it just once or twice a week.

Check out the options on the back of this page.

"Benefits of daily physical activity: weight control, lower blood pressure, less stress and better academic performance. It also lowers the risk of heart disease when active children reach adulthood."
Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Walking Wednesdays/Trekking Tuesdays: Set aside one day a week to walk to school.

Walk a Block: Park your car in a legal, safe parking spot a few blocks from the school, then walk the remaining blocks with your children.

Walking Buddies: A great way for older students to walk to school in safety with their friends. Students look out for each other and enjoy the responsibility this entails.

Walking School Buses: Volunteer parents who live on the same block or in the same apartment building, take turns walking children to and from school. Initially everybody walks, sharing responsibility, conversation and building social networks along the way. Later, as trust is built and schedules get organized, taking turns can save time.

"The Walking School Bus is a great way to reduce traffic congestion around our schools, making our communities safer for everyone." *Community Police Officer.*

Don't let the weather get you down ... be sure to dress appropriately when walking or biking to school. Umbrellas and rain gear for wet weather days; snow suits, boots, hats, scarves and mitts for snowy days; sunscreen and a wide-brimmed hat for sunny days. And be sure to throw an extra pair of socks or mitts into the backpack.



"It's really cool to walk to school!"