

# The Discover Inclusive Safe Routes to School Guidebook

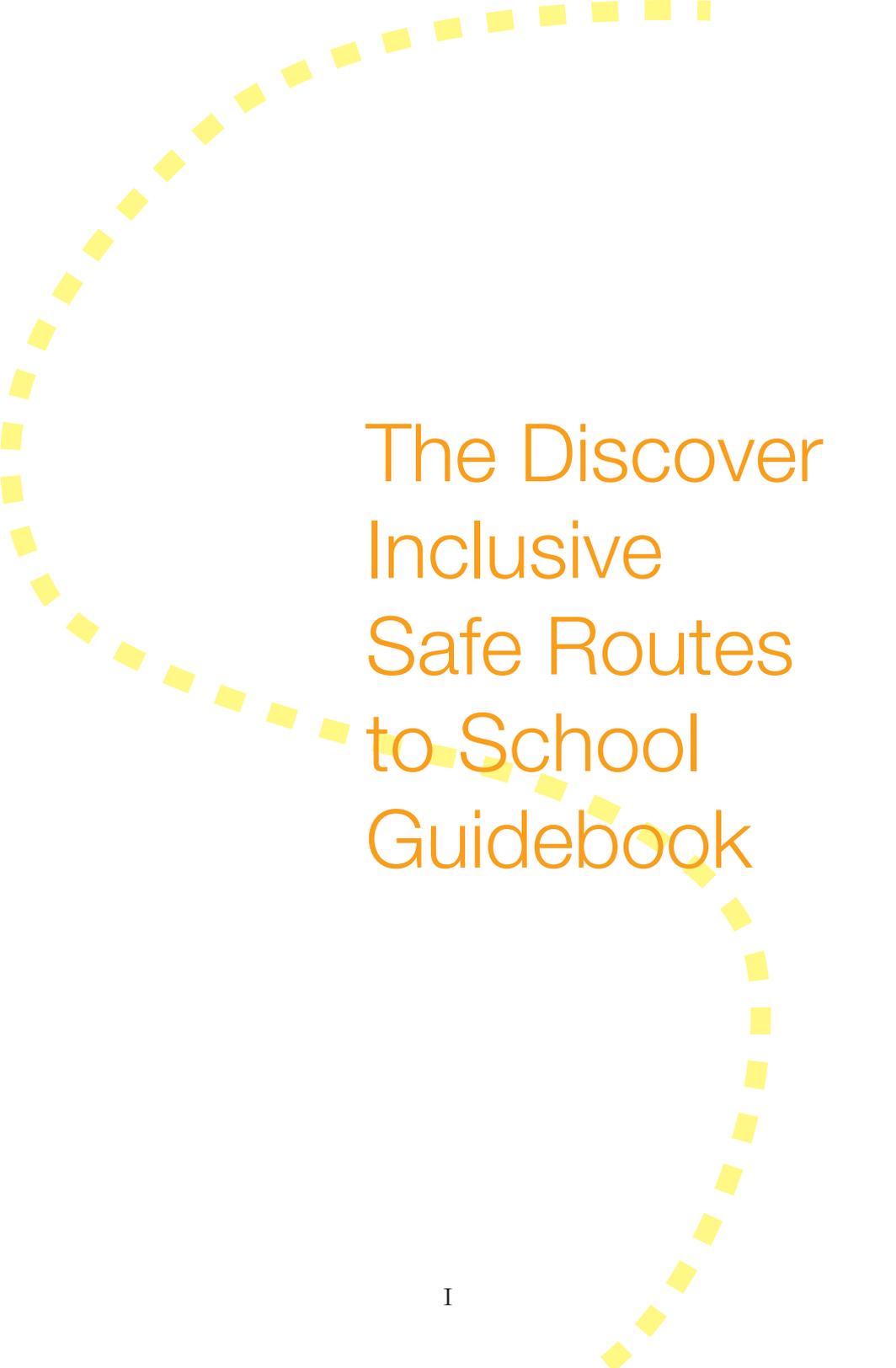
A guide for students, parents, educators,  
and others to enhance understanding and  
participation of students with disabilities in  
walking and wheeling to, from, and at school.

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# The Discover Inclusive Safe Routes to School Guidebook

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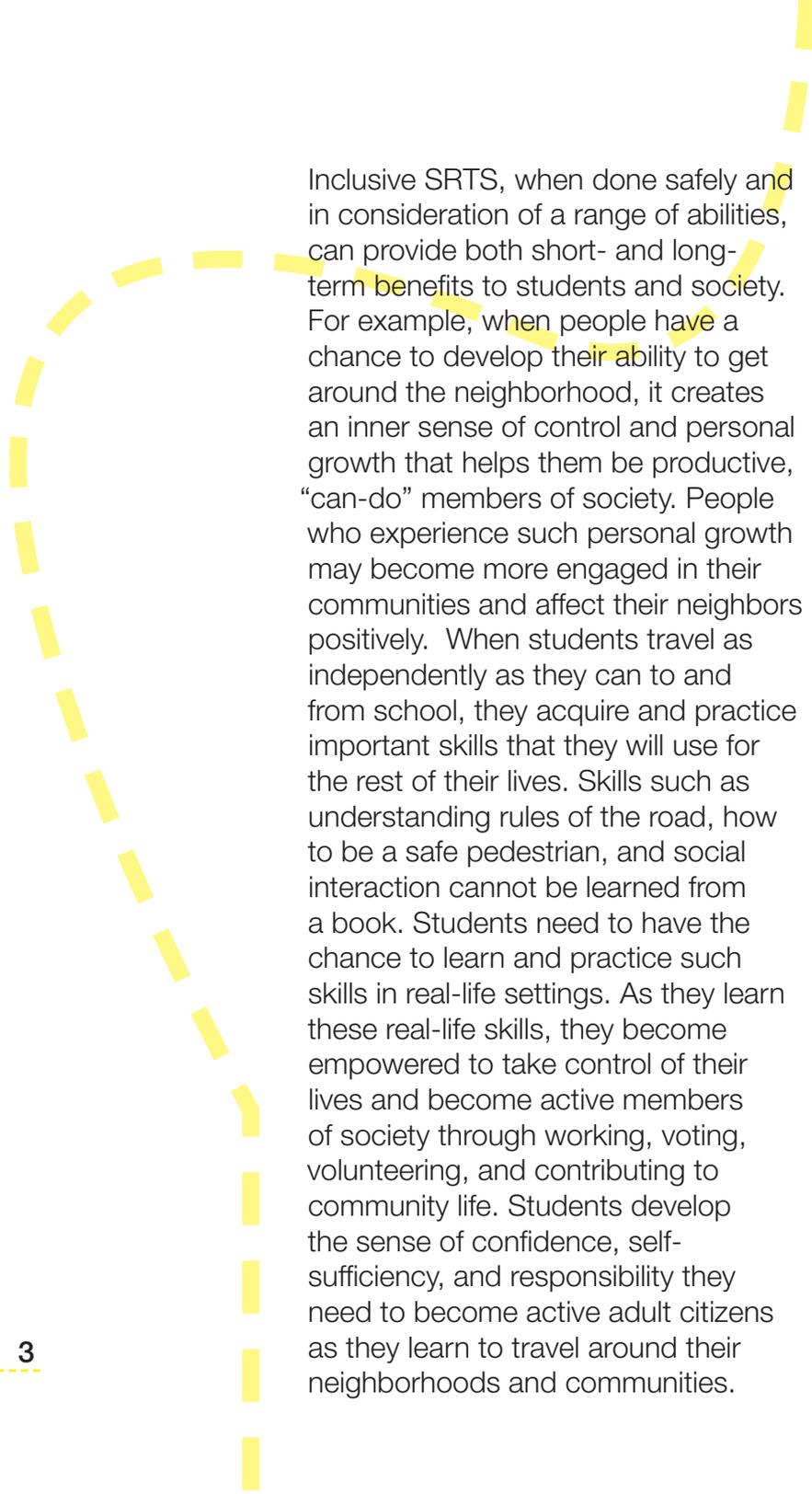
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# Why This Guide Was Written?

The Discover Inclusive Safe Routes to School (SRTS) guide has been developed for students, parents, educators, public servants, community members, and others to increase understanding, acceptance, and participation of students with disabilities in walking and wheeling to/from/at school. This practical guide, written by an educator who is the parent of a child with a disability, is designed to assist in making SRTS programs available to all students in your school. It will address an array of common barriers to full community inclusion and shine a light on the way that creative thinking, a helpful and inclusive attitude, and a little community support can maximize opportunity so that all students will be able to achieve physical fitness and independence in the community through participation in Safe Routes to School.

There is widespread concern about the general level of health and physical fitness of all young people in today's overstressed and *underactive* communities. The plight of 21st Century youth is a lifestyle rooted in excess of calories, increased pollution of air and water, and decreased regular, daily physical activity. Children with disabilities are at an even greater risk of underactivity than are other students, due, in part, to the many barriers to participation that they face. And yet, it is clear that participation in daily physical activity and recreation in school and in the neighborhood is necessary for laying a solid foundation of good health and well-being in the lives of all children.

SRTS offers bountiful opportunities for students of all abilities to experience independent travel. All children want the same thing — a chance to live their lives with happiness, health, and fulfillment. They want an opportunity to navigate independently in a protected environment. Active travel does just that. It connects people, develops friendships, creates healthful opportunities, and empowers youth to be active and independent.

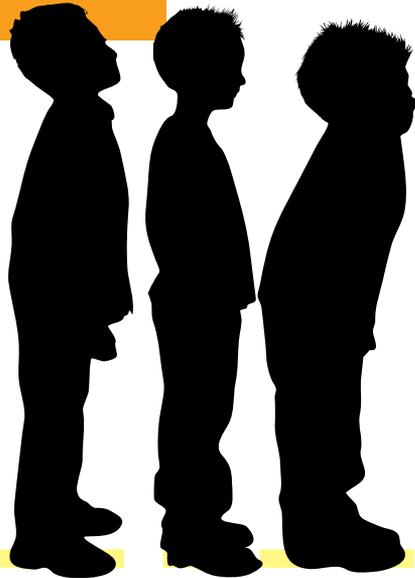


Inclusive SRTS, when done safely and in consideration of a range of abilities, can provide both short- and long-term benefits to students and society. For example, when people have a chance to develop their ability to get around the neighborhood, it creates an inner sense of control and personal growth that helps them be productive, “can-do” members of society. People who experience such personal growth may become more engaged in their communities and affect their neighbors positively. When students travel as independently as they can to and from school, they acquire and practice important skills that they will use for the rest of their lives. Skills such as understanding rules of the road, how to be a safe pedestrian, and social interaction cannot be learned from a book. Students need to have the chance to learn and practice such skills in real-life settings. As they learn these real-life skills, they become empowered to take control of their lives and become active members of society through working, voting, volunteering, and contributing to community life. Students develop the sense of confidence, self-sufficiency, and responsibility they need to become active adult citizens as they learn to travel around their neighborhoods and communities.



It is clearly mandated by federal legislation (the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004) that children with disabilities have the legal right to full access to school-based programs that their peers without disabilities enjoy. As the opportunity for American children to participate in SRTS programs increases, children with disabilities must be included. In fact, this issue was so important that it is specifically called out in the legislation, explaining that the program's purpose is to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school. This guide will help communities recognize and demolish barriers to participation. Wherever barriers continue to exist, an informed community will be able to collaborate to support the full participation of students with disabilities.

# Letters from the Field



## Message from NCPAD

The National Center on Physical Activity and Disability's (NCPAD) mission is to promote the substantial health benefits that can be gained by people with disabilities and other chronic health conditions from participation in regular physical activity. The slogan of NCPAD is Exercise is for EVERY body, and NCPAD believes every person can gain some health benefits from being more physically active. The lack of participation in beneficial exercise and physical activity is a serious public health concern for all Americans, but even more so for the estimated 54 million Americans with disabilities. According to the U.S. Department of labor, more than 20 million families in the U.S. have at least 1 member with a disability, and in 1 out of every 5 households in the U.S. a family is caring for a child that has unique health care needs. Research shows that not only are children and adults with disabilities at great risk of developing secondary conditions associated with a sedentary lifestyle such as diabetes, obesity, and heart disease they also face greater barriers to participation in regular physical activity due to environmental and programmatic barriers that impede access.

NCPAD is delighted to have an opportunity to support the Safe Routes to School Initiative for Illinois and to provide the opportunity for all children, including individuals with disabilities to participate in this important initiative. I am writing to express our enthusiasm and willingness to support the proposed projects that will develop, disseminate and evaluate the participation levels of children with disabilities in the SRTS programs to identify how children with disabilities are being integrated into the statewide plan.

I look forward to supporting these projects and the opportunity for Illinois to lead the way on inclusion of children with disabilities in the Safe Routes to School Plan.

Sincerely,

James Rimmer  
Director  
National Center  
on Physical Activity

# Letter from IDOT





**Illinois Department of Transportation**  
2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

February 4, 2011

Dear Reader:

The Safe Routes to School program was created around several principles, the first of which is "To enable and encourage children in grades K-8, including those with disabilities, to walk and bike to school" (emphasis added). The Illinois Department of Transportation agrees that it is imperative to reach out and make this program available to all children, promoting a healthy and active lifestyle for all students and creating positive habits that will last a lifetime.

In Illinois, we are pleased to be at the forefront of studying and sharing information to try to ensure that ALL students are included in Safe Routes to School. As a result, the Illinois Department of Transportation provided funding for this important guide, a compilation of best practices taken from the Safe Routes to School project at Solomon School in Chicago, specifically focusing on the inclusion of students with disabilities in Safe Routes to School.

We hope that you will be able to use this guide to increase the participation of students with disabilities in Safe Routes, providing them with a firm foundation of active travel, healthy habits, confidence and independence. Through guides such as this, Safe Routes to School comes several steps closer to the goal of positively changing the habits of an entire generation.

Sincerely,

*Megan Holt Swanson*

Megan Holt Swanson  
Safe Routes to School Coordinator

# Introduction

The Safe Routes To School (SRTS) program has been developed to bring a lifestyle change into the lives of a generation of children. Children today are not often given the opportunity to walk and bike to school as children routinely did in past generations. As a case in point, in the year 2001, only 16% of children aged 5 to 18 years walked or biked to school, compared to 42% of children aged 5 to 18 years in 1969. According to researchers, it may not be a coincidence that between 1970 and 2002, the same time period in which active transportation to school decreased, the prevalence of obesity and overweight tripled among students aged 6 to 19 years (Hedley, Ogden, Johnson, Carroll, Curtin & Flegal, 2004).

More than one-third of young people today are overweight or at risk for overweight. According to the Safe Routes To School landmark publication, *“Legacy Report of the National Safe Routes to School Task Force”* (July 2008), it has been projected that this generation of American children may be the first in 200 years to live a shorter lifespan than their parents, due to health conditions that arise from obesity. These alarming statistics convey a clear message to the nation: a large-scale

change in daily activities must occur in order for our youth to have healthful lives.

The “Safe Routes to School” movement is reaching across the nation to children, parents, educators, and community members. However, these types of movements often do not include students with disabilities. This is, in large part, due to a mistaken belief that by not intentionally excluding people we are inherently including them or that any accommodations needed would be too expensive, too hard to arrange, and/or too time-consuming to be worthwhile. Of course, these misconceptions are quite wrong. This guide will provide SRTS facilitators with practical information for streamlining accommodations and helping to ensure that all the students served in our schools are able to take part in healthful, life-enhancing opportunities for physical activity. Recent research suggests



that people with disabilities are often confronted with so many barriers to participating in the types of physical and recreational activities needed to maintain their health and well-being that they give up on participation due to the amount of the effort required just to deal with the barriers (Rimmer, 2005b; Scelza, Kalpakjian, Zemper, & Tate, 2005).

When working to accommodate children with disabilities, people should always refer to the student in “person- first” language. This means that we have to put the person first in the sentence, before the disability. If the diagnosis must be referenced, it is correct to say “a student with autism” rather than “an autistic student.”

In most cases, there is no need to mention the specific diagnosis. A label, such as “autistic” is stigmatizing. Labels often communicate inferiority, rather than membership and welcome. Whenever possible, it is best to refer to

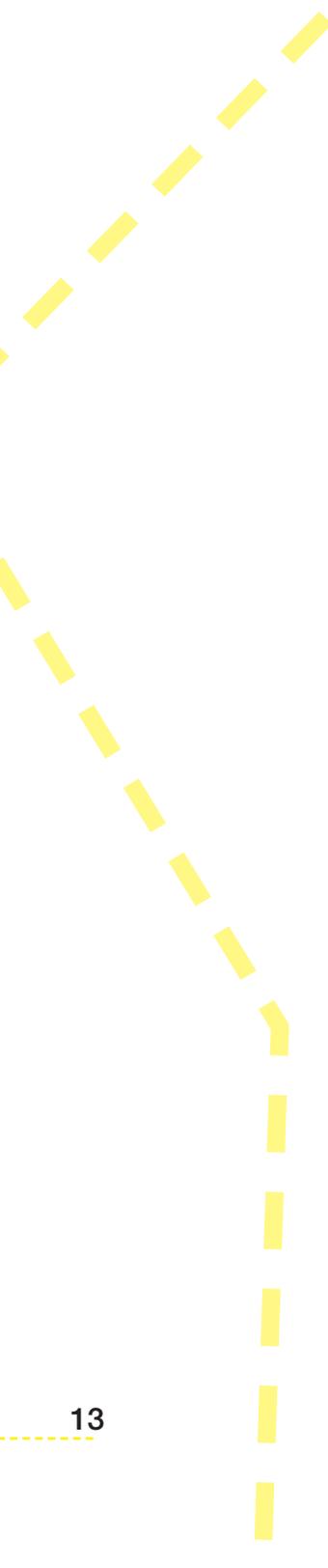


students by name or grade or classroom, rather than by any disability label. Having a disability label focuses attention on real or perceived “impairments.” Rather than focusing on the disability, look beyond the label to the student’s personality, skills, abilities, and interests. Since this is the way that we look at all other children, it is appropriate for students with disabilities as well.

In planning, our focus needs to be on the barriers to full inclusion, rather than trying to identify and list the specific diagnoses of children in our group. A simple focus on “barriers we need to remove” helps ensure that each child has access to participation in the Safe Routes to School program. The opportunity to learn how to live independently by socializing, learning, contributing, helping others, and walking/wheeling to school is our focus.

The **Discover Inclusive Safe Routes to School (SRTS)** guide builds upon the 2009 Final Position Paper on Students with Disabilities, published online by the National Partnership for Safe Routes To School ([www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org)).

In this guide, we expand the information previously provided in regard to disability and specific steps to provide meaningful supports for the inclusion of children who face barriers to participation. The interagency collaboration of partners is a fundamental way in which children with disabilities are empowered to take part in

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the national health promotion activity. By having schools, the law enforcement community, the school bus vendor, and volunteers from the community work together to create meaningful accommodations in the SRTS program, children with disabilities will be able to participate fully in the walk/wheel program.

Others have traveled this path, and there is now a growing body of literature to help guide new SRTS program planners. As new planners read through the issues that have been identified by the trailblazers, they may begin to develop a mental image of the empowering and transforming experience children can have when they are allowed full participation in the SRTS program. The reader will be able to recognize the concerns of schools and the issues addressed by planning teams, and then view solutions to common problems that others have found helpful. Seeing the work done by others may encourage new teams to envision additional ways of “making things work” that will benefit us all.

By creating more inclusive programs, this benefit may be extended to more children, which will provide them with a significant advantage as they transition from childhood into their adult lives.

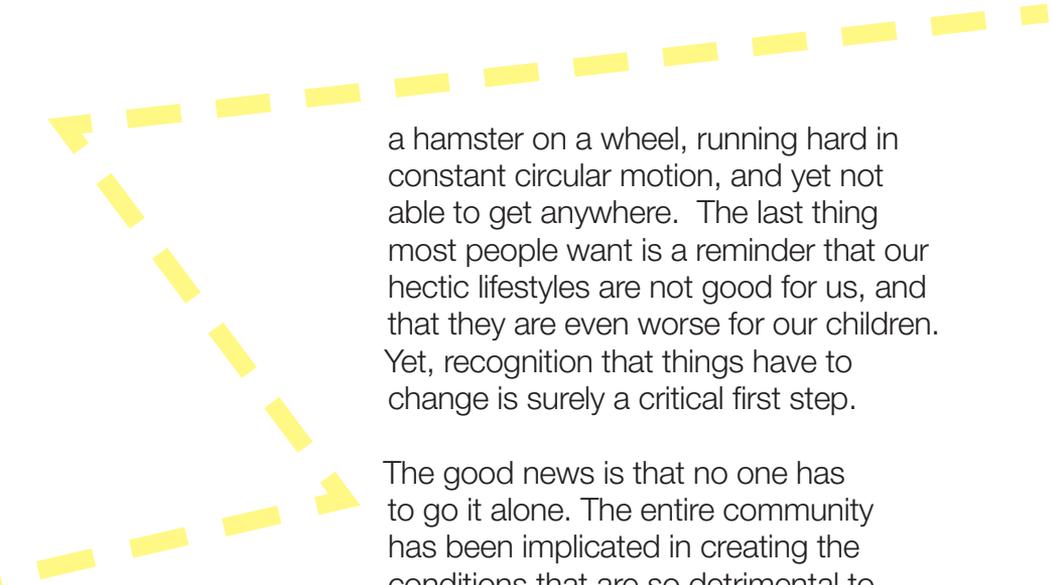
# Benefits of Safe Routes to School for Children with Disabilities

Safe Routes programs promote healthy lifestyle behaviors that lead to improved health over time for individuals who learn to make physical activity a daily occurrence. The work before us is not to create a single-day “event”; but, rather to, help the children in our society establish a lifestyle that incorporates daily physical activity.

Moving beyond the schoolroom, it is likely that all of the community will be well-served by the changes created through the SRTS program. Safe Routes activities are expected to increase road and sidewalk safety for bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages by reducing the number of motor vehicles clogging the roads. It follows that air pollution from engine emissions will also decrease as the amount of school-related traffic is gradually reduced in volume. The Safe Routes program will also increase positive community-wide social contacts between residents who live, work, and go to school in close proximity, people whose paths would never cross if they stayed inside their cars.



Even among people who recognize the need for increased activity levels for children, there is some level of difficulty in moving from passive recognition of the issues active involvement in dealing with the sticky details that make participation in naturally occurring physical activity difficult to arrange. Most people have come to rely upon gasoline-fueled transportation across even relatively short distances because they have little time to spare. Many people say that they rush back and forth between their jobs and homes, providing transport to their children's programs, squeezing in the urgent need to shop for food and stop by the bank, and trying to find a rushed moment for their own social and educational demands. They report that they feel like



a hamster on a wheel, running hard in constant circular motion, and yet not able to get anywhere. The last thing most people want is a reminder that our hectic lifestyles are not good for us, and that they are even worse for our children. Yet, recognition that things have to change is surely a critical first step.

The good news is that no one has to go it alone. The entire community has been implicated in creating the conditions that are so detrimental to our health. Luckily, the community also contains the remedy to the problem. As a group, we can rally to correct most of the conditions that are detrimental to health, one issue at a time. Since we, as a society, realize that childhood can be enriched by the efforts of the family and of the entire community, we can see that we need to rally around programs that promote well-being among children.

To remain viable, SRTS programs must be created, implemented, and sustained through the efforts of interdisciplinary teams. It has been suggested that effective teams might include parents, school district officials, teachers and administrators, local government, law enforcement personnel, and community volunteers. Only by involving all the key

players needed to change rules and regulations, set policy, and provide on-the-ground programmatic support right from the beginning, will the program be sustainable and able to have an impact on the entire community.

One often-underserved segment of society is children with disabilities. Yet, students with disabilities actually differ very little from students who are following a typical developmental



*Figure 1 Untitled photograph of school children boarding a bus (2010).*



pattern. Their basic need for educational and social growth mirrors that of typically developing children. The main difference is that some children will need to have program designers consider a few additional details upfront.

For example, most observers would agree that there should be a sidewalk along the route for the safety of all the students in the program. Most people don't want students to walk in the street with the traffic. To accommodate students who use wheelchairs, walkers, or leg braces, an additional detail would be to ensure, for example, that the sidewalks have curb cuts at each of the intersections. Not only is creating an inclusive program the right thing to do; it is mandated by law (Reauthorization of the Individuals With Disabilities



Education Improvement Act of 2004 and the Americans With Disabilities Act). Curb cuts benefit many other sectors of society as well, such as parents with strollers, elderly people using canes, and cyclists of all ages.

Every student, with or without a disability, must be taught the directions between home and school, and learn the protocol for a safe way to walk in the community. To ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are being met, slight additions to the educational component might include completion of a longer training period,



more hands-on practice time, provision of officially grouped “walking buddies,” use of a pictographic map, or having monitors stationed at intervals along the route.

In each of these cases, the needs of students with disabilities require little more than attention to the same safety issues that affect the lives of all children. As you will see, planning for the needs of people with disabilities right from the start is cost-effective, and takes little extra time.

# Steps to Creating Accommodations

While every school team designing a program will want to consider following the basic steps for programmatic design outlined below, each community will find that its planning process will develop a synergy that will take on a life of its own. We have found that people will rally around the issue and that the emerging creativity and enthusiasm of the group is what makes planning and problem-solving exciting parts of the process.



## Basic Steps to Safe Routes Inclusive Accommodations Design

Adapted from the National Center for Safe Routes to School

- 1. Bring together the right people:** It has been recommended that the planning team should be comprised of people from each sector of the community. This includes representatives of parents, teenagers, the municipality, school district officials, teachers, neighbors, law enforcement officers, and people with deep knowledge of disability accommodations. Each member of the planning team is expected to take an active leadership role in some aspect of the project, and to bring in other helping hands as planning progresses to implementation.
- 2. Hold a kick-off meeting:** The first meeting will set the tone for the workgroup. It is important that everyone should feel that the group hears what they have to say, and everyone should be able to find a meaningful role for their participation as a partner in creating the school-wide SRTS program. Momentum and energy should start building under the direction of the planning team leader. The leaders' goal should be that everyone leaving the meeting will want to go out into the community and share their excitement about the project.
- 3. Gather information and identify issues:** Each planning team member represents a constituency (or stakeholder) group. Information will need to be sought from each group in order to avoid any snags that could develop later during implementation. Additionally, each member is responsible for taking information about the progress of the planning team back to his or her constituency to garner their support for the project.



## Basic Steps to Safe Routes Inclusive Accommodations Design

Adapted from the National Center for Safe Routes to School

- 4. Identify solutions:** Potential problems and their solutions should be sought aggressively in the early planning stages, rather than managed in a haphazard manner as they arise due to an emergency of some sort. Some sample problems along with tried-and-true solutions are offered later in this guide to help planning teams get ahead of the curve.
- 5. Make a plan:** The plan does not need to be lengthy, but should contain the following components: A list of people and their responsibilities, a time schedule, engineering and enforcement strategies, a map of the area involved, and an evaluation plan and timeline. Many state SRTS programs utilize some form of School Travel Planning tool, which provides an outline of many of the common issues all students and communities face. For more information about planning, please contact your State SRTS Coordinator.
- 6. Get the plan and people moving:** Everyone should have a task and a timeline. The chair needs to follow-up with members by phone and/or e-mail on a regular basis, and each member should have time on the agenda at the next scheduled meeting to report on progress and raise concerns.
- 7. Evaluate, adjust, and keep going:** Despite the best-laid plans, new information often arises when a plan is implemented. Address issues that arise on a timely basis. Don't let small things slide, since little problems can become big problems quite rapidly. Share ideas, seek expert advice, and try creative solutions. It can be frustrating, but keep going. Remember that any worthwhile program takes time and energy to develop, initiate, and maintain. Use the Fact Sheet on Safe Routes To School, available on the NCPAD website, to help you when issues arise.

# Steps to Success: The Five E's = Strategies for Inclusive Participation

The Safe Routes To School program has created a toolkit to help in the initiation and implementation of successful programs. The toolkit approaches are: 1) engineering, 2) encouragement, 3) education, 4) enforcement, and 5) evaluation. Each type of approach has been helpful to schools as they inform their populations about the program and seek to increase participation.

## Engineering

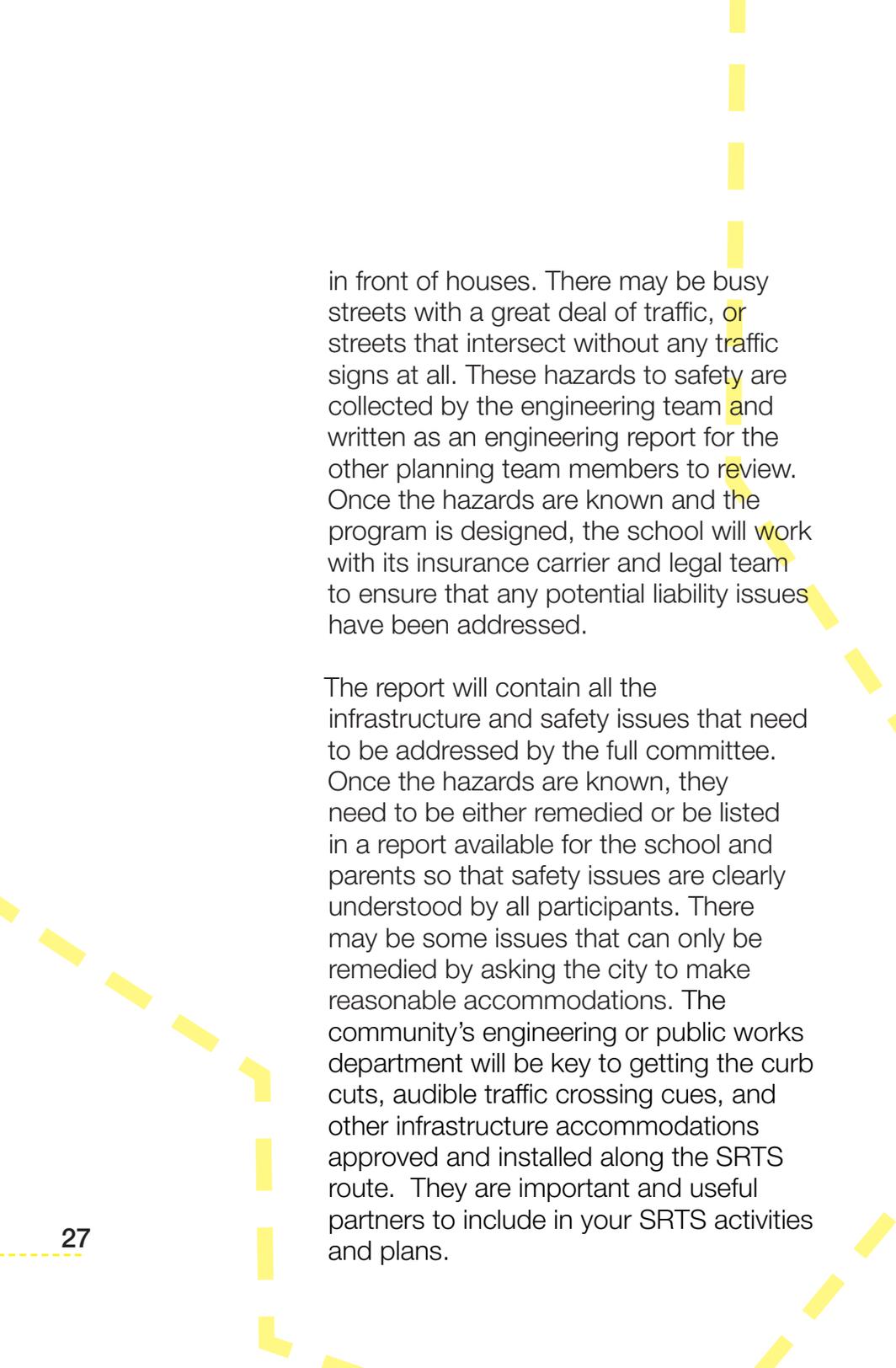
### The Engineering Approach

The engineering approach focuses on creating physical improvements to the infrastructure in and around the school.

Planning team members will also need to take some time to determine the best walking route for the SRTS program in your school by walking the proposed routes themselves.

As various routes are considered, the location of a safe bus-drop point for students with disabilities who must take the bus and will participate in a park and walk/roll program, existing curb cuts, and streets with lower traffic volume might be important features of your conversation. If none of the routes appear to meet ADA guidelines, your team might have to discuss asking the city to make improvements. In other places, there are no sidewalks at all. Some areas with sidewalks do not have curb cuts for wheelchairs. This is a hazard to unsteady walkers, blind children, and children using wheelchairs created by snow and ice build-up on the sidewalks that pass



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in front of houses. There may be busy streets with a great deal of traffic, or streets that intersect without any traffic signs at all. These hazards to safety are collected by the engineering team and written as an engineering report for the other planning team members to review. Once the hazards are known and the program is designed, the school will work with its insurance carrier and legal team to ensure that any potential liability issues have been addressed.

The report will contain all the infrastructure and safety issues that need to be addressed by the full committee. Once the hazards are known, they need to be either remedied or be listed in a report available for the school and parents so that safety issues are clearly understood by all participants. There may be some issues that can only be remedied by asking the city to make reasonable accommodations. The community's engineering or public works department will be key to getting the curb cuts, audible traffic crossing cues, and other infrastructure accommodations approved and installed along the SRTS route. They are important and useful partners to include in your SRTS activities and plans.

### Making Reasonable Accommodations

What is a reasonable accommodation? As described earlier, the government has mandated that schools provide children their education in the least restrictive environment and that the school must make “reasonable accommodations” to help children succeed. Some reasonable accommodations are related to the environment and others are related to staff and education. All accommodations need to be mentioned during the engineering section, since the planning committee must be aware of them when beginning to design the route and implementation of the SRTS program.

Reasonable accommodations can include:

- Having an adult who can push a wheelchair if needed.
- Curb cuts or adults to lift the chairs.
- Someone who can sign to a child with a hearing impairment.
- Having sound cues at intersections near the school (voice or recorded) for children who have a visual impairment.
- Having an adult provide close supervision to a small group of children who are known to the adult



*Figure 2 Untitled  
photograph of  
cross walk (2010)*

- by name.
- Allowing extra time for children to learn the school walking/ wheeling route.
- Allowing extra time for children to learn the training for pedestrian and bicycle safety and extra time to cover the ground on the route.
- Having screened and trained adult aides along the route who know the children by name, are trained in supporting people with disabilities, and who have a clear protocol to follow.

In addition to following the letter of the law, some exemplary schools have adopted the spirit of inclusion, and have been known to go the extra mile, in ways such as helping to find adaptive bikes for students who need them.

disabilities among the other students and not segregate them or keep them apart from the mainstream of life. In addition, all school programs must provide any of the types of accommodation that are present on the child's Individual Educational Programs (IEP).

Although infrastructure refers to the physical, built environment, it is important to acknowledge the necessity of utilizing staff or volunteers who already have the role of meeting the buses carrying children who have (IEPs), or who help in ensuring that students can move between classrooms. Someone from the school will determine the size of the



group each adult can manage, based upon the needs of the children in the group. This will require asking the principal for a ballpark figure concerning the number of children with IEPs that dictate accommodations in movement to and from school as well as within the school and to extra-curricular events. Ask the principal to recommend a liaison or a Planning Team member who is knowledgeable in this area.



## Encouragement

### The Encouragement Approach

The encouragement approach model uses events and contests to encourage students to participate in the walking and riding program. Children with disabilities should be given the opportunity to participate in the same programs as all other students and to compete with peers on a level playing field for the same rewards. While many ideas for encouragement activities are available from the National Center for Safe Routes to School's ([www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)), one approach that is especially useful for a comprehensive SRTS program is a mileage contest.



- **Competition:** students, staff, and volunteers record the miles walked/rolled by students. This is a useful program to encourage students walking or rolling from home, as well as for students who are dropped off by bus or private vehicle at a park and walk/roll location several blocks from the school. Additionally, students may be allowed to walk on campus at recess or before or after school, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to participate.



- Students are often proud to win tangible awards, such as patches, that they can wear on their coat sleeves or hats for the various levels of achievement in miles walked or number of days they participated.
- School assemblies publicly awarding those children who have earned the highest number of miles might be enhanced by allowing children to lead an activity in front of the whole school, or receive their award from someone they look up to in front of everyone.



- Reusable water bottles, sunglasses, patches, logo caps, writing pens, reflective stickers for coats and shoes, movie tickets, and shoulder bags have all been rewards that are popular with children.
- In some schools, classes compete against each other to be recognized as the class with the most miles walked. The winning class may be rewarded by receiving a traveling trophy, such as The Golden Shoe Award.

One practice we suggest that schools avoid is offering a food reward for this program. Most awards involving food provide the very high-fat, high-calorie, and high-sugar foods that we hope to teach children to eat in smaller amounts, if at all. These are the foods that contribute to obesity — as does the idea of using food as an award.

It is better to focus on activity, movement, skill attainment, and leadership, rather than sweet or high-fat foods. We want to promote the idea that activity is its own reward, because people tend to feel better and be healthier when they are active.

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Since children with disabilities may be segregated in their educational settings, an approach specifically designed to attract their participation must be launched. Having the program materials provided in any alternate formats that are needed will be something the planning committee will need to address in advance. Besides ensuring that colorful posters promoting the program are hung on walls near their classrooms and that they are given the same announcement fliers to carry home, another way to encourage children with disabilities to enroll in the program is to reach out to their parents and teachers. Let parents and teachers help in planning accommodations during the start-up phase and through annual evaluation programs, and encourage parents and teachers to serve as volunteers from time to time.

Learning about the danger that inactivity and obesity pose to their children will raise parents' awareness of the benefits to health that the program provides.

## Education

### The Education Approach

The education model teaches students important safety skills and launches



community-wide educational campaigns for safe driving practices. Along with other children in the school, children with disabilities need to have “safety-first” programs delivered in their classrooms. They need to learn pedestrian safety, biking, and intersection-crossing safety along with their peers. For children with intellectual disabilities, the main accommodations to the educational content include: 1) increasing opportunity to practice the new skills; 2) decreasing the amount of information delivered at each training session; and 3) providing more frequent refresher sessions covering the information. For those with physical



disabilities, the content should be adapted to include safety information specific to assistive devices they use and their functional abilities.

### Safety Education for Walkers and Wheelers

SRTS has provided a bicycle and pedestrian safety training. These educational protocols available from the National Center for Safe Routes to School ([saferoutesinfo.org](http://saferoutesinfo.org)). The Safe Routes to School Online Guide provides an age-based structure by which children are usually able to learn and apply various key skills for safe pedestrian and bicycle safety. Children with cognitive disabilities may learn these skills more slowly and may need more practice time than do their peers, as well as more frequent reminder sessions. Some children may understand the rules but not understand that it is possible that they will be injured if they don't follow the safety rules. Since some children with disabilities may mature at differing rates and times than children following a typical developmental pattern, it is important that they have adults who know them personally on the walk or ride to school until it is clear that



they understand and can apply the information covered in the pedestrian and bicycle safety SRTS materials. A child with a cognitive disability may know the correct answer, but not be able to carry out the principle in action. For this reason, having a child with a cognitive disability travel alone may be unsafe, and the student may need additional supervision or assistance.

Key approaches to educational accommodation are as follows:

1. Children need to be able to indicate the safest places to walk in theory and then demonstrate that they are making safe choices.
2. Children need to learn where to cross streets and demonstrate how to cross safely.
3. Children with disabilities may require more extensive review and practice sessions than others to obtain mastery of the material. They may be able to answer correctly on one day, but not on the next day.
4. Attention-switching and concentration skills are essential for safe walking and develop as children mature. Children with disabilities may develop these higher executive functioning skills



later or differently than do other children. Take into account the entire performance of the child in school, on the playground, and in leisure activities before determining that it is safe for the child to walk alone.

Many students will learn to ride adaptive bikes and drive adaptive cars as they grow older. Therefore, when they are younger, these are important skills for them to start learning in order to successfully transition into independent living. The SRTS program will be instrumental in creating space in their lives for independent living practice related to mobility in the community under safe conditions, the same way it is for peers.

be needed to provide educational outreach for children, for the community, and to walk the route with children twice a day for successful implementation of these programs. After a screening process, these volunteers also need training and education to effectively support children with disabilities on the walk or wheel to school.

The law enforcement program in some cities registers bicycles and provides both bicycle and pedestrian safety courses. Many children enjoy taking bicycle rodeos on courses that involve driving their bikes through a temporary child-sized village complete with traffic signs and other children in “cars” and on foot. These training sessions are often held in the school parking lot on a weekend and are a way for children to get extra practice in safety. It also allows the children to license their bikes, which may assist in the return of stolen bikes. Having law enforcement working with the school may take some of the educational burden off the school and, in the process, increases safety for everyone concerned.

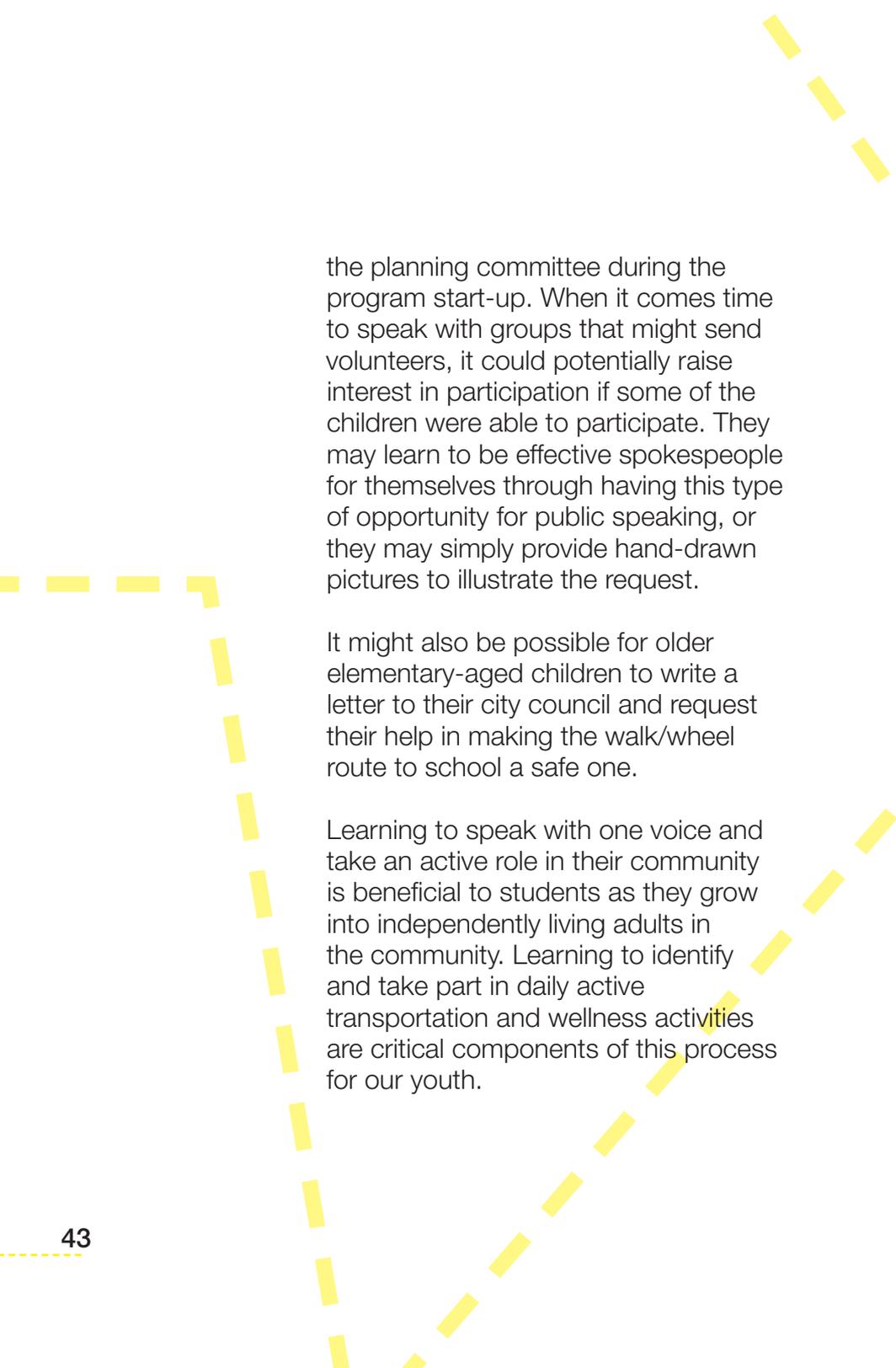
In early-adopting communities, support has been offered by a wide array of community service groups. Involvement has been high among members of the following groups:

- Senior centers
- Hiking clubs
- Biking clubs
- Centers for Independent Living
- Senior recreation groups
- Parks and recreation departments
- Police forces
- PTAs and other parent groups
- Community members, such as people living along the School Route
- Kiwanis, Shriners, Knights of Columbus, and other service groups
- Scouts and Scouting leaders

Many planning groups feel overwhelmed in beginning to reach out to community groups that might be interested in helping the children in the program. Writing letters and making phone calls to people personally known by committee members is a good first step. A nearby senior center, church, civic club, or Independent Living Center may supply volunteers. Exactly which groups of community members might be approached to serve as volunteers is an issue that can be addressed by







the planning committee during the program start-up. When it comes time to speak with groups that might send volunteers, it could potentially raise interest in participation if some of the children were able to participate. They may learn to be effective spokespeople for themselves through having this type of opportunity for public speaking, or they may simply provide hand-drawn pictures to illustrate the request.

It might also be possible for older elementary-aged children to write a letter to their city council and request their help in making the walk/wheel route to school a safe one.

Learning to speak with one voice and take an active role in their community is beneficial to students as they grow into independently living adults in the community. Learning to identify and take part in daily active transportation and wellness activities are critical components of this process for our youth.

## Enforcement

### The Enforcement Approach

Marking the route will not be enough to ensure child safety. The law enforcement approach ensures that drivers take the law seriously. If law enforcement officials are clearly visible and prepared to ticket drivers who speed through reduced-speed school zones or rush the lights at intersections where children are crossing, the word will spread quickly and traffic safety will be on the minds of all who drive along the school route.

The local law enforcement agency can also take an active role in helping to create and train student leaders. There are many schools with officers trained to offer active anti-drug programs in the schools. These schools can be canvassed by the school law enforcement officers for student leaders to assist in the program. Student leaders in junior high or middle school can be asked to assist with the morning walk to the elementary school, since they often begin school later than the elementary school children. Similarly, senior high students can be asked to assist in the walk home from school, since their school may let out before the elementary



school does every afternoon.

The elementary school can identify a cohort of sixth-grade student patrol members, route monitors, and walking buddies through a competitive application and interview process. Additionally, law enforcement and the school working together can identify a few “safe houses” along the route through a similar application and interview process.

## Evaluation: Assessment of the Program

Program assessments need to be scheduled to occur at set intervals throughout the operation of any program. Assessment outcomes can be used to determine the number of students walking/rolling, measure the parent perceptions of safety, identify problematic areas for the program, rally people to address difficulties within the program operations, and result in positive changes to the program that will increase the utilization of the program as well as satisfaction among stakeholders.

A parent survey form has been created and is available online at the National Center for Safe Routes to School website ([www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)). It should be offered in alternate formats and should be completed at regular intervals by every participant in the program. A relatively standard evaluation schedule would call for written evaluation surveys to be distributed just after the trial run, and then again at the end of each semester.

Parent Perception Surveys and Student Travel Tally forms are available from the National Center for Safe Routes to School in the Submit Data link. [www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org) and click Submit Data Link

Our experts are the early adopters of



# Steps to Success: Strategies for Inclusive Participation

the Safe Routes programs who have identified common areas of concern in managing the needs of students with disabilities that may be of interest to new planning teams. These concerns are grouped into categories and some of the solutions tried by other groups are shared for each category of concern.

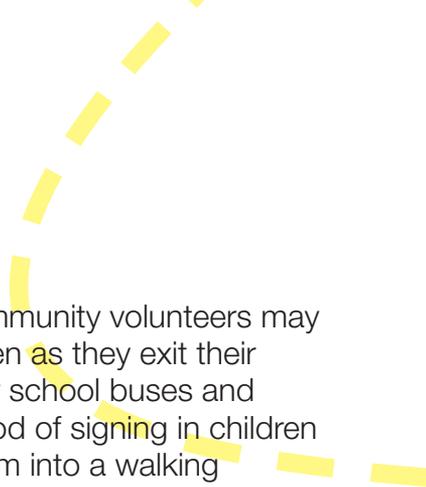
Of course, there will be many additional ways to address problems that each community will envision and implement uniquely. These examples are provided as a way to start the conversation within your own planning team. Be sure to check the Safe Routes to School update section posted online ([www.ncpad.org](http://www.ncpad.org)) for new information, which will be made available as updates, success stories, and case study information pour in

from around the nation. Additional resources include the National Center for Safe Routes to School, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, and your State Safe Routes to School Coordinator.

### How Should We Deal With Distance and Time Constraints?

Not all children attend a school located close to their home. Many children must travel longer distances on a school bus. Some children must ride a bus fitted with a wheelchair lift. Others need to have one-to-one staff support for mobility. Still others have parents whose work schedules make it very difficult for them to see the children off to school. Many families are further rushed because they have children attending multiple schools and the parents need to arrive at their own jobs on time. What are some solutions for these problems?

A park and walk/roll program utilizes a centralized drop-off point located about four to six blocks from the school, complete with signage to identify separate driveway access for automobiles and buses, will provide a streamlined solution to many parents with time constraints. A group of school personnel and/or pre-screened

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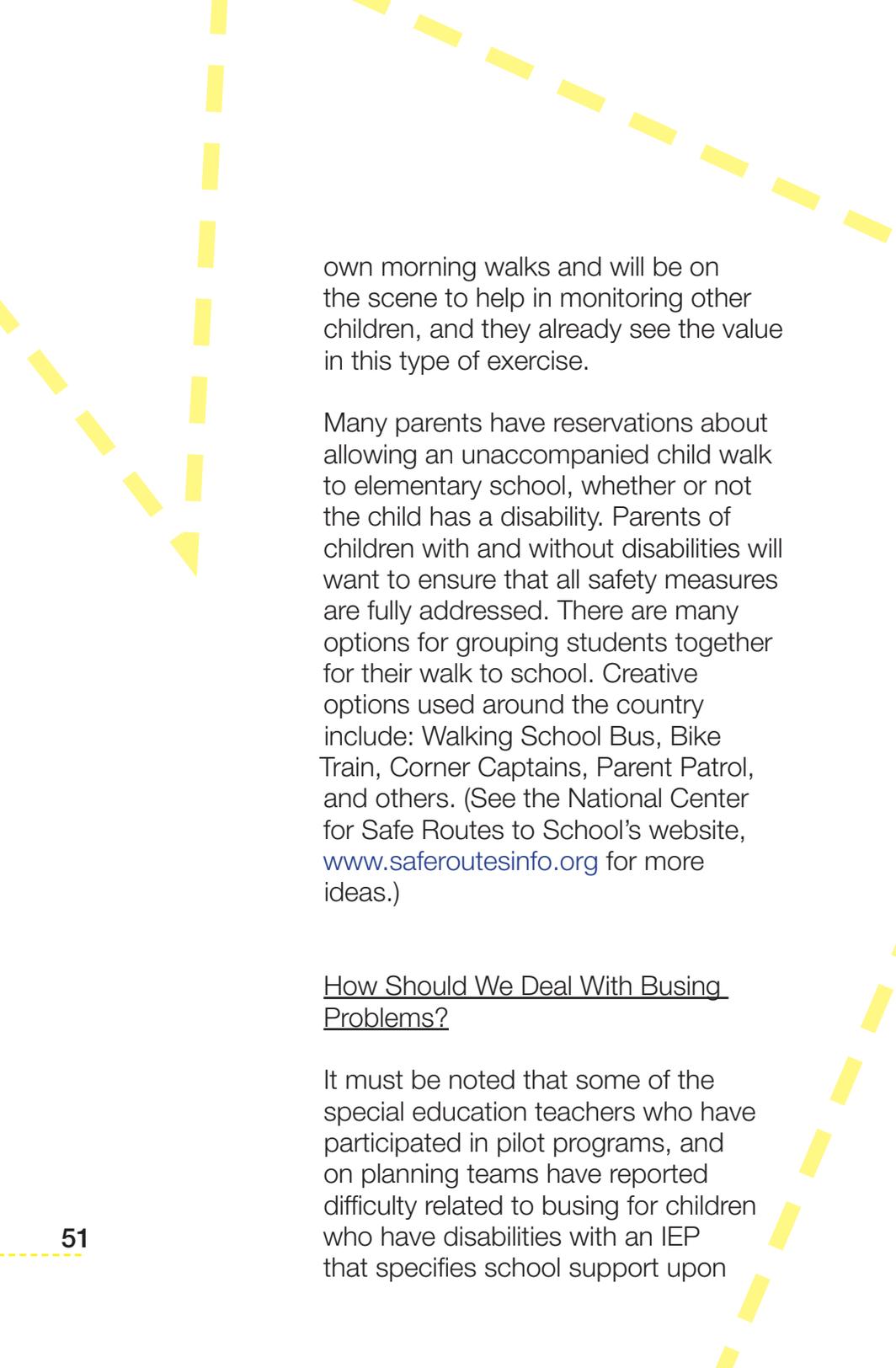
and trained community volunteers may greet the children as they exit their parents' cars or school buses and provide a method of signing in children or grouping them into a walking school bus. Volunteers will count the children, cluster them into groups, and walk with them from the drop-off point to the school, providing any support necessary along the way. If the group includes more than 10 children, consider utilizing two trained adults as walking monitors.

Supervised walking groups of children meet the children's need for social activity and exercise, balanced with their need for protection from the potential dangers posed by traffic, strangers, and straying off the path that leads to school. The needs of the parents are met by being able to hand over their children to trusted school personnel and volunteers, without taking any more time than it would have taken to drop them off directly at school. This model also allows families the option of driving children to school when necessary.



### What Are Some of the Strategies that Have Been Used to Include Students with Disabilities?

Strategies some parents already use, include: walking with their children to school as part of their own exercise routine; grouping neighborhood children and having one parent or older student walk with the group; and using a walking route that takes advantage of crossing guards already posted at specific corners by the school administration. Parents whose children are already walking to school may be among the best volunteers for the SRTS program. They may already be using the opportunity to take their

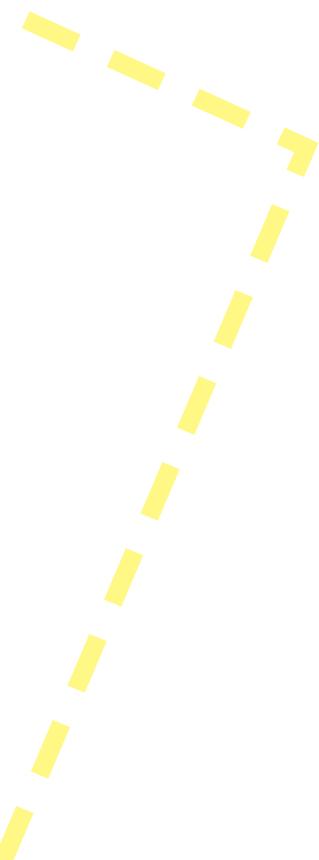


own morning walks and will be on the scene to help in monitoring other children, and they already see the value in this type of exercise.

Many parents have reservations about allowing an unaccompanied child walk to elementary school, whether or not the child has a disability. Parents of children with and without disabilities will want to ensure that all safety measures are fully addressed. There are many options for grouping students together for their walk to school. Creative options used around the country include: Walking School Bus, Bike Train, Corner Captains, Parent Patrol, and others. (See the National Center for Safe Routes to School's website, [www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org) for more ideas.)

### How Should We Deal With Busing Problems?

It must be noted that some of the special education teachers who have participated in pilot programs, and on planning teams have reported difficulty related to busing for children who have disabilities with an IEP that specifies school support upon



arrival. One teacher reported that her school has seven different bus routes for her school's students with disabilities. Since the children come from different areas of the city and arrive at the school at staggered times, a common drop-off point was considered problematic. The teachers noted that buses are often late in arriving, reportedly due to "the bus breaking down." The teachers went on to report that when a bus aide is absent due to illness, there is not sufficient staff to assist and supervise students with disabilities. For these reasons, they were hesitant to allow students with disabilities to participate in a SRTS program.

Thinking through the issues raised by this problem makes it clear that the failure on the part of the existing bus system is an unacceptable reason for depriving children of walking and wheeling to school. When we have a broken system, we don't fix it by demanding less for our children. We demand that the broken pieces in the system be fixed, and we continue to expect that we will meet the needs of our students, despite the difficulties.

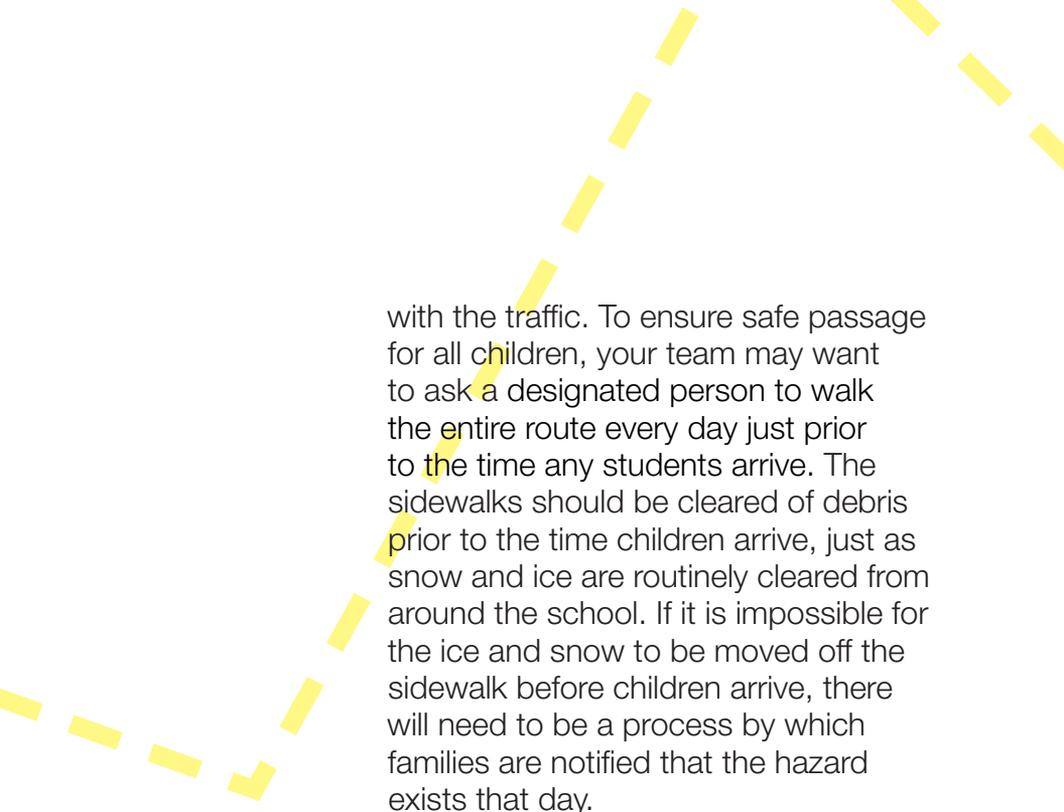
If there are staggered bus arrival times, we can stagger the timing of volunteer assignments for meeting groups of walking/wheeling students at the designated drop-off point. If buses are late, the volunteers wait for the bus, and then immediately file a report with the principal stating that the bus was late. The principal will then manage the communication with the bus company. If the team stays on top of the problem, it may have the effect that the bus company learns to manage its hiring, training, and oversight more effectively so that it will be able to provide good service to the school. If the bus



company has been given feedback that shows it needs to improve services, but cannot or will not meet its responsibilities to ensure that children arrive at school on time, another bus company can be hired. The hiring of a new bus company is outside the planning team's responsibility, but the planning team can certainly lend its official voice to the reporting and evaluating process, making certain that both the school administrators and the community at large become aware of the failure of the current bus company.

### How Should We Deal With Hazards on the Sidewalk and at Intersections?

In many parts of the nation, weather conditions can sometimes make sidewalks slippery with ice, covered in deep snow, or otherwise difficult to traverse. In many communities, laws mandate that sidewalks are to be cleared of snow and ice, but enforcement is lax. A slip on the ice for a child with a physical disability may be a source of trauma requiring medical care. A child using a wheelchair may have to use a driveway if a curb cut or the sidewalk is blocked with ice or snow. This places the child in the street

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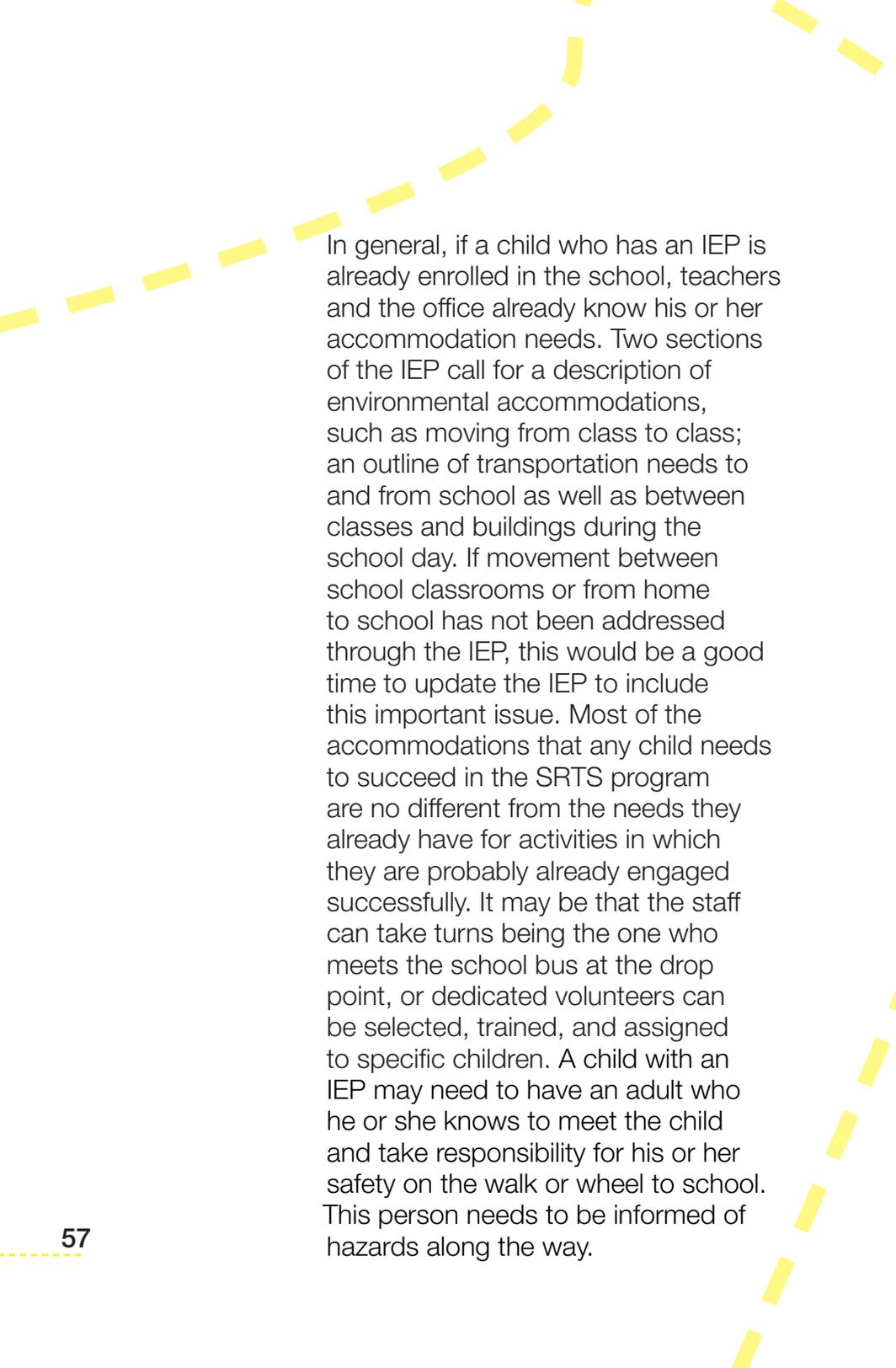
with the traffic. To ensure safe passage for all children, your team may want to ask a designated person to walk the entire route every day just prior to the time any students arrive. The sidewalks should be cleared of debris prior to the time children arrive, just as snow and ice are routinely cleared from around the school. If it is impossible for the ice and snow to be moved off the sidewalk before children arrive, there will need to be a process by which families are notified that the hazard exists that day.

It has been helpful in some locations to have both the school and the city send official announcements to homeowners informing them that their property is located along the school's walking/ wheeling route and that their attention to the condition of the sidewalk in front of their homes is of paramount importance during the before- and after-school time periods. The support of the city has been found to be very helpful in keeping the sidewalks clear.

### How Should We Find Out What Accommodations Are Needed By Specific Children?

The sign-up time period managed by the school would normally occur routinely in the fall and at the beginning of the second semester. Children should have fliers to take home letting their parents know about the SRTS program, and for students with disabilities with IEPs, parents will need to complete an enrollment form. This process ensures that any need for accommodations will be identified on the enrollment form, so that these needs can be anticipated and addressed.



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In general, if a child who has an IEP is already enrolled in the school, teachers and the office already know his or her accommodation needs. Two sections of the IEP call for a description of environmental accommodations, such as moving from class to class; an outline of transportation needs to and from school as well as between classes and buildings during the school day. If movement between school classrooms or from home to school has not been addressed through the IEP, this would be a good time to update the IEP to include this important issue. Most of the accommodations that any child needs to succeed in the SRTS program are no different from the needs they already have for activities in which they are probably already engaged successfully. It may be that the staff can take turns being the one who meets the school bus at the drop point, or dedicated volunteers can be selected, trained, and assigned to specific children. A child with an IEP may need to have an adult who he or she knows to meet the child and take responsibility for his or her safety on the walk or wheel to school. This person needs to be informed of hazards along the way.

### What Type of Accommodations Do Children With A Cognitive Disability Need?

As adults, teachers, parents, and volunteers, we already accommodate for all children. They are all young and inexperienced. The accommodation needs of children who use wheelchairs, canes, or other aids are not much beyond what we already are doing to accommodate the common features of all of the children we serve. We always need to be ready for anything with any group of children and we always have to be attentive and ready to assist.

Where appropriate, a neighborhood friend or classmate “walking buddy” can be arranged semester-by-semester or month-by-month. Additionally, a tried-and-true method of instituting a recruitment of motivated older students who serve as carefully trained and monitored “walking guards” or mentors increases the interactivity between children in different grade levels in the school and helps all the children involved in the program to reach a higher level of independence and self-sufficiency. Younger children look up to older children, and it is empowering to the older children to help those who are younger.

# Media and Visibility

A special media event to kick off the new program can be held once the system is up and running. It may be best to not have the media present on the first day of a program, but plan to have high visibility occur in the second week of the program. In such an event, the media (television, radio, and newspaper) are invited via a press release to attend the morning or afternoon process of committed volunteers encouraging children on their walking/wheeling route to and from school. Children with disabilities should be part of the crowd.

Invite community leaders, government officials, school officials, and law enforcement to take part in the event and give interviews to the media as the children stream by the cameras. Waivers may be required to utilize these images.

# Perceived Barriers to Participation and Creative Solutions

The key issue from a programmatic standpoint is that any student who wants to participate is welcomed into the program. The ADA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 protect the rights of all students, so that students with disabilities will never be excluded as a class from any activity offered by the school. However, by the same token, a student with or without a disability may opt out of the walking/wheeling program. While participation is elective, all participating students will have their individual needs identified and fully accommodated to enhance the quality of their experience in full accordance with the law.

## What Is A Disability?

The definition of the term “disability” has shifted over the years. The definition is tied to the effort to provide a method of determining exactly who is and is not entitled to services.

Since the main reason for having disability categories is to allow entry to treatment, services, and supports, we will use the definition of disability created by the ADA.

The ADA provides a broad definition of disability with three required prongs:

- The person must have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or
- The person must have a history or record of such an impairment; or



- The person must be perceived by others as having such an impairment.

### **International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF)**

Perhaps the most helpful way to view disability is through the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF). The system was developed through an interagency collaboration of professionals supported by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Use of this framework can lead to:

- Real choices in the community;
- Empowerment to reach personal goals;
- Equality of human rights before the law; and
- Integration into the community.

Recent research suggests that people with disabilities are often confronted with so many barriers to participating in the types of physical and recreational activities needed to maintain their health and well-being that they give up on participation due to the amount of the effort required just to deal with the barriers (Rimmer, 2005b; Scelza, Kalpakjian, Zemper, & Tate, 2005).

The ICF helps us to focus on the level

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of functioning of the individual, his or her limitations in activity and participation, and contextual factors that contribute to his or her current level of functioning or limitation, rather than on a disability diagnosis. Even today, people with disabilities continue to experience significant barriers that limit their involvement in health-promoting opportunities.

The ICF is a simple way to think about disability through classification by the individual's level of functioning, recognizing the environmental and personal factors that may serve as barriers or facilitators to full participation. We can use this approach to identify areas of limitation.

During the enrollment phase of the program, it is a good idea to ask parents and teachers to share a few tips that have been helpful to them in managing specific areas in which a student may have faced barriers to participation based upon his or her level of functioning in one or



another of the developmental areas. Accommodations may need to be made in one or more of the following four categories defined by the ICF: mobility, communication, social or emotional interactions, or learning/ cognitive areas.

## Mobility or Movement

### What is it?

Mobility is the ability to walk, climb stairs and curbs, run, jump, sit in a chair or on a bike, hold objects, chew and swallow, and keep balance when walking.



Example of need:

Students who use wheelchairs, walkers, canes, crutches, braces, etc., are examples of children who have limitations in movement or mobility. Some children do not use a device, but may have difficulty with balance, gait, stamina, or other barriers to full mobility.

How should the need be addressed?

Children who need accommodations for mobility are sometimes quite sensitive to being “over-helped” and staff should wait to be asked for help rather than hovering over the student “just in case” or ask if the student would like assistance before providing it. These students do not necessarily have communication or hearing disabilities, so it is not necessary to speak louder or slower than usual.

Each of these students may have a different type of difficulty in movement and will need to be supported only in the area(s) of their specific need. Information on the specific need of the student will be contained in his or her enrollment form. Most of the children who face barriers in this area



have an IEP that clearly states the accommodation that the school is required to provide. They will usually be able to ask for the help they need on the spot. Most will want to fit in as much as possible by doing everything the same way that others are doing it.

Many children with mobility needs may move more slowly than most of their peers, and others may need a staff person walking beside them for support. In addition, the program managers must ensure that the sidewalk is completely cleared of debris before they arrive, and that there are curb cuts.

Volunteers serving as monitors may need to be located at intervals in case the student needs additional assistance.

Some students with movement disorders use walkers instead of wheelchairs, and they may want to walk the Safe Route while others would appreciate being able to ride an adaptive bicycle. If a student would like to ride a bike, he or she may need help in obtaining an adaptive bicycle. Bicycles that are hand-operated, those with a third or a fourth wheel, and



those with special seats are available commercially. Local charities such as the Knights of Columbus ([www.kofc.org/un/index.cfm](http://www.kofc.org/un/index.cfm)), the Shriners ([www.shrinershq.org](http://www.shrinershq.org)), and Kiwanis ([www.kiwanis.org](http://www.kiwanis.org)) are among the organizations that are often prepared to assist schools by providing adaptive bikes. Some schools order the bikes and then rent or lend bikes to students, as needed.



## Communication

### What is it?

Communication is the ability to understand what someone is trying to tell you and to express yourself, whether in spoken language, sign language, expression, or in writing. Communication includes understanding facial expressions, as well as the emotion being communicated to one by others, and being able to express oneself clearly through all of these same skills. The abilities to hear, see, smell, taste, and touch are part of this area. Some children have sensory impairments that were acquired over time, perhaps even getting worse as the time passes, while other students have sensory impairments that were present at birth and are stable. Hearing, vision, and auditory processing are sensory deficits that present barriers to communication. It may be difficult for staff to understand what the child is trying to communicate, or that children with communication disorders do not seem to hear or respond as anticipated to communications directed at them.

Example of need:

Some children with communication difficulties may not hear a shout to warn them of danger; others will not be able to see if a car or bike is suddenly moving too near them or is out of control in their vicinity; and others will not be able to communicate in spoken language to the monitor when they have a question or need to ask for help.

How should the need be addressed?

Simple accommodations for children with sensory or communication disabilities include:

1. maintaining eye contact or voice contact so that the student is aware of the location of the monitors as they move along the path,
2. making sure the monitor anticipates the presence of the children with communication disabilities, recognizes them, and is aware of their location throughout the walk/wheel time period, and
3. ensuring that students with hearing or vision disabilities are grouped or

partnered with students who see and hear, so that they can be made aware of things going on around them by their classmates.

For children in this group, having the opportunity to traverse the walk/wheel path during a training period can be of great help. Having a touch-map showing in 3D the walkway, street corners and curbs, stop signs, houses along the way, and any other interesting features can also help if the map is provided prior to the initiation of the walk/wheel program. Crossing lights with audio signals are helpful for students with hearing impairments.

## Social Relationships

### What is it?

The term “social relationships” refers to the complex abilities needed to relate to others and engage in play, work, and shared goals with others.

### Example of need:

Children with social relationship disabilities are often unable to blend in with the group and follow the rules. It is important to understand that the child

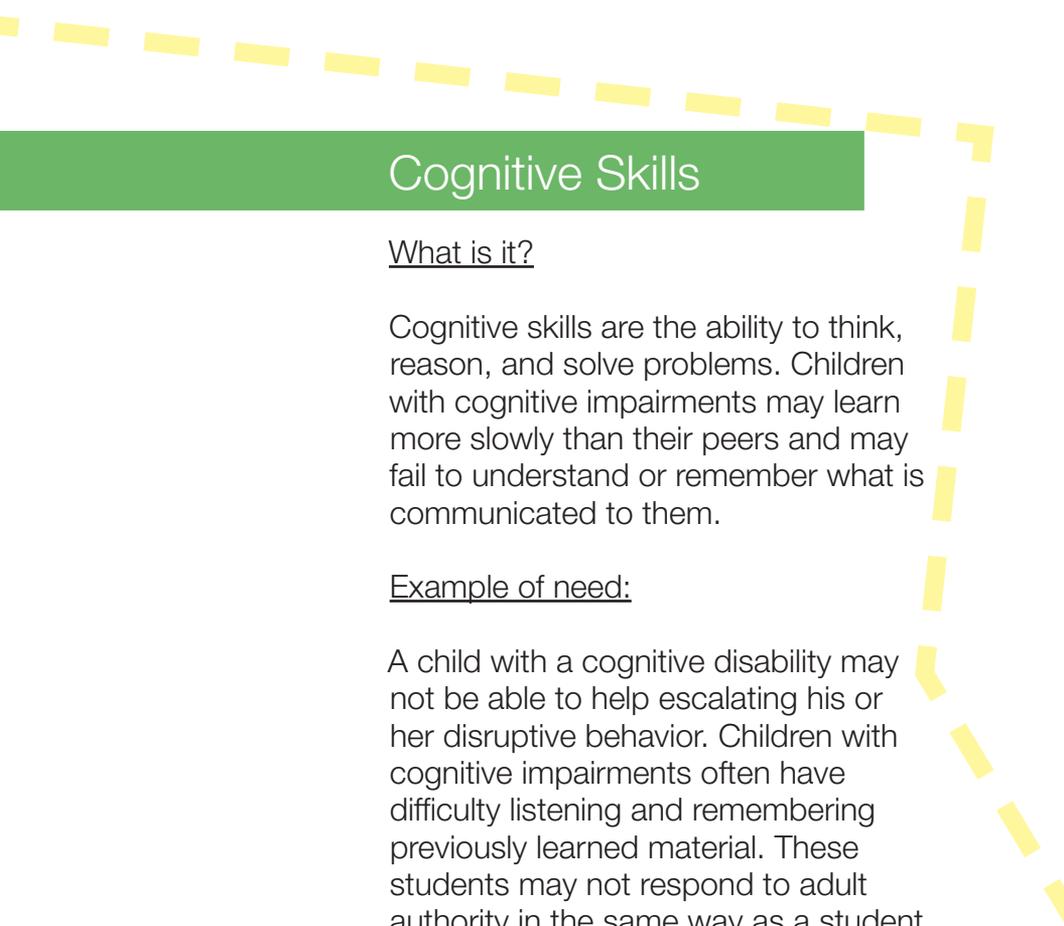
is not intentionally being “bad” and that time and patience can help these children to gain the self-mastery skills.

How should the need be addressed?

It is most helpful to the child’s progress if authority figures remain calm and unruffled.

It helps to:

1. keep the group small,
2. provide constant close supervision and friendly support,
3. teach cooperation by showing cooperation,
4. give clear guidelines,
5. keep established rules (do not expect the child to accept a changed rule),
6. keep punishment to a bare minimum and don’t threaten,
7. never embarrass the child in an attempt to keep his or her behavior in line,
8. practice the walk alone with the child ahead of time, and
9. set up an agreement or contract with the child and then review progress on the agreement together in a supportive manner.

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## Cognitive Skills

### What is it?

Cognitive skills are the ability to think, reason, and solve problems. Children with cognitive impairments may learn more slowly than their peers and may fail to understand or remember what is communicated to them.

### Example of need:

A child with a cognitive disability may not be able to help escalating his or her disruptive behavior. Children with cognitive impairments often have difficulty listening and remembering previously learned material. These students may not respond to adult authority in the same way as a student without a cognitive impairment.

### How should the need be addressed?

Children with these characteristics will need to practice ahead of time to learn what is expected of them by actually taking the walk with an adult a number of times before the first day of school. It is common for these children to do well on the test of knowledge retention, but fail to implement their knowledge in practice.

The best ways to accommodate children with cognitive impairments include:

1. breaking the task down into steps and explaining how to do each step, one step at a time,
2. providing ongoing monitoring, feedback, and encouragement, and
3. having the student teach another child the material he or she is learning.

When dealing with children who can be disruptive, try to keep them busy. Such methods as giving them an *admired task* to manage (for example, carrying the flag or helping a younger child) builds their self-confidence, keeps their minds focused on the task at hand, and increases responsibility. It can also significantly cut down on the disruption they might otherwise cause.



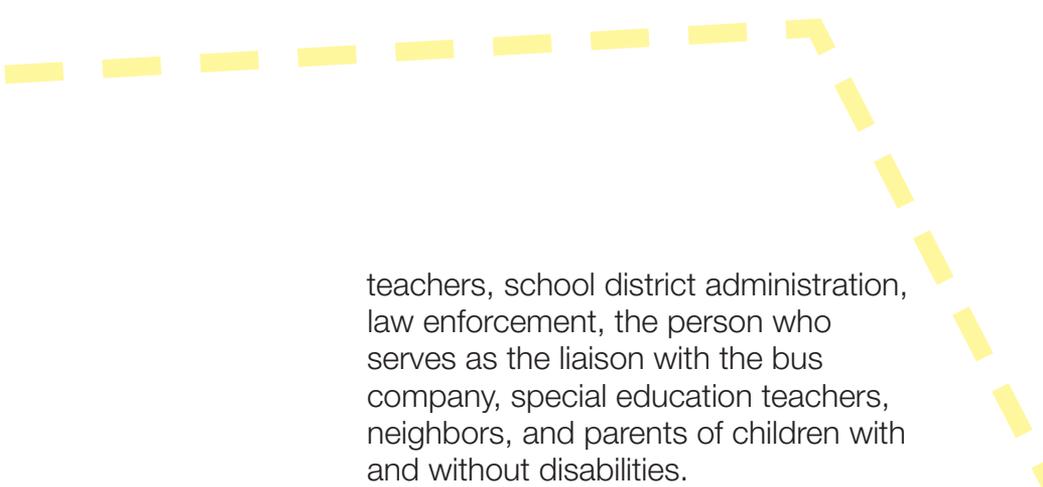
### Children's Medical Condition, Limited Endurance, and Limited Stamina

Since inclusion of students with disabilities has now been underway for a number of years, students with increasingly severe disabilities are frequently enrolled in local schools. Therefore, it must be realized that some students in almost any school will have chronic medical conditions that reduce endurance and stamina. Such students may be exhausted simply by attending class and may report that they do not have the stamina for the additional exercise that would deplete the limited energy they have available for learning. Participation of children in walking and wheeling to school is at the discretion of parents. It is only natural that some medically fragile students may choose not to participate on certain days, or they may elect to participate only when their health is at its most optimum level.

## Tips and Guidelines: Making It Work

As shown in the timeline below, the process of planning and implementing a Safe Routes to School Accommodation program is not complex. However, the success of the program will depend upon how comprehensive and thorough the planning and problem-solving processes are before the first shoe (or wheel) hits the pavement.

The importance of getting the right people together on the planning team cannot be exaggerated. District administrators at the highest level will be the best place to start. They may ask you if you know of a person you would like to have on the planning team. If you have done your homework and shared information about your program with a wide array of school personnel, it may be that you already have a person in the district who is enthusiastic about the program and is just waiting for the call. Be sure that your team has representatives from every stakeholder group, including

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teachers, school district administration, law enforcement, the person who serves as the liaison with the bus company, special education teachers, neighbors, and parents of children with and without disabilities.

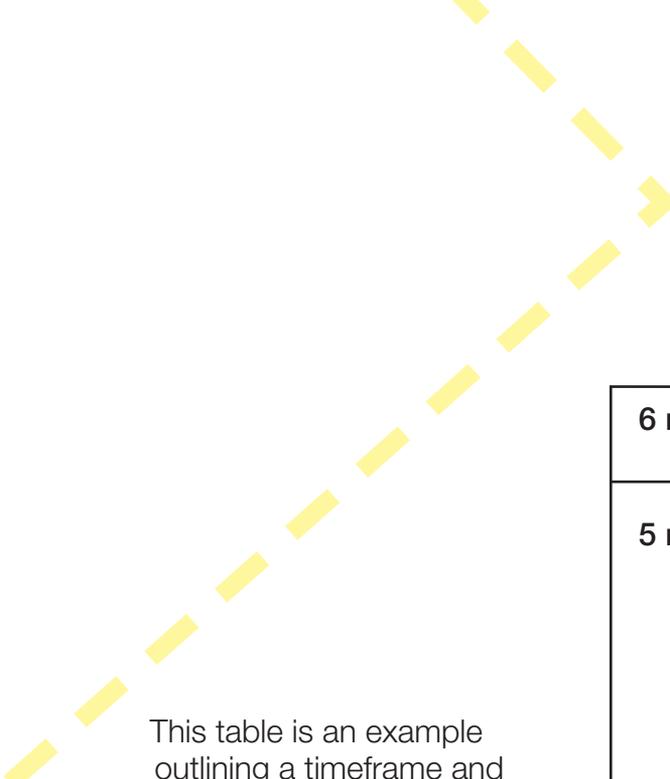
Consider assigning this guidebook as reading for each team member. Get to know your team by talking about the issues raised here, and finding out how they view their own roles on the planning team. Assign roles and responsibilities based upon preferences of team members. Ensure that timelines are included with each assignment, as well as deliverable outcomes (such as phone calls to make or documents to type) with set due dates.

Many have found that by applying the seven simple principles of universal design — a national model of building to remove barriers to full participation — to the planning process, the job of planning becomes simpler and more manageable.



These steps are:

1. Create a plan or curriculum.
2. Assess student accommodation needs prior to starting the program.
3. Adjust the content based upon student needs.
4. Adjust the process based upon student needs.
5. Deliver the content via the process.
6. Assess how well the program went. Make changes where needed.
7. Continue to evaluate the program at specific times as the year moves forward.



## TIMELINE

This table is an example outlining a timeframe and activities for a team that has 6 months to prepare for an SRTS disability accommodation program

<b>6 months before launch</b>
<b>5 months before launch</b>
<b>4 months before launch</b>

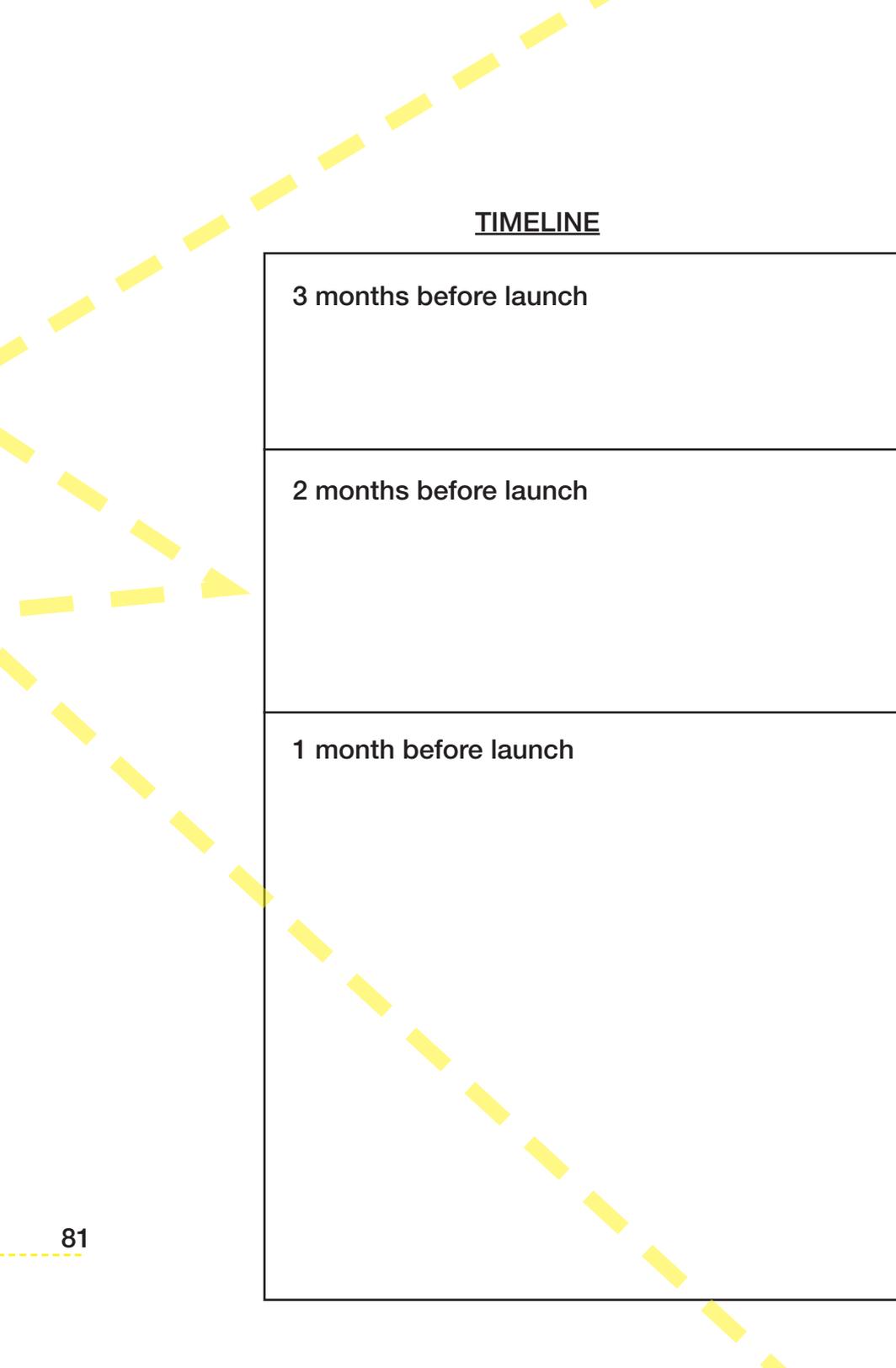
## ACTIVITY

Get to know your team. Assign roles and responsibilities on the team.

Do your homework. Plan the route; check out the intersections, sidewalks and curbs, and traffic patterns with the inclusion of all students kept in mind. Create a detailed list of hazards and ensure that everyone is aware of them. Remove all hazards or set in motion plans to remove possible hazards.

Find out what each partner on the planning team is concerned about and address each issue, however small or unlikely it may seem. Consult experts if needed. Assure that the liability is managed and that insurance coverage is adequate.

Determine what rules and regulations apply to your program. Review other schools' guides (some are available at the Safe Routes to School National Partnership: [www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org)). Your State Safe Routes to School Coordinator is also a good resource in assisting your team. Create written rules and regulations for your program.



## TIMELINE

3 months before launch

2 months before launch

1 month before launch

## **ACTIVITY**

Plan and order incentives, such as the walker/wheeler patches for students and the sashes for volunteering adults. If there will be student awards, order them now. Create the signage for driveways and parking, and have it printed on waterproof and windproof banners.

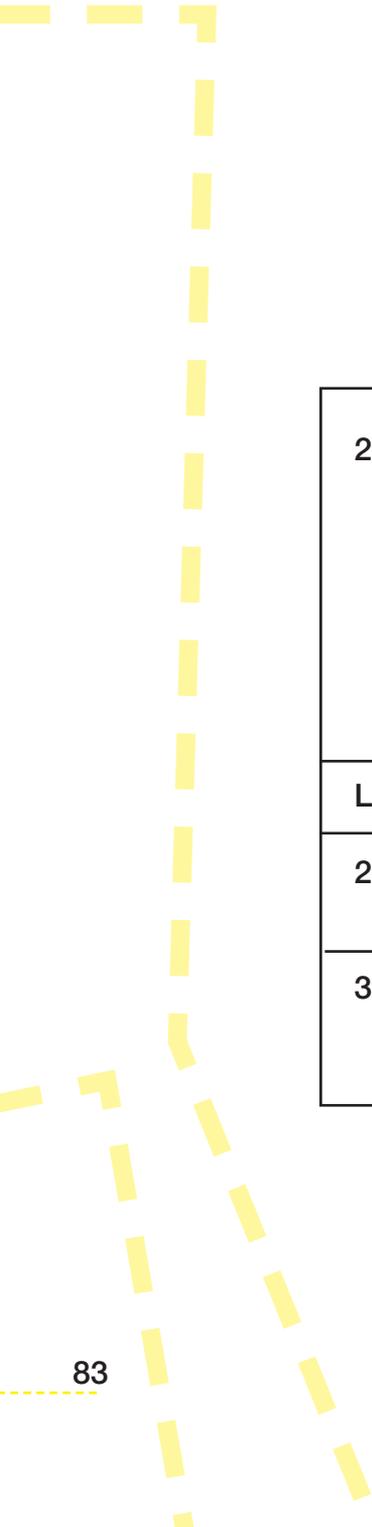
Ensure that all team members are informed and know their roles. Make sure that children know the adults who will be working with them. Begin practicing the route with students. Hold meetings for teachers, bus drivers, parents, law enforcement, neighbors, and all stakeholder groups to ensure that everyone understands the process agreed upon and make any revisions that are warranted.

Do outreach to potential volunteers and begin sign-up for other students (such as middle or high school students to help with the program.)

Hold a training session for all volunteers at which attendance is mandatory. Consider having a way to measure learning, such as a short test to be taken after the training. It may be helpful to have a contract for volunteers to make sure everyone is clear about the agreement.

Inform all parents and engage the most enthused parents to lead the pack.

Carry out enrollment of children in the school and send home notices. This includes the assessment of special needs for all children with IEPs/disabilities and ensuring that the staff is on board.

A decorative yellow dashed line graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of several vertical and diagonal segments.

## TIMELINE

2 weeks before launch
Launch
2 weeks after launch
3-month intervals

## ACTIVITY

Assure that all documentation is done and provide all necessary scheduling.

Plan the assessment of your program.

Do a trial run with volunteers.

Have children with special needs begin daily practice walking the safe route with volunteers.

After the trial run, review how it went, and make any revisions which appear to be needed.

Day 1 of program in operation.

Kick-off! Invite the media to visit after the program is up and running.

Periodic program assessments should be carried out at set intervals, with changes to the program dependent upon evaluation outcomes.

# Case Study

Following is a composite case study designed to demonstrate each of the steps from the chart and explain them in greater detail to help you make your inclusive walking/wheeling program the best it can be!

## Glenn's Story: How They Made The Program Work At Sunnydale Elementary School

Glenn was a Boy Scout who loved to fish with his Dad. He played shortstop on the neighborhood baseball team and ice hockey in the park with his neighborhood friends every winter. When the Fourth of July came along just before his ninth birthday, Glenn



was huddled with his friends behind Sunnydale Elementary School, which was empty for the holidays. The boys were setting off firecrackers. No one was ever sure just exactly what happened, but when a firecracker went off in the middle of the group, Glenn's eyes were burned. He lost his sight in both eyes.

After the burned skin healed, Glenn went back outside to play with the other kids, but soon found that he could not participate the same way he had in the past. He learned to improve as a fisherman that summer, and he learned to ride his bike amongst a group of his pals who warned him when they came to the corner. Glenn and his dad built a tree house with the help of his friends, and they started a club that met in Glenn's yard. Glenn learned to make lemonade and sandwiches for his friends to eat in the clubhouse, and by the time September rolled around, most of the guys had forgotten that Glenn was "different."

When school started, the district sent a bus to Glenn's street to pick him up, and he was devastated to hear that he was expected to ride to school on the bus while his friends were all walking to school together.

Glenn's mother wanted to ensure that he had the opportunity to continue to share social activities with his classmates, as well as having the chance to exercise daily by walking to and from school. So she approached Glenn's principal to start a discussion about options for Glenn to participate in the Safe Routes To School program in operation at the Sunnydale Elementary School.

The principal of Sunnydale Elementary was not against the participation of children with disabilities in principle. It was the practice of their participation that concerned her. She told Glenn's mother that she had some reservations about the participation of children with disabilities in the walking/wheeling program. Glenn's mother made a list of the principal's concerns. It is shown below.

## The Concerns of Glenn's Principal Prior to Starting the Program

### The Concerns of Glenn's Principal

1. Teachers are not trained in how to manage both typically developing children and those with disabilities at the same time. They feel overwhelmed by the prospect.
2. The school or district would have to be sure it could afford the liability coverage and that accidents were prevented.
3. Teachers reported that they were short on staff already. If we are going to utilize volunteers, how will the school find the volunteers that are needed? How will volunteers be trained to meet the accommodation needs of our students?
4. Teachers reported that it is difficult to find anyone to drive an accessible bus. They wanted to have some suggestions about how they could keep drivers if drivers were expected to perform this additional task.
5. What about weather? What about school closings? What about when storms come up during the school day and children are not dressed properly?

In this case, the principal became a champion of the cause when she saw how each of her concerns were taken seriously by the planning team, and that potential resolutions for the issues were not expensive or difficult to arrange.

## Addressing the Concerns of the Principal

1. *The principal was concerned that the SRTS staff and volunteers would not be trained in how to manage both typically developing children and those with special needs at the same time. They feel overwhelmed by the prospect.*

Using, the Safe Routes To School national project accommodation guide for planners, and NCPAD's ([www.ncpad.org](http://www.ncpad.org)) tool to help planners include students with disabilities from the start, the staff and volunteers were given training on how to successfully manage all of the students.

Teachers and volunteers received a relatively short training program to help them prepare to meet the needs of walkers and wheelers who needed additional help in covering the route between the drop-off point and the school.

2. *The principal was concerned that the school or district would have to be sure they could afford the liability coverage and that accidents were prevented.*

This issue was addressed by the program during the planning stages. A “walking school bus” or “bicycle train” was found to not expose the school to any greater liability than other school-sponsored activities. However, assuming responsibility for students with IEP accommodations for transportation to and from school and within the school day meant that the school needed to check into its insurance and follow the 10-point guide for managing risk provided by the SRTS program ([www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)). Schools and school districts must regularly address issues of liability for a variety of school programs and school-sponsored activities. It is important that parents be specifically told whether or not the school is responsible for supervising children who walk or bike to school. Schools can minimize risks by conducting volunteer training, bicycle and pedestrian safety education, and screening of all adults who participate in the program. Make sure that the program follows all applicable school policies for children with IEPs, such as parental permission slips or required supervision for specific students. Work closely with the school district’s administrative and legal staff to identify any particular risk management and insurance needs based on your SRTS accommodation program, the children being served, and the relevant laws of your jurisdiction. Review the insurance policy to ensure that the SRTS activities being organized are



covered. If they are not, have the policy adjusted to include the activities. Sunnydale Elementary School created a document that describes the program and its safeguards for the students. It did not increase the premium paid by the school, and it was helpful to have everyone informed and on the same page in regard to liability.

- 3. The principal was concerned about finding staff and volunteers that were needed to meet the children at the bus stop. It is challenging to have coverage at the school to care for everyone as needed. How could staff be stretched to walk with groups of children that will arrive at different times? If volunteers are used, how would they be trained?*

The “Sunnydale SRTS Manual,” prepared to help everyone at Sunnydale participate more effectively, provided suggestions and national links to potential volunteers, including middle- and high-school students, retired persons, members of social service clubs, and people living along the walking/wheeling route. Sunnydale had notices describing the program and calling for volunteers posted in the local paper. It also contacted the junior and senior high schools through the police department Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) officers in place at all three schools and soon had a program in place to train and post older students in the roles of walking monitors, along with a few adults. All volunteers were background-checked, and attended a general training as well as a classroom-based “get acquainted” session so that the children and volunteers could meet.

Sunnydale kept a roster of volunteers. The school assigned someone to monitor the roster, and

continued to increase the number of names on the list. Volunteers needed to have training sessions, since the safety of children is at stake, and the liability rests on the school. These sessions used an existing PTA training program. The minimal essential parts of the program included: volunteers had to read and understand the rules and regulations handbook; and they needed to understand their roles and the chain of command. Since the trust of the community was placed in them, they were prepared to replace themselves with another trained volunteer in case of their absence. The call list was established in advance so that it could be implemented rapidly when needed. Volunteers were recognized or rewarded at least once each semester. One individual was assigned as the contact person — the first person new volunteers called.

4. *The principal was concerned about keeping the bus driver, since it is difficult to find drivers for the special education buses.*

With the help of their teachers, the children at Sunnydale Elementary School participated in writing a list of behavioral standards that was posted in the front hallway and the lunchroom and distributed to students' homes. These standards for behavior were reviewed every day with the full class. The principal decided to assign a volunteer to ride the bus every day to help the driver keep order,

by applying the standards of behavior developed by the children with the help of their teachers. Any children found to have broken the standards of behavior on three occasions were given a “suspension” from bus riding and the walking/ wheeling program for a week at a time, and parents were made aware of the behavior problems on the bus.

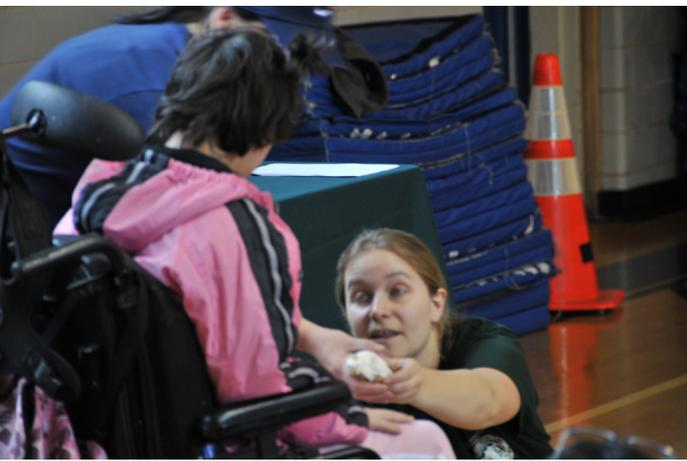
The drivers found that dropping the children off at the drop-site was no more difficult or time-consuming than dropping them off at the school, and the job satisfaction of bus drivers rose dramatically when they did not have to provide discipline, as well as drive the bus.

5. The principal was concerned about how to manage the SRTS program accommodations in weather that created icy conditions on the sidewalks. She worried about what to do on occasions when storms come up during the school day and children were not dressed properly.

The Sunnydale staff and volunteers found that managing the SRTS program was no different than managing transportation and school closings due to bad weather, with or without the walking/ wheeling program. The rules and regulations for the SRTS program reflected all of the same decisions and operating standards the district already had in place for its students. The accommodation program was more individual-based than group-based. If a particular child needed to be picked up at the school for any reason related to his or

her disability, then the bus came to the school, as stated on the IEP. All team members knew what to do to meet the specific needs of the children as they were reported on the sign-up form. Meetings for teachers, bus drivers, parents, law enforcement, neighbors, and all stakeholder groups were held to talk over the best way to carry out accommodations for each child. Staff did their very best to meet the requests of parents. School personnel discussed the requests with the child, the PE teacher, the parent(s), and others to ensure that what the child had requested could be delivered.





Additionally, parents were informed about the program by sending brightly colored and enthusiastic flyers home from school and holding an informational meeting for parents. A film from NCPAD ([www.ncpad.org](http://www.ncpad.org)) was shown to the parents and they were assured that inclusive programs have been very successfully carried out in multiple locations. The most enthusiastic parents were engaged to lead the pack. Children were signed up in the school and the enrollment forms contained the assessment tool for accommodations needed (example shown below). Later, notes were sent home as a reminder and assessment/enrollment forms were kept on file in the school office. Other walkers were not left out of the process and were handled (and rewarded) exactly the same way that designated drop-off arrivals of students participating in the park and walk/roll program were managed.

The accommodations intake/agreement form used by Sunnydale is provided.

Sunnydale Elementary School  
Safe Routes To School Enrollment Form for Students with  
Disabilities

Welcome to the Sunnydale Safe Routes to School Program

Name of Child:

Name(s) of Parent(s):

Address(es) of Parent(s):

Phone Numbers

Home:

Cell:

Work:

Emergency phone number of relative or friend:

Name of person allowed to walk with child or pick up child:

Child's Date of Birth:

Child's Grade:

Child's Classroom Teacher's Name:

My child will participate in the Sunnydale Safe Routes To School Program (circle one choice)

1. By walking/wheeling to the meeting point at x street intersection
2. School bus drop-off at x location
3. Parent drop-off at x location

I have read and agree with the following statements:

- My child will arrive at the meeting location between 7:50 a.m. and 8:05 a.m. or I will deliver him directly to school.
- If no one is present at the drop-off site, I will not leave my child there.
- If I do not arrive to meet my child at the drop off site by 3:40 p.m., my child will be taken into day care at x location at my own expense.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Initials of Parent

If you live within the boundaries of x Street on the north, x Street on the south, x Street on the east and x Street on the west, you live within walking distance of the school. Therefore, your child may enroll in the program with all of the privileges of the program, but will not be provided with oversight by program employees or volunteers. If this is your choice, please put your initials after the following statement: My child will walk or bike independently to and from school.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Initials of Parent

My child needs the following accommodations:

1. Assistance crossing the street.
2. A walking buddy with hearing.
3. A walking buddy with sight.
4. Help with English or Sign Language.
5. Assistance by an adult:
  - a. pushing wheelchair
  - b. providing one-on-one instruction.
6. Please assist me in finding an adaptive bicycle.

I am requesting other accommodations, as described below:

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Training Volunteers

Using volunteers to implement a program for school-aged children is a great way to bring the community together. All the children need the program to be reliable and operated with safety as the first goal. Adults may need to meet the children at the park and walk/roll location, check children's names off the list, and group them for the walk/wheel to school. All of the adults volunteering their time and energy for the program will need to undergo a training period prior to starting work in the field. There must also be, at minimum, a criminal background check, and a signed parental agreement form on file. The volunteers also need to have training in providing assistance and support to children with disabilities.

Exactly what this training entails is up to the individual school, but it should be the same level of training as that given to classroom volunteers within the school, with the addition of a training unit on traffic, and mobility accommodation on sidewalks, parking lots, and crossing intersections.

The trial run with volunteers may be especially valuable to both the volunteers and the children, who will have the chance to become acquainted with each other through a collegial and friendly situation in which both parents and teachers are also present and available as a resource to both volunteers and children.

A routine program evaluation assessment of the trial run to identify any rough spots in planning or operations that need to be smoothed over should be held after the first walk-through with children and volunteers, but prior to the kick-off date.

The training materials for bicycle and pedestrian safety training and crossing guard training are available from the National Center for Safe Routes to School and the National Partnership for Safe Routes to School. Some law enforcement organizations also have bicycle and pedestrian training programs that they offer to children once or twice a year. Some materials are also available as a booklet or an online downloadable PDF file from [www.ncpad.org](http://www.ncpad.org) in the Fact Sheet on Safe Routes To School.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Assistive Technology Information for Home and School

Ablenet  
[www.ablenetinc.com](http://www.ablenetinc.com)

National Center on Accessibility  
[www.ncaonline.org](http://www.ncaonline.org)

The ARC of the United States  
[www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org)

Blaze Sports  
[www.blazesports.org](http://www.blazesports.org)

Centers For Independent Living  
[www.ilusa.com](http://www.ilusa.com)

Creative Mobility <http://thebikerack.com/page.cfm?pageld=396>

Kiwanis adaptive bike program  
[www.kiwanis.org](http://www.kiwanis.org)

Knights of Columbus adaptive bikes  
[www.kofc.org/un/index.cfm](http://www.kofc.org/un/index.cfm)

Lose the Training Wheels <http://www.losethetrainingwheels.org/about.html>



National Center for Safe Routes To School  
[www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)

National Therapeutic Recreation Society  
[www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org)

Programs to Educate All Cyclists (PEAC)  
<http://bikeprogram.org/>

Safe Routes To School  
National Partnership  
[www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org)

Scouts — Boy Scouts of America  
[www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org)  
— Girl Scouts of America  
[www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org)

Shriners adaptive bikes program  
[www.shrinershq.org](http://www.shrinershq.org)



## Appendix B: References and Further Readings

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Appendix D: Walk & Wheel to School Day Flyer

Appendix E: Sports Day Flyer

Appendix F: Weekly Walking & Wheeling Around School Schedule

Appendix G: SRTS Evaluation Forms

## Appendix C: Walk & Wheel to School Day Flyer





## Walk and Wheel to School Day October 6, 2010



All children and their parents are invited to participate in Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Walk & Wheel to School Day. This event is fun and easy for everyone! Children learn healthy behavior through experience. Walk and Wheel with your child to school on October 8. Have your child join the Walking & Wheeling School Program to enjoy a healthy and fun start to the school day. Here is what you can do:

- Be active in your transportation to school: Walk, wheel, or carpool to school.
- Participate in the SRTS Walking & Wheeling Program which begins at 9:30 a.m.
- SRTS Program Assembly
- Stretching & Active Games
- Walk & Wheel around Solomon School
- Healthy Snacks & Prizes



Children who participate will receive prizes, snacks and a chance to be part of a year-round health promotion team (get free, fun stuff and become healthier at the same time!).



## Appendix D: Sports Day Flyer



## Walk & Wheel to School

### Sports Day

9:30 am-12:00 pm



Students and their parents are invited to participate in a fun event for everyone! Students will experience a variety of activities that promote active transportation to walk & wheel to school. Have your child ready to enjoy a healthy and fun start to their school day.

#### Sports Day Events 9:30 am-12:00 pm:

- Adaptive Cycling
- Cycling
- Safe Routes to School
- Wheelchair Basketball
- Parachute Games
- Art & Nature
- Healthy Snacks & Goodie Bags



Here is what you can do:

- Be active in your transportation to school:
- Walk, wheel, or carpool to SolomonSupport good health all year-round



## Appendix E: Weekly Walking & Wheeling Around School Schedule





# **iwalk** International *in the* Walk to School **USA**

Join children and adults around the world  
to celebrate the benefits of walking.

## **why walk?**

International Walk to School is an annual event that promotes walking for several reasons:

- Physical activity
- Teaching safe walking skills to children
- Awareness of how walkable a community is and where improvements can be made
- Concern for the environment
- Reducing traffic congestion, pollution and speed near schools
- Taking back neighborhoods for people on foot
- Sharing time with community leaders, parents and children

**get started at:**

**[www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org)**

**and contact your local coordinator:** Name Here  
Contact Information Here

Prepared by the National Center for Safe Routes to School, which serves as the National Coordinator for International Walk to School events in the USA.

## Walkability Checklist

### How walkable is your community?

#### Take a walk with a child and decide for yourselves.

Everyone benefits from walking. These benefits include: improved fitness, cleaner air, reduced risks of certain health problems, and a greater sense of community. But walking needs to be safe and easy. Take a walk with your child and use this checklist to decide if your neighborhood is a friendly place to walk. Take heart if you find problems, there are ways you can make things better.

#### Getting started:

First, you'll need to pick a place to walk, like the route to school, a friend's house or just somewhere fun to go.

The second step involves the checklist. Read over the checklist before you go, and as you walk, note the locations of things you would like to change. At the end of your walk, give each question a rating. Then add up the numbers to see how you rated your walk overall.

After you've rated your walk and identified any problem areas, the next step is to figure out what you can do to improve your community's score. You'll find both immediate answers and long-term solutions under "Improving Your Community's Score..." on the third page.



Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center



U.S. Department  
of Transportation



Take a walk and use this checklist to rate your neighborhood's walkability.

# How walkable is your community?

Location of walk \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Rating Scale: 

## 1. Did you have room to walk?

- Yes  Some problems:
- Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
  - Sidewalks were broken or cracked
  - Sidewalks were blocked with poles, signs, shrubbery, dumpsters, etc.
  - No sidewalks, paths, or shoulders
  - Too much traffic
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_
- Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_  
1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Was it easy to cross streets?

- Yes  Some problems:
- Road was too wide
  - Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross
  - Needed striped crosswalks or traffic signals
  - Parked cars blocked our view of traffic
  - Trees or plants blocked our view of traffic
  - Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_
- Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_  
1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Did drivers behave well?

- Yes  Some problems: Drivers...
- Backed out of driveways without looking
  - Did not yield to people crossing the street
  - Turned into people crossing the street
  - Drove too fast
  - Sped up to make it through traffic lights or drove through traffic lights?
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_
- Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_  
1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Was it easy to follow safety rules? Could you and your child...

- Yes  No
- Yes  No Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen by drivers?
- Yes  No Stop and look left, right and then left again before crossing streets?
- Yes  No Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic where there were no sidewalks?
- Yes  No Cross with the light?
- Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_  
1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Was your walk pleasant?

- Yes  Some unpleasant things:
- Needed more grass, flowers, or trees
  - Scary dogs
  - Scary people
  - Not well lighted
  - Dirty, lots of litter or trash
  - Dirty air due to automobile exhaust
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_
- Locations of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating: (circle one) \_\_\_\_\_  
1 2 3 4 5 6 \_\_\_\_\_

## How does your neighborhood stack up? Add up your ratings and decide.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 26-30 Celebrate! You have a great neighborhood for walking.
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ 21-25 Celebrate a little. Your neighborhood is pretty good.
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_ 16-20 Okay, but it needs work.
- 11-15 It needs lots of work. You deserve better than that.
- Total \_\_\_\_\_ 5-10 It's a disaster for walking!

Now that you've identified the problems,  
go to the next page to find out how to fix them.

Now that you know the problems,  
you can find the answers.

# Improving your community's score...



## 1. Did you have room to walk?

Sidewalks or paths started and stopped  
Sidewalks broken or cracked  
Sidewalks blocked  
No sidewalks, paths or shoulders  
Too much traffic

### What you and your child can do immediately

- pick another route for now
- tell local traffic engineering or public works department about specific problems and provide a copy of the checklist

### What you and your community can do with more time

- speak up at board meetings
- write or petition city for walkways and gather neighborhood signatures
- make media aware of problem
- work with a local transportation engineer to develop a plan for a safe walking route

## 2. Was it easy to cross streets?

Road too wide  
Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross  
Crosswalks/traffic signals needed  
View of traffic blocked by parked cars, trees, or plants  
Needed curb ramps or ramps needed repair

- pick another route for now
- share problems and checklist with local traffic engineering or public works department
- trim your trees or bushes that block the street and ask your neighbors to do the same
- leave nice notes on problem cars asking owners not to park there

- push for crosswalks/signals/parking changes/curb ramps at city meetings
- report to traffic engineer where parked cars are safety hazards
- report illegally parked cars to the police
- request that the public works department trim trees or plants
- make media aware of problem

## 3. Did drivers behave well?

Backed without looking  
Did not yield  
Turned into walkers  
Drove too fast  
Sped up to make traffic lights or drove through red lights

- pick another route for now
- set an example: slow down and be considerate of others
- encourage your neighbors to do the same
- report unsafe driving to the police

- petition for more enforcement
- request protected turns
- ask city planners and traffic engineers for traffic calming ideas
- ask schools about getting crossing guards at key locations
- organize a neighborhood speed watch program

## 4. Could you follow safety rules?

Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen  
Stop and look left, right, left before crossing  
Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic  
Cross with the light

- educate yourself and your child about safe walking
- organize parents in your neighborhood to walk children to school

- encourage schools to teach walking safely
- help schools start safe walking programs
- encourage corporate support for flex schedules so parents can walk children to school

## 5. Was your walk pleasant?

Needs grass, flowers, trees  
Scary dogs  
Scary people  
Not well lit  
Dirty, litter  
Lots of traffic



- point out areas to avoid to your child; agree on safe routes
- ask neighbors to keep dogs leashed or fenced
- report scary dogs to the animal control department
- report scary people to the police
- report lighting needs to the police or appropriate public works department
- take a walk with a trash bag
- plant trees, flowers in your yard
- select alternative route with less traffic

- request increased police enforcement
- start a crime watch program in your neighborhood
- organize a community clean-up day
- sponsor a neighborhood beautification or tree-planting day
- begin an adopt-a-street program
- initiate support to provide routes with less traffic to schools in your community (reduced traffic during am and pm school commute times)

## A Quick Health Check

Could not go as far or as fast as we wanted  
Were tired, short of breath or had sore feet or muscles  
Was the sun really hot?  
Was it hot and hazy?

- start with short walks and work up to 30 minutes of walking most days
- invite a friend or child along
- walk along shaded routes where possible
- use sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher, wear a hat and sunglasses
- try not to walk during the hottest time of day

- get media to do a story about the health benefits of walking
- call parks and recreation department about community walks
- encourage corporate support for employee walking programs
- plant shade trees along routes
- have a sun safety seminar for kids
- have kids learn about unhealthy ozone days and the Air Quality Index (AQI)

Need some guidance?  
These resources might help...

# Great Resources

## WALKING INFORMATION

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC)  
UNC Highway Safety Research Center  
730 Airport Road, Suite 300  
Campus Box 3430  
Chapel Hill, NC  
27599-3430  
Phone: (919) 962-2202  
[www.pedbikeinfo.org](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org)  
[www.walkinginfo.org](http://www.walkinginfo.org)

National Center for  
Safe Routes to School  
730 Martin Luther  
King, Jr. Blvd., Suite 300  
Campus Box 3430  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3430  
Toll-free 1-866-610-SRTS  
[www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)

National Center for Bicycling and Walking  
Campaign to Make America Walkable  
1506 21st Street, NW  
Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: (800) 760-NBPC  
[www.bikefed.org](http://www.bikefed.org)

## WALK TO SCHOOL DAY WEB SITES

USA event: [www.walktoschool-usa.org](http://www.walktoschool-usa.org)  
International: [www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org)

## STREET DESIGN AND TRAFFIC CALMING

Federal Highway Administration  
Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Research Program  
HSR - 20  
6300 Georgetown Pike  
McLean, VA 22101  
[www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/index.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/index.htm)

Institute of Transportation Engineers  
[www.ite.org](http://www.ite.org)

Surface Transportation Policy Project  
[www.transact.org](http://www.transact.org)

Transportation for Livable Communities  
[www.tlcnetwork.org](http://www.tlcnetwork.org)

## WALKING COALITIONS

America Walks  
P.O. Box 29103  
Portland, Oregon 97210  
Phone: (503) 222-1077  
[www.americawalks.org](http://www.americawalks.org)



## PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Traffic Safety Programs  
400 Seventh Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20590  
Phone: (202) 662-0600  
[www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/ped](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/ped)

SAFE KIDS Worldwide  
1301 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20004  
Phone: (202) 662-0600  
Fax: (202) 393-2072  
[www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)

## WALKING AND HEALTH

US Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Children's Health Protection (MC 1107A)  
Washington, DC 20460  
Phone: 202-564-2188  
Fax: 202-564-2733  
[www.epa.gov/children/](http://www.epa.gov/children/)  
[www.epa.gov/airnow/](http://www.epa.gov/airnow/)  
[www.epa.gov/air/urbanair/ozone/what.html](http://www.epa.gov/air/urbanair/ozone/what.html)  
[www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html)  
[www.epa.gov/otaq/transp/comchoic/ccweb.htm](http://www.epa.gov/otaq/transp/comchoic/ccweb.htm)

President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and  
Safety Risks to Children  
[www.childrenshealth.gov](http://www.childrenshealth.gov)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity  
Phone: (888) 232-4674  
[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/readysat](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/readysat)  
[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm)

Prevention Magazine  
33 East Minor Street  
Emmaus, PA 18098  
[www.itsallaboutprevention.com](http://www.itsallaboutprevention.com)

Shape Up America!  
6707 Democracy Boulevard  
Suite 306  
Bethesda, MD 20817  
[www.shapeup.org](http://www.shapeup.org)

## ACCESSIBLE SIDEWALKS

US Access Board  
1331 F Street, NW  
Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20004-1111  
Phone: (800) 872-2253;  
(800) 993-2822 (TTY)  
[www.access-board.gov](http://www.access-board.gov)



# Bikeability Checklist

## How bikeable is your community?

### Riding a bike is fun!

Bicycling is a great way to get around and to get your daily dose of physical activity. It's good for the environment, and it can save you money. No wonder many communities are encouraging people to ride their bikes more often!



### Can you get to where you want to go by bike?

Some communities are more bikeable than others: how does yours rate? Read over the questions in this checklist and then take a ride in your community, perhaps to the local shops, to visit a friend, or even to work. See if you can get where you want to go by bicycle, even if you are just riding around the neighborhood to get some exercise.



At the end of your ride, answer each question and, based on your opinion, circle an overall rating for each question. You can also note any problems you encountered by checking the appropriate box(es). Be sure to make a careful note of any specific locations that need improvement.



Add up the numbers to see how you rated your ride. Then, turn to the pages that show you how to begin to improve those areas where you gave your community a low score.

Before you ride, make sure your bike is in good working order, put on a helmet, and be sure you can manage the ride or route you've chosen. Enjoy the ride!



Go for a ride and use this checklist  
to rate your neighborhood's bikeability.



# How bikeable is your community?

Location of bike ride (be specific): \_\_\_\_\_

Rating Scale:   
1 2 3 4 5 6  
awful many some good very good excellent  
problems problems

## 1. Did you have a place to bicycle safely?

### a) On the road, sharing the road with motor vehicles?

- Yes  Some problems (please note locations):
- No space for bicyclists to ride
  - Bicycle lane or paved shoulder disappeared
  - Heavy and/or fast-moving traffic
  - Too many trucks or buses
  - No space for bicyclists on bridges or in tunnels
  - Poorly lighted roadways
- Other problems: \_\_\_\_\_

### b) On an off-road path or trail, where motor vehicles were not allowed?

- Yes  Some problems:
- Path ended abruptly
  - Path didn't go where I wanted to go
  - Path intersected with roads that were difficult to cross
  - Path was crowded
  - Path was unsafe because of sharp turns or dangerous downhill
  - Path was uncomfortable because of too many hills
  - Path was poorly lighted
- Other problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall "Safe Place To Ride" Rating: (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

## 2. How was the surface that you rode on?

- Good  Some problems, the road or path had:
- Potholes
  - Cracked or broken pavement
  - Debris (e.g. broken glass, sand, gravel, etc.)
  - Dangerous drain grates, utility covers, or metal plates
  - Uneven surface or gaps
  - Slippery surfaces when wet (e.g. bridge decks, construction plates, road markings)
  - Bumpy or angled railroad tracks
  - Rumble strips
- Other problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Surface Rating: (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

## 3. How were the intersections you rode through?

- Good  Some problems:
- Had to wait too long to cross intersection
  - Couldn't see crossing traffic
  - Signal didn't give me enough time to cross the road
  - Signal didn't change for a bicycle
  - Unsure where or how to ride through intersection
- Other problems: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Intersection Rating: (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

Continue the checklist on the next page...

#### 4. Did drivers behave well?

- Yes     Some problems, drivers:
- Drove too fast
  - Passed me too close
  - Did not signal
  - Harassed me
  - Cut me off
  - Ran red lights or stop sign
- Other problems: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Overall Driver Rating:** (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

#### 5. Was it easy for you to use your bike?

- Yes     Some problems:
- No maps, signs, or road markings to help me find my way
  - No safe or secure place to leave my bicycle at my destination
  - No way to take my bicycle with me on the bus or train
  - Scary dogs
  - Hard to find a direct route I liked
  - Route was too hilly
- Other problems: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Overall Ease of Use Rating:** (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

#### 6. What did you do to make your ride safer?

Your behavior contributes to the bikeability of your community. Check all that apply:

- Wore a bicycle helmet
- Obeyed traffic signal and signs
- Rode in a straight line (didn't weave)
- Signaled my turns
- Rode with (not against) traffic
- Used lights, if riding at night
- Wore reflective and/or retroreflective materials and bright clothing
- Was courteous to other travelers (motorist, skaters, pedestrians, etc.)

#### 7. Tell us a little about yourself.

In good weather months, about how many days a month do you ride your bike?

- Never
- Occasionally (one or two)
- Frequently (5-10)
- Most (more than 15)
- Every day

Which of these phrases best describes you?

- An advanced, confident rider who is comfortable riding in most traffic situations
- An intermediate rider who is not really comfortable riding in most traffic situations
- A beginner rider who prefers to stick to the bike path or trail

### How does your community rate? Add up your ratings and decide.

(Questions 6 and 7 do not contribute to your community's score)

1. _____	<b>26-30</b>	Celebrate! You live in a bicycle-friendly community.
2. _____	<b>21-25</b>	Your community is pretty good, but there's always room for improvement.
3. _____	<b>16-20</b>	Conditions for riding are okay, but not ideal. Plenty of opportunity for improvements.
4. _____	<b>11-15</b>	Conditions are poor and you deserve better than this! Call the mayor and the newspaper right away.
5. _____	<b>5-10</b>	Oh dear. Consider wearing body armor and Christmas tree lights before venturing out again.
<b>Total</b> _____		

### Did you find something that needs to be changed?

On the next page, you'll find suggestions for improving the bikeability of your community based on the problems you identified. Take a look at both the short- and long-term solutions and commit to seeing at least one of each through to the end. If you don't, then who will?

During your bike ride, how did you feel physically? Could you go as far or as fast as you wanted to? Were you short of breath, tired, or were your muscles sore? The next page also has some suggestions to improve the enjoyment of your ride.

Bicycling, whether for transportation or recreation, is a great way to get 30 minutes of physical activity into your day. Riding, just like any other activity, should be something you enjoy doing. The more you enjoy it, the more likely you'll stick with it. Choose routes that match your skill level and physical activities. If a route is too long or hilly, find a new one. Start slowly and work up to your potential.

Now that you know the problems,  
you can find the answers.

# Improving your community's score...



## 1. Did you have a place to bicycle safely?

### a) On the road?

No space for bicyclists to ride (e.g. no bike lane or shoulder; narrow lanes)  
Bicycle lane or paved shoulder disappeared  
Heavy and/or fast-moving traffic  
Too many trucks or buses  
No space for bicyclists on bridges or in tunnels  
Poorly lighted roadways

### What you can do immediately

- pick another route for now
- tell local transportation engineers or public works department about specific problems; provide a copy of your checklist
- find a class to boost your confidence about riding in traffic

### What you and your community can do with more time

- participate in local planning meetings
- encourage your community to adopt a plan to improve conditions, including a network of bike lanes on major roads
- ask your public works department to consider "Share the Road" signs at specific locations
- ask your state department of transportation to include paved shoulders on all their rural highways
- establish or join a local bicycle advocacy group

### b) On an off-road path or trail?

Path ended abruptly  
Path didn't go where I wanted to go  
Path intersected with roads that were difficult to cross  
Path was crowded  
Path was unsafe because of sharp turns or dangerous downhill  
Path was uncomfortable because of too many hills  
Path was poorly lighted

- slow down and take care when using the path
- find an on-street route
- use the path at less crowded times
- tell the trail manager or agency about specific problems

- ask the trail manager or agency to improve directional and warning signs
- petition your local transportation agency to improve path/roadway crossings
- ask for more trails in your community
- establish or join a "Friends of the Trail" advocacy group

## 2. How was the surface you rode on?

Potholes  
Cracked or broken pavement  
Debris (e.g. broken glass, sand, gravel, etc.)  
Dangerous drain grates, utility covers, or metal plates  
Uneven surface or gaps  
Slippery surfaces when wet (e.g. bridge decks, construction plates, road markings)  
Bumpy or angled railroad tracks  
Rumble strips

- report problems immediately to public works department or appropriate agency
- keep your eye on the road/path
- pick another route until the problem is fixed (and check to see that the problems are fixed)
- organize a community effort to clean up the path

- work with your public works and parks department to develop a pothole or hazard report card or online link to warn the agency of potential hazards
- ask your public works department to gradually replace all dangerous drainage grates with more bicycle-friendly designs, and improve railroad crossings so cyclists can cross them at 90 degrees
- petition your state DOT to adopt a bicycle-friendly rumble-strip policy

## 3. How were the intersections you rode through?

Had to wait too long to cross intersection  
Couldn't see crossing traffic  
Signal didn't give me enough time to cross the road  
The signal didn't change for a bicycle  
Unsure where or how to ride through intersection

- pick another route for now
- tell local transportation engineers or public works department about specific problems
- take a class to improve your riding confidence and skills

- ask the public works department to look at the timing of the specific traffic signals
- ask the public works department to install loop-detectors that detect bicyclists
- suggest improvements to signalines that include cutting back vegetation; building out the path crossing; and moving parked cars that obstruct your view
- organize community-wide, on-bike training on how to safely ride through intersections

# Improving your community's score...

(continued)

**What you can do immediately**

**What you and your community can do with more time**

## 4. Did drivers behave well?

Drivers:  
Drove too fast  
Passed me too close  
Did not signal  
Harassed me  
Cut me off  
Ran red lights or stop signs

- report unsafe drivers to the police
- set an example by riding responsibly; obey traffic laws; don't antagonize drivers
- always expect the unexpected
- work with your community to raise awareness to share the road

- ask the police department to enforce speed limits and safe driving
- encourage your department of motor vehicles to include "Share the Road" messages in driver tests and correspondence with drivers
- ask city planners and traffic engineers for traffic calming ideas
- encourage your community to use cameras to catch speeders and red light runners

## 5. Was it easy for you to use your bike?

No maps, signs, or road markings to help me find my way  
No safe or secure place to leave my bicycle at my destination  
No way to take my bicycle with me on the bus or train  
Scary dogs  
Hard to find a direct route I liked  
Route was too hilly

- plan your route ahead of time
- find somewhere close by to lock your bike; never leave it unlocked
- report scary dogs to the animal control department
- learn to use all of your gears!

- ask your community to publish a local bike map
- ask your public works department to install bike parking racks at key destinations; work with them to identify locations
- petition your transit agency to install bike racks on all their buses
- plan your local route network to minimize the impact of steep hills
- establish or join a bicycle user group (BUG) at your workplace

## 6. What did you do to make your ride safer?

Wore a bicycle helmet  
Obeyed traffic signals and signs  
Rode in a straight line (didn't weave)  
Signaled my turns  
Rode with (not against) traffic  
Used lights, if riding at night  
Wore reflective materials and bright clothing  
Was courteous to other travelers (motorists, skaters, pedestrians, etc.)

- go to your local bike shop and buy a helmet; get lights and reflectors if you are expecting to ride at night
- always follow the rules of the road and set a good example
- take a class to improve your riding skills and knowledge

- ask the police to enforce bicycle laws
- encourage your school or youth agencies to teach bicycle safety (on-bike)
- start or join a local bicycle club
- become a bicycle safety instructor



Need some guidance?  
These resources might help...

# Great Resources

## **STREET DESIGN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES**

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials  
444 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 249  
Washington, DC 20001  
Tel: (202) 624-5800  
[www.aashto.org](http://www.aashto.org)

Institute of Transportation Engineers  
1099 14th Street, NW, Suite 300 West  
Washington, DC 20005-3438  
Tel: (202) 289-0222  
[www.ite.org](http://www.ite.org)

Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP)  
P.O. Box 23576  
Washington, DC 20026  
Tel: (202) 366-4071  
[www.apbp.org](http://www.apbp.org)

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC)  
UNC Highway Safety Research Center  
730 Airport Road, Suite 300  
Campus Box 3430  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3430  
Tel: (919) 962-2202  
[www.pedbikeinfo.org](http://www.pedbikeinfo.org)  
[www.bicyclinginfo.org](http://www.bicyclinginfo.org)

Federal Highway Administration  
400 Seventh Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20590  
[www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/index.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/index.htm)

## **EDUCATION AND SAFETY**

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
400 Seventh Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20590  
Tel: (202) 366-1739  
[www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/)

League of American Bicyclists  
1612 K Street NW, Suite 401  
Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: (202) 822-1333  
[www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org)

National Bicycle Safety Network  
[www.cdc.gov/ncipe/bike/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipe/bike/default.htm)

National Safe Kids Campaign  
1301 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20004  
Tel: (202) 662-0600  
[www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)

## **PATHS AND TRAILS**

Rails to Trails Conservancy  
1100 17th Street SW, 10th Floor  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: (202) 331-9696  
[www.railtrails.org](http://www.railtrails.org)

National Park Service  
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program  
1849 C Street, NW, MS-3622  
Washington, DC 20240  
[www.nrcr.nps.gov/rtrca/rtrca-ofh.htm](http://www.nrcr.nps.gov/rtrca/rtrca-ofh.htm)

## **HEALTH**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity  
4770 Buford Highway, NE  
Atlanta, GA 30341-3724  
[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa)  
Tel: (770) 488-5692

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control  
Childhood Injury Prevention  
4770 Buford Highway, NE  
Atlanta, GA 30341  
[www.cdc.gov/ncipc](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc)

## **ADVOCACY AND USER GROUPS**

Thunderhead Alliance  
1612 K Street, NW, Suite 401  
Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: (202) 822-1333  
[www.thunderheadalliance.org](http://www.thunderheadalliance.org)

League of American Bicyclists  
1612 K Street, NW, Suite 401  
Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: (202) 822-1333  
[www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org)

National Center for Cycling and Walking  
1506 21st Street, NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: (202) 463-6622  
[www.bikewalk.org](http://www.bikewalk.org)

Surface Transportation Policy Project  
1100 17th Street, NW, 10th Floor  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: (202) 466-2636  
[www.transact.org](http://www.transact.org)

## **OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES**

Bikes and transit: [www.bikemap.com](http://www.bikemap.com)

Bicycle information: [www.bicyclinginfo.org](http://www.bicyclinginfo.org)

Bicycle-related research:  
[www.ftlhc.gov/safety/pedbike/pedbike.htm](http://www.ftlhc.gov/safety/pedbike/pedbike.htm)

Bicycling Magazine: [www.bicycling.com/](http://www.bicycling.com/)

Bicycle touring:  
Adventure Cycling Association  
P.O. Box 8308  
Missoula, MT 59807  
(800) 755-2453  
(406) 721-8754  
[www.adv-cycling.org](http://www.adv-cycling.org)



## About the Author



Tanya D. Whitehead, Ph.D.

Following an appointment in research and teaching at the University of Kansas School of Medicine (1987-1996) and serving at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (1996-2010) as research and teaching faculty, Dr. Whitehead is currently a Senior Research Scientist at the University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC) in the National Center for Physical Activity and Disability (NCPAD), located in the Center on Health Promotion in the Department of Disability and Human Development at UIC.

Dr. Whitehead's record of technical publishing includes new media workshops, website development, scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals, technical manuals, program evaluations, online educational and training workshops, and print-based training materials. Her background includes 9 years in clinical practice of psychology, 15 years in higher education teaching, and 23 years in research.

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