

# A Parents Guide to Child Pedestrian Safety



## Walking is good for your children

### Children who walk regularly:

- Build and maintain healthy bones and muscles.
- Increase their flexibility and stamina.
- Maintain a more healthy weight.
- Reduce feelings of stress and anxiety.
- Increase their ability to concentrate and remember.
- Enjoy all forms of physical exercise (including sports) more.
- Have better sleep patterns.
- Develop healthy exercise habits that could last a lifetime.



Zedro the Road Safety Mascot

### Children can walk further than you think

Most healthy children of school age should be able to walk 15–30 minutes at a time without difficulty. With most children in urban areas living within a two-kilometre radius of their local school, it is reasonable to walk to and from school.

Children who are only beginning to be physically active should be given small walking goals to achieve, to build up their stamina gradually.

### *Park and Stride*

*One simple way of building up family fitness is the Park and Stride regime: the parent drives only part of the way to school and walks with their children the rest of the way. As the children become fitter, the parent can park further from the school.*



## Walking recreationally as a family

Families can also benefit from regularly walking together recreationally. Walking in a supervised situation, such as on a visit to the park or the shops allows children to develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe on our streets.

## Children do what you do

Children learn by watching others, especially you, as their parent or caregiver.

- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Cross at the school patrol when it's operating, and never cross downstream of a patrolled crossing.
- Look for vehicles exiting driveways – be aware that the vision of drivers may be restricted, and they may not see people, particularly children, on the footpath.
- Remember that drivers are not obliged to stop at courtesy crossings, so these should be treated like any other part of the road.
- Check for vehicles coming in all directions, including turning vehicles, at intersections.
- Avoid crossing from between parked cars – you may be able to see on-coming traffic but your children can't, and they can't be seen by drivers.
- Wear clothing that increases your visibility to drivers. Avoid wearing dark clothing at night.

## What you can explain

Parents are encouraged to explain to their children the safety implications of the pedestrian behaviour they are modelling. Let your children know:

- why a route was selected over other possible routes, and what makes it safer
- why the best place to cross is at a zebra crossing or pedestrian island
- the importance of stopping to look and listen for traffic in all directions before crossing
- the importance of waiting until there is no traffic coming in any direction before crossing the road – children have difficulty with gap selection, and with judging the speed of oncoming traffic
- why they should never cross from between parked cars
- the importance of walking straight across the road
- what the green figure, the red figure and the flashing red figure mean at controlled intersections
- that when getting off a bus, it's important to wait until the bus has driven away before attempting to cross the road
- the importance of being seen by approaching drivers, especially in low light situations, such as night or when it's raining.



## Stages of development

### 4–6 Years

#### *Walk together*

- They have limited judgment and concentration span.
- They cannot gauge the speed of oncoming traffic, or pick safe places to cross.
- They can be impulsive.

### 7–9 Years

#### *Teach them lifelong skills*

- They still need adult supervision.
- They can identify safe crossing sites with help and practice.
- They can be taught how to identify traffic and stay focused while crossing the street.

### 10+ Years

#### *Increase their independence*

- They can be granted some independence when they repeatedly demonstrate safe behaviour.
- They still require supervision and instructions in complex, busy traffic situations.
- As children grow, revisit road safety issues often.





WALK TO SCHOOL EVERY WEEK  
IA WIKI HIKOI KI TE KURA

## Walking school buses

A walking school bus is a walking group formed from families living in a community, for the purpose of sharing the responsibility of supervising their children on the walk to and from school. Parents and caregivers take turns as “drivers” of the bus, walking along a set route, collecting children from designated “bus stops” along the way. Walking school buses keep children safe, and save busy parents the trouble of walking their children to school every day.

For more information about walking school buses and how to establish your own, please visit:

[www.ccc.govt.nz/walkingschoolbus](http://www.ccc.govt.nz/walkingschoolbus)

or: [www.feetfirst.org.nz](http://www.feetfirst.org.nz)



## School travel planning

### Travel Plan



School travel planning is a process whereby a school, working with its local authority, finds ways to promote safer, healthier and more sustainable travel options for school-related journeys. Encourage your child's school to investigate the benefits of school travel planning. Information can be obtained by contacting the Christchurch City Council's Road Safety Coordinators at [EducationCEG@ccc.govt.nz](mailto:EducationCEG@ccc.govt.nz), who will be happy to advise your school.

*Make sure children walking to school get there on time, so they can cross the road with other pedestrians. A child running late is more likely to run across the road, and potentially into traffic.*



## Drivers awareness around schools

- **Slow down.** Around schools, make sure you're always ready to stop quickly, as children can behave unpredictably.
- **Travel at 40 km/h.** Some schools have electronic 40 km/h signs that flash when the school day begins and ends.
- **Park legally.** Don't park, or even stop briefly, on broken yellow lines. You will be blocking the ability of other drivers and child pedestrians to see one another. Double parking is also very dangerous, and exposes children to on-coming traffic. Always obey the parking regulations, including time restrictions.
- **Drop off early.** You can avoid congestion at the school gate by dropping your children off earlier rather than later.
- **Be visible.** On wet days use your lights.

- **Alight on the left.** Have children get out of your vehicle on the footpath side of the car.
- **Stop for pedestrians at pedestrian crossings.** If a school patrol is operating, stop only when the stop sign is extended onto the road. If the patrol is not operating, stop for any pedestrian waiting at a zebra crossing. Be careful about stopping for pedestrians at courtesy crossings – oncoming vehicles may not stop and drivers behind you may decide to pass you, putting pedestrians at risk.
- **Always be on the lookout for children.** Nationally, the highest number of child pedestrians are injured between 2pm–4pm.



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