

Toledo Safe Routes to School Walk to School Day Toolkit



Updated 2018



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Background

About Walk To School Day:

International Walk to School Day is a global event that involves communities from more than 40 countries walking and biking to school on the same day. It began in 1997 as a one-day event. Over time, this event has become part of a movement for year-round safe routes to school and a celebration – with record-breaking participation – each October. Today, thousands of schools across America – from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico – participate every October.

Why Walk?

- It's fun!
 - Walking can bring a sense of joy and independence

 - Healthier Habits
 - Walking to school enables children to incorporate the regular physical activity they need each day while also forming healthier habits that can last a lifetime.
 - Regular physical activity helps children build strong bones, muscles and joints, and it decreases the risk of obesity.

 - Cleaner Environment
 - Replacing car trips to school with walking can reduce congestion and air-polluting emissions.

 - Promoting Safety
 - Children and adults need to learn safe walking skills.

 - Community Benefits
 - Reducing traffic congestion, boosting a sense of community, and improving neighborhood connections benefit the community.
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Planning Worksheet



First week of September

1. Identify the Walk to School Day Champion

- Who will be planning the event: i.e., principal, vice principal, teacher, school nurse, social worker, PTO, parent volunteer.

2. Register your event

- Don't forget to register here: <http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/go>

3. Determine the type of event

- Example#1:
 - Simply encourage students and families to walk to school on Walk to School Day instead of their typical mode of transportation.
- Example#2 Park and Walk Event:
 - A nearby church, library, police station, fire station, park. Participants meet at a central location and walk to school from here. This allows those who feel they may live too far to walk. A location about ½ mile to 1 mile from school is ideal.
- Example #3: Walking School Bus/Train:
 - Suggest that students and families make their own arrangements to meet in their neighborhood to participate in a walk to school. Encourage parents to walk with their children to school on Walk to School Day.
- Example #4: School as starting point:
 - Participants along with volunteers, teachers and principal walk to a specific location together after arriving to school (field trip to park, police/fire station, library, church). This can be done as a whole school event or throughout the day in smaller groups by grade.
- Example #5: Classroom brain break
 - Individual classroom teachers can take their class outside on school grounds or in the gym to walk 15 mins.

Second Week of September

4. Recruit parents & volunteers

- Volunteers can help with event preparation and on the event date itself. You can recruit volunteers in many ways: through PTO meetings, via email or on the listserv groups who regularly volunteer for student activities. Remember to take advantage of your local school and community newsletters.
- Notify your school community resource officer or other local law enforcement with details of the event; date, time, location, and specific routes. They can assist with any necessary traffic control.

5. Optional: Make arrangements with the food service department

- Provide the children who participate with a bagged breakfast or snack.

Third Week of September

6. Finalize event plans

- Decide what students and families will do when they arrive at the school. Are students supposed to report to their classroom? Are students meeting outside together? Are they meeting in one central location in the building?
- If the event requires temporary road closings, make sure to contact police officials to block off designated areas during the event.

7. Promote the event

- One to two weeks before event: Post an announcement in the school and community newsletter and include in daily school announcements.
- Optional: One to two weeks before the event send home interest forms with children to see how many children will be attending event and include safety reminders such as “wear bright colored clothing.”
- Send home flyers provided by your Safe Routes to School Coordinator a couple days before the event as a reminder.
- Have the school do an “All Call” to families a couple days before event
- Incorporate promotion of the event into classroom activities:
 - **Art or Computer Class:** Create posters promoting Walk to School Day and safe driving and walking messages.
 - **Geography:** Survey and create maps of walking routes to school
 - **Health:** Use pedometers to measure steps, or simply measure walking or riding time accumulated by students; study health benefits of physical activity.

- **Mathematics:** Keep logs of walking time or steps; calculate speeds and distances, individual and group averages, trends and statistical analysis (e.g. do boys or girls walk more?)
- **English:** Write press releases and public service announcements to promote Walk to School Day. Write essays or keep a diary about your experiences walking or riding to school.

Other Options:

8. Provide Incentives

- Your Safe Routes to School Coordinator will provide you a fun incentive to hand out to students when they arrive - pencils, badges, or silicone bracelets etc...
- Certificate of participation
- Dress Down Day
- PTO provide a special event-pizza party or ice cream social
- Lunch with principal
- Breakfast/lunch picnic with sack lunch provided
- Toe Tokens <http://www.fitnessfinders.net/>

9. Make it Fun!

- Invite your learning community high school mascot
- Wear school colors while walking or biking
- Take disposable cameras on the route and document what you see
- Carry colorful balloons during event
- Hold a pep rally before or after event
- Have students map a walking route from their home to school
- Have kids design promotional materials for the event
- Hold a pedestrian safety assembly or a "question and answer" session in conjunction with the event
- Give the "Golden Shoe" award to the classroom or grade that has the most participants in the day's events. Extend the friendly competition to other schools in your area.

Attachments:

- See attachment (pg.10) or go to: Parent Volunteer Request Letter (pg. 7)
- Volunteer Agreement (pg. 8)
- Donation Letter- Sample (pg. 9)
- Other Resources
 - <http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-t2oX6zQEyU>



Request for Volunteers

<Insert School Name> Walk-to-School Day 2015

On <Insert Date>, <Insert School Name> will be hosting its first annual *Walk to School Day* event. In order to make this event a success, we need your help.

Walking to school has many benefits. Some benefits include:

- Safety in larger groups
- Increased amounts of physical activity among our youth
- Reduced amounts of traffic congestion around school areas
- Social benefits for children
- Parents save money on gas

How you can get involved

Getting involved is easy. You can participate in Walk-to-School Day by:

- Walking your child and other neighborhood students to school
- Volunteer to meet students being dropped off at a Walking School Bus Stop and safely walk with them to school
- Greet students as they arrive to school
- Help serve snack

For more information about Walk-to-School Day, please contact *<Insert Contact Person Here>* at <Insert Phone Number> or e-mail at <Insert E-mail Address Here>.

If you would like to be a Parent Volunteer on Walk-to-School Day, please return the Volunteer Registration sheet to <Insert Name> by <Insert Date>.

Parent Name: _____ Child's Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Zip Code: _____

Walk to School Day Volunteer Agreement



- The goal of the Walk-to-School Day Event is to provide a healthy option atmosphere for children to get safely to school. Any suspected incidences of abuse or injury must be reported to the school principal or assistant principal immediately.
- At no time during the Walk-to-School Day Event program may a volunteer be alone with a single child where they cannot be observed by others. As volunteers supervise children, they should space themselves in a way that they are in view of other volunteers.
- Volunteers will be supervised at all times.
- Volunteers shall not abuse children including:
 - physical abuse – strike, spank, shake, slap;
 - verbal abuse – humiliate, degrade, threaten;
 - sexual abuse – inappropriate touch or verbal exchange;
 - emotional abuse – shaming, harassment or cruelty, etc.
- Volunteers will portray a positive role model for youth.
- Using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during volunteer hours is not allowed. Use of tobacco is not permitted while volunteering for Walk-to-School Day. Profanity, inappropriate jokes in the presence of children or parents is not acceptable.
- Volunteers are not to transport children in any vehicle.
- Under no circumstance should volunteers release children to anyone other than the school.
- Under no circumstances will volunteers have permission to take photographs of Walk-to-School Day participants.
- Cell phones are to be used only for emergency purposes.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____



Donation Request

Manager's Name
Name of business
Street address
City, State zip

<Insert Date>

Dear <Insert Manager's name>:

This year, _____ <Name of School> Elementary School will be hosting a Walk-to-School Day on _____.<Insert Date>. We are seeking donations of drinks, snacks, and small prizes for distribution to those who walk to school. We are promoting this event at our school to bring awareness to the community that walking is a good way for students and members of the community to increase physical activity which leads to a healthier lifestyle. We would greatly appreciate your support, and would like to request a donation from you. We are seeking <Insert item you are requesting for donation>

In exchange for your donation, your business will receive:

- ✓ Recognition throughout the community
- ✓ Publicity on our event welcome table to our entire school population
- ✓ Recognition in our school newspaper
- ✓ A tax-deductible donation receipt

Thank you in advance for supporting the health and happiness of your community. I will call you next week to answer any questions you have about this request. You may also contact me at <Insert contact information>.

Sincerely,

**<Name of School>
is participating in Walk to School Day
<Month, Day, Year>**

**Join children and adults around
Toledo to celebrate the benefits of
walking!**

Why walk?

Walk to School Day promotes safe walking for many 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
- Taking back neighborhoods for people on foot
- Sharing time with community leaders, parents and children



To learn more about Walk to School Day, contact your school coordinator <Name>

Safety Reminders



Walking is a fun and healthy way to spend time with your children while teaching them skills that can serve them well throughout life. Walk to school day is a great time to use these safety tips.

As you walk with your child, remember these safety tips:

- Wear bright-colored clothes, and carry flashlights or wear reflective gear if it is dark or hard to see
- Look for traffic at every driveway and intersection. Be aware of drivers in parked cars that may be getting ready to move
- Obey all traffic signs and signals
- Cross the street safely:
 1. Stop at the curb or edge of the street
 2. Look left, right, left and behind you and in front of you for traffic
 3. Wait until no traffic is coming and begin crossing
 4. Keep looking for traffic until you have finished crossing
 5. Walk, don't run across the street

