**Walk and Roll to School Day Ideas**

If you think your school can’t possibly host a Walk and Roll to School Day event, think again! The ideas listed below can help make it work.

**Alternate Drop-Off**

In situations where a majority of students are bused or are driven because they live far away, finding an alternative drop-off location for Walk and Roll to School Day is a great idea. Buses and private vehicles can stop a few blocks away from the school in a parking lot that has safe sidewalks connecting to the school. Students are greeted by adult volunteers who walk with the children the remaining way to school.

Walking buddies include police officers, grandparents, high school athletes and band members, parents, and community leaders. Recruit volunteers before Walk and Roll to School Day and provide them with directions to the alternative drop-off.

Look for an alternative drop-off lot that has enough space for buses and other vehicles to stop, safely drop-off students and park so parents and community members can leave their vehicles and walk with students. Examples of alternative drop-off locations are: shopping centers, community centers, parks, and places of worship.

Be sure to invite your school district transportation director and bus drivers to walk with students!

**Walking School Bus**

The walking school bus addresses the needs of students and the concerns of parents. One or more adults accompany a small group of students who pick up other students along a planned route, similar to the traditional school bus. They walk as a group on their commute to and from school.

Adults can take turns walking with the students by having assigned days of duty. Children can be picked up at their homes or at “staging areas” where they “catch the bus.” The staging areas should also have adult supervision. Students can wear a specific color (yellow for visibility and to symbolize the bus, for example), use a wagon for their backpacks, or hold a rope linking them all together. Adults can utilize the opportunity to teach pedestrian safety skills to students while walking to school as well.

**Bike Trains**

Bike trains are similar to the walking school bus except that students ride their bikes to school in groups. These are usually utilized when older students are involved.

A bike safety workshop (sometimes called a bike rodeo) should be offered to teach students important safety habits, including the importance of wearing a bike helmet. Bike racks should also be available to students to secure their bikes while at school. Bike trains need more adults to supervise bicyclists and adults should be good role models (i.e., know and obey bicycle safety rules).

**Walking Wednesdays**

Another way to promote walking to school is to begin a “Walking Wednesdays” program. Designate Wednesday as “Walking Wednesday”. Encourage students to walk or roll to school with their friends, family, caregivers, or as part of a walking school bus. Keep track of the number of students walking and reward the class that has the greatest percentage of students participating. This program can be held on any day of the week; if Wednesdays do not work for your school, choose whichever day works best.

**When Routes Aren’t Safe...**

Walk and Roll to School Day builds public support for having safe walking routes to school. The Safe Routes to School program is a great follow-up to Walk and Roll to School Day. While Walk and Roll to School Day is a one-time event, Safe Routes to School is an ongoing initiative to identify safety hazards to walking and bicycling to school and to develop an improvement plan that targets making specific changes.

However, even before route safety is improved, your school CAN hold Walk and Roll to School Day! Ways that schools have improvised Walk and Roll to School Day when walking routes aren’t yet safe include “Walk and Roll to School Day—at School.” Students arrive by usual transportation mode, are greeted by walking buddies (see above for examples of walking buddies) and walk the perimeter of the school property several times.

Parents and other community members are given directions on where to park and when students will arrive at school so they can walk with students on school property.

“Walk and Roll to School Day—at School” is an effective way to bring community attention to the lack of safe routes for walking and bicycling to school. It is also a great way to involve students who must be bused or driven to school on Walk and Roll to School Day. For a variety of reasons it may not be possible for all students to walk or roll to school; however, all students should be able to join the celebration.

**Celebrations**

Schools sometimes hold an assembly after students, parents, and community members arrive at school. It is a good opportunity to emphasize healthy, safe lifestyle choices.

Guest speakers might include police officers who teach pedestrian skills and high school students who model positive attitudes toward physical activity, such as members of the cheerleading squad or sports teams. Another way to celebrate Walk and Roll to School Day is to hold a meeting to talk about the interest in starting a Safe Routes to School initiative.

**Don't Forget**

* Promote your event to the news media.
* Count student, parent, and community participants this year and use these figures to increase participation next year!
* Invite your school district transportation director and bus drivers to participate in Walk and Roll to School Day.