



California's Safe Routes to School Initiative

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Safe Routes to Schools

the 20 minute overview

- Definitions
- Public health potential
- Partnerships
- Programs
- Moving forward





Safe Routes to Schools Definitions

- Promoting non-motorized trips to and from school
 - Feet
 - Bikes
 - Skateboards & scooters
- Normalizing incidental physical activity
 - Using the “spectrum of prevention”



Safe Routes to Schools Definitions

- SR2S programs help
 - Children who already bike & walk
and
 - Enable more children to safely bike
and walk
 - Whatever the barriers
- Ultimately: create places and a culture for all to safely walk & bike



Safe Routes to Schools Definitions

- The Three “E”s

- Education
- Engineering
- Enforcement

- Additional “E”s for comprehensive SR2S programs

- Environment
- Equity
- Encouragement
- Enrichment

Education: Maps with Designated Routes

Maps:

The “original” Safe Routes to School program.



Education: Skill Building for Children

- Traffic skills
- Social skills
- Independent problem solving



Engineering

- Sidewalks
- Bike paths
- Crosswalks

More comprehensive engineering solutions:

- “Traffic calming”



Enforcement

- Law enforcement
 - Signs & lights
(passive enforcement)
 - Tickets
 - Stings
- Community involvement
 - Patrols
 - Safe houses
 - Crossing guards



Environment

- Litter
- Visibility
- Dogs
- People
 - Social
 - Anti-social



Policies and Legislation

- School siting & size
- Busing
- Transportation funding
- Liability
- Roadway maintenance
- Classroom curricula
- After-school programs
- Crossing guards
- Storage for bikes and books





Safe Routes to Schools

Public health potential

Providing safer routes to school offers a full range of benefits:

- ✓ It's Fun!
- ✓ It's Healthy
- ✓ It's Non-polluting
- ✓ It's Friendly
- ✓ It's Educational
- ✓ It's Economical

Walking + Biking = Healthy, Alert Children



Potential: The Public Health Benefits

Lifelong health

- 24% of U.S. children are now obese,
 - a 55% increase from 1963
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Bone health
- Mental health



Potential: The Public Health Benefits

Children's skill development

- Traffic skills for safe mobility
- Socialization
- Independence

Children's academic performance

- Concentration, problem solving ability and mood are enhanced by physical activity



Potential: The Public Health Benefits

Community livability

- Active community environments (ACEs)
 - Safety, Access, Aesthetics, Functionality
- Traffic safety
- Congestion
 - Parents driving their children to school comprise 20% - 25% of the morning commute and vehicle emissions
- Community cohesiveness
- Small schools serving a neighborhood
- Environmental stewardship



Research Potential

- Demonstration projects
 - England, Canada, U.S.
- Transportation surveys
 - for example: children's trip distances and modes
- Community audits
 - Walkability checklists



Research Potential

- Walkability Checklists from California's Walk to School Day have provided data:
 - Drivers don't yield to children on foot
 - Children want to bike
 - By 3rd grade, walk trips are in decline
 - Bus riders are the children most likely to perceive dangers along the route when they do walk

- Thank you Cathy Staunton @ CDC !



Grassroots Potential

"We will use walk-day checklists to show our town places we need more safety measures along the main routes to school."

Malcolm Clark

parent at Bullis Purissima Elementary

Los Altos



Grassroots Potential

“Children should be able to walk to school.
It’s a basic right.”

Helen Kwan, co-coordinator at John Yehall Chin Elementary

San Francisco

San Francisco Independent 10/9/01



Safe Routes to Schools Partnerships

- Health departments
- Walking advocates
- Parks & recreation
- Academy of Pediatricians
- Parent-Teacher associations
- Traffic officers
- Department of Education
 - School health
 - School safety
- Bicycle advocates
- Trails advocates
- Safe Kids Coalitions
- CA legislature
- Federal Express
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Transportation & public works departments
- Environmentalists
- Local government officials
- Automobile insurance companies



Common agenda for multiple partners

- In California ...
 - Dept of Health Services
 - Traffic-Related Injury Prevention
 - Active Community Environments
 - Cancer Prevention & Nutrition
 - Rails to Trails Conservancy
 - Surface Transportation Policy Project
 - California Bicycle Coalition
 - Local Government Commission
 - CA Highway Patrol



Safe Routes to Schools

Program activities in California

- Caltrans grants
 - Engineering
- Community planning grants
 - DHS
 - Marin County
- Walk to School Day
 - 500+ schools every October



The “Caltrans program”

- Construction grants to public works
- Eligible projects
 - Sidewalks & crosswalks
 - traffic control devices
 - bike lanes & off-street trails
- \$500,000 maximum per award



Safe Routes to Schools through Safe Communities

- Office of Traffic Safety
 - federal “402” safety funds
- Nine local lead agencies
- \$25,000 ~ 18 months
- CA Department of Health Services
 - Project management & technical assistance
- NHTSA’s “Safe Communities” model

Safe Routes to Schools through Safe Communities

- Local lead agencies for SR2S projects:
 - community clinic
 - hospital community outreach office
 - city transportation department
 - county health department
 - bicycle coalitions
 - child abuse prevention council
 - county public works department



Walk to School Day





Walk to School Day

- Simple, turn-key event
- Media worthy
- Raise awareness ... or call to action
- Start of school year
- Prior to fall elections
- Potential to rally allies for ongoing projects



Walk to School Day

- Highlights a variety of health and safety issues:
 - Overweight and obesity epidemic
 - Traffic, crime and violence hazards
 - Insufficient pedestrian and bicycle facilities
 - Air quality ~ asthma
 - Bicycle helmets



Walk to School Day

"We had a lot of fun and can't wait for next year. In 2002 we hope to make this a week long event so we can fit more schools in."

Lisa Scates
Public Safety Officer
City of Palmdale

Example: Noralto School in Sacramento



Example: Safe Kids Coalitions

- National partnership for pedestrian safety
 - Federal Express
 - LL Bean





Walk Day Headquarters @ DHS

- Resources
 - Checklists
 - Promotion
 - Activity ideas
- www.cawalktoschool.com

Walk Day Headquarters @ DHS

- Registration
- Advocacy network
 - Support legislation
 - Idea exchange



On this day:

- ✓ Schools will promote pedestrian safety and parent involvement.
- ✓ Children and parents will spend time together practicing safe pedestrian behavior.
- ✓ The community will highlight the benefits of active and safe routes to schools.

Walk Locally, Take Part Globally • Support Safe Routes to Schools

For more information or
to request a "Classroom Activities Packet"
contact California's Walk Day Headquarters:
Toll free: 877-4-Safe-Rt
E-mail: SafeRt@jba-cht.com
Web-sites: www.dhs.ca.gov/routes2school/
and www.jba-cht.com/walk.html

Event support is provided by the California Department of Health Services,
the University of California San Francisco, and
the Partnership for a Walkable America.

Your School Contact Person



Examples of support for Walk to School Day

- Department of Education mailing
 - 10,000 school principals and district superintendents
- Spanish language translations produced by DHS's Latino 5-a-day program
- 7th grade class at a Chinese immersion school translated the checklist into Chinese
- Local health departments got volunteers to translate the checklist into Spanish and Hmong



Moving Forward:

Recommendations to Public Health agencies

- Set a comprehensive definition
- Harness a complex agenda
- Adopt Precautionary Principle (act now!)
- Link chronic disease control with injury control
- Promote Walk to School Day
 - National website: www.walktoschool-usa.com
 - Resources
 - Registration



Moving Forward: Support “Caltrans” legislation

- Federal transportation bill
 - “TEA-3”
- State transportation program
 - 9 states have similar SR2S bills

For info: www.transact.org

Surface Transportation Policy Project

Safe Routes to Schools create Healthier Communities

- Many gatekeepers
- Many stakeholders
- Multiple benefits
- Common agenda
- Highly adaptable
- Positive
- Profound
- Sustainable

