

## Safe Walking Information for Parents

We encourage you to walk at least several times with your younger child to help them learn and practice safe walking and crossing. If your school has a Walking School Bus, a group led by a parent or volunteer who is fingerprinted and background checked, your child can “ride” the bus. If not, you can help start a program, and volunteer.

**Select safe walking routes:** Walk with your child and talk about hazards so that you and your child can identify the safest routes to places they want to go. Make it clear to your child which streets they may cross by themselves or with friends, and which they may not, but allow them more freedom as they mature, grow taller, and develop better walking and crossing skills. Children have difficulty judging the speed and distance of vehicles, but with practice will improve.

Mid-block crossings are safe and legal (except between signals), but pedestrians (= someone who walks) must yield to all vehicles. Intersection crossings can be safe, but are more complicated places to cross because of the additional directions and turning vehicles, requiring looking left, right, ahead and behind. All intersections have crosswalks, whether they are painted or not.

Steps to crossing streets safety:

STOP at the edge Look left Look right Look left again <i>Is it safe to cross?</i>
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When crossing with a group of people, **everyone** looks. Pedestrians should **continue looking** left and right, all the way across, until safely on the other side. It is OK to walk fast, but **never** to run.

If a car stops, make **eye contact** with the driver to make sure it has stopped for you. You must still look left, right, and left again for other cars. If the driver does not motion you across or if you are not comfortable, step back from the curb/edge so that driver can go, and then start over.

The biggest danger for pedestrians in our area is on a **multi-lane street** where one car stops for the pedestrian but another car does not stop. Crossing multi-lane streets is a higher-level skill that young children should not attempt, and all pedestrians must be particularly careful.

Painted crosswalks, stop signs, traffic signals, and pedestrian signals do not guarantee safety. You must still look left, right, and left again, decide if it is safe to cross, and continue to look left and right all the way across the street.

If there are no sidewalks, all pedestrians should **walk on the left facing traffic**, but cautiously walking a short distance on the “wrong” side might be better than crossing the street twice.

At night, and on dark days, wear light clothing, wear reflective materials, and/or carry a light.

For more information: [http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/graduated\\_walking/pdf/TeachingChildrenToWalkSafely.pdf](http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/graduated_walking/pdf/TeachingChildrenToWalkSafely.pdf).