



Reasons to Participate in Walk to School Events

There are many great reasons for walking. Here are some ways participating in walk to school events can benefit your community:

Pedestrian safety

Walk to school events provide an opportunity to bring pedestrian safety issues to the attention of:

- Children- through basic safety education on how to cross streets and be visible to drivers.
- Parents- by creating awareness of walking options.
- Drivers- by alerting all drivers of the presence of walking students.
- Law Enforcement – by enforcing school speed zones.
- Local Officials – by bringing attention to necessary improvements and beginning the process of addressing them.

Walk to school events provide participants with the opportunity to see the challenges facing pedestrians, making them conscientious when they are driving.



Traffic Safety

Walk to school events remind communities that walking should be a safe and convenient transportation option. As cars have become the dominant transportation for children, communities have forgotten to include safety measures for walkers such as:

- Constructing schools within neighborhoods and within walking distance from homes
- Building sidewalks to connect homes with schools
- Creating safer opportunities to cross streets (providing crossing guards, raised medians, traffic and pedestrian signals)
- Reducing the speeds of cars through police enforcement and traffic calming

Walk to school events encourage those who normally drive to experience the walking environment, which leads to a personal understanding of the need to plan for pedestrians. Walking to school reduces the number of cars near schools at pick-up and drop-off times, making it safer for those who walk while also reducing traffic congestion.



Physical Activity

Walking to school is an easy way to increase physical activity. Research shows that physically inactive kids are more likely to grow up to be physically inactive adults, and are therefore at high risk for obesity and related problems.

Walking to school provides an opportunity for daily exercise, which reduces the rates of obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and other chronic diseases. Physical activity recommendations for children suggest the need for a variety of activities each day - some intense, some less-so, some informal, and some structured. Walking to and from school is an ideal way to get some of that activity at no extra cost to the child or family.





Reasons to Participate in Walk to School Events

More ways participating in walk to school events can benefit your community:

Environment and Air Quality



Walking to school reduces the number of vehicle miles traveled each day, which decreases the levels of air pollutants such as ground-level ozone, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter that negatively affect our health.

Air pollutants can be especially harmful to children because their respiratory systems are still developing. Air pollution can exacerbate chronic respiratory conditions such as asthma.

Public Policy

Walk to school events encourage non-walkers to pay attention to pedestrian safety issues. This encourages policy makers to view walkers as valid important users of the transportation system.

Participation in walk to school events brings pedestrian issues to the attention of those who decide where to site schools. School Siting and the design of the surrounding area affect traffic congestion, air pollution, school transportation budgets, and whether children can walk and bike to school safely.



Quality of Life

Walking to school increases the opportunities for children to interact with their parents, friends, neighbors and the community.

