



SMART STEPS TO SAFE PEDESTRIANS

Pedestrian-related injury is one of the leading causes of death and injury for children ages 5-14. Yet many of these tragedies can be prevented. Are your children walking safely? Review these guidelines to find out.

WHAT ARE KIDS THINKING?

- **Fantasy vs. Reality.** Until approximately age 7, children don't always distinguish between fantasy and reality. For example, when they are in a crosswalk, they may believe they are completely safe.
- **Visual Skills.** A child's peripheral vision is only 2/3rds that of an adult. Peripheral vision, along with depth perception and the ability to judge speed and distance do not fully develop until at least age 10.
- **Hearing.** Children can't always locate the source of a sound. They may hear a car, but not know where it is coming from.
- **Judgment.** The ability to anticipate hazards, understand cause and effect, and think about more than one thing at a time are skills that develop with age and experience.

GETTING READY

- Always know the route your children are taking, and when they plan to arrive and return. Walk the route with them in advance.
- Younger children should be accompanied by a grown-up. Older children should walk with a buddy.
- Children need to wear retroreflective materials and bright clothing so they can be seen.
- In low light conditions such as dawn or dusk, children should carry a flashlight. Do not let them walk at night.

ON THE WAY

- Use sidewalks. If there is no sidewalk, children should walk on the far left, facing traffic.
- Help children watch for hazards such as cracks or uneven sidewalks. If the weather is wet or icy, they need to take shorter steps and walk more carefully.
- Children should ALWAYS stop at the curb and never run into the street.

CROSSING STREETS

- Teach children to use crosswalks and only cross streets at corners.
- Children should cross streets with a grown-up until they are at least age 10.
- Remind children to look left, right, and left again before entering or crossing a path, sidewalk, street or driveway. They should continue looking as they cross.
- Children need to make eye contact with each driver before they pass in front of him or her.
- Never cross the street from between parked cars.

AROUND THE SCHOOL BUS

- Get to the bus stop 5 minutes early. Have children wait 4 giant steps back from the curb.
- Children need to stand back until the bus driver opens the door. They need to use the handrail as they board the bus, with no pushing.
- Make sure everything is "tucked in" before children get on or off the bus so nothing can get caught.
- When children get off, they need to immediately walk 10 steps away from the bus.
- If children have to cross the street, teach them to be sure they can see the driver's face. They need to cross in front of the bus, at least 10 steps away from the bus. Never cross the street in back of the bus.
- If something falls near or under the bus, children should tell the bus driver and wait to pick it up.

For more information,
contact the I'm Safe! Network,
www.imsafe.com.

