

# School Travel Planning



## Introduction for Parents

### The Problem

You've probably noticed...fewer students are walking/cycling for the school journey

Many of today's parents walked or cycled to school when they were young. But, times have changed and car culture is taking over. Now, fewer kids are using active modes of transportation (i.e., walking, cycling, rollerblading, scooting) for their school journey. Many parents are busy or concerned about safety, and so they drive their children to school instead of allowing

them to walk or cycle. The trouble is, when students are driven to school instead of walking or cycling, they miss the opportunity for much-needed physical activity, fresh air and quality interaction with parents, caregivers and friends; and driving increases school zone congestion, which in turn makes conditions less safe for those who do walk or wheel, and adds to air pollution.

### A Solution

School Travel Planning is a proven approach for addressing parental concerns

School Travel Planning (STP) is a process that involves school staff, parents and students working with transportation/traffic staff, police and public health to develop a plan to address parental concerns and challenges about school routes, and get more students walking and cycling for the school journey.



### So Many Benefits!



#### Healthier Children

- Active school travel helps school-aged children meet the recommendation to accumulate at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity, which is associated with improved physical and mental health.



#### Less Traffic and Pollution

- Reducing the number of children being driven to school reduces greenhouse gas emissions and particulate air pollution around the school; this improves air quality and reduces associated risks of lung and cardiovascular diseases.



#### Safer School Zones

- Reducing traffic volumes creates safer school zones and saves school staff time. Improving walking and cycling routes to school also enhances the safety, connectivity, and quality of life for the community as a whole.



#### Better Academic Performance

- Increased physical activity specifically associated with the school journey increases alertness and attention during the school day.
- Physical activity supports healthy brain development, which can lead to improved learning and academic outcomes.

Let's work together to get more kids walking and cycling to school

## How it Works

### The STP Process

School Travel Planning flows through a six-phase process over an initial period of two to three years. The process is guided and supported by a Facilitator whose role is to bring everyone together, coordinate activities and compile the School Travel Plan.

### How Parents Can be Involved

Parents have an important role in creating a culture of walking and cycling at schools. There are many ways parents that can be involved:

- **Enable your children to walk or cycle to and from school**—you may travel with them and enjoy the opportunity to get some fresh air and exercise along the way, or you may allow them to walk or cycle on their own or with siblings/friends, if they are old enough to do so. Plan a route and practice the journey with them.
- **Have your children ride the school bus** if you live in the ‘bus zone.’ This is important because increasing usage of assigned bus seats is one way to reduce congestion and improve safety in the school zone.
- **Respond to the Family Survey** and provide valuable input that will help to identify travel issues and concerns about the school journey.
- **Join our School STP Committee.** As a member of the committee, you will:
  - attend regular meetings during the school year;
  - participate in a Walkabout survey to assess the current routes to school; and
  - help develop the school’s Action Plan to address travel issues identified.
- **Attend select School STP Committee meetings as a guest** if you’re interested in being involved but don’t want to commit to being a member.

### Examples of STP Actions Other Schools Have Taken Include:

- Walking and cycling route maps
- New bike racks and cycling skills training
- Fun walking events
- Improved signage and crosswalks
- Lower speed limits in school zones

### Positive Feedback

*“Having (the kids) walk and bike when they can to school has been excellent for them in terms of getting a little bit more activity every day. I think they’re happier when they get to school and even when they get home. I know when they walk it’s a great feeling for them.”*

Bruce Krentz, parent

*“It’s not a far walk, so it is nice to get out and get a good start, run a few errands and walk home, and get a little fresh air!”*

Anja Liddy, parent



## Get Involved Now

Please contact the Principal if you have any questions or if you’d like to join our School STP Committee. For more information about School Travel Planning, visit [www.ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/school-travel-planning](http://www.ontarioactiveschooltravel.ca/school-travel-planning).