

Organizing a Walk and Bike Event

Walking and biking events can serve as fun and interactive ways to get children excited about active transportation. These events positively impact the community by integrating physical activity into daily life, increasing opportunities for local leaders to work together, raising awareness of ways to decrease vehicle pollution, and increasing school spirit. Walking and biking events can happen once or they can become semi-regular events that promote healthy choices throughout the year.

Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day

Some schools plan their events around the International Walk to School Day (October 9, 2013), the National Bike to School Month (October), or the National Bike to School Day (May 8, 2013). This is a great way to gain exposure and show that your school is connected to a worldwide movement. Many schools use their walking and biking events as a kick-off for a larger initiative, such as a walking club or Fire Up Your Feet program.

Start Planning an Event

Hold a meeting with school administrators, teachers, and PTA to decide on the event details. Things to consider:

- Will this be a one-time event or will it happen on a quarterly/monthly basis?
- Will it be a kick-off to a walking club, walking school bus, bike train, and/or Fire Up Your Feet program?
- Will it incorporate healthy fundraising activities such as a walk-a-thon or bike-a-thon?
- Will the event teach biking skills or focus on pedestrian safety?
- Does the school have resources nearby that encourage walking and biking (bike racks, safe pathways, track, field, open space)?

Get Creative So All Families Can Participate

Walking and biking the whole way to school is a great behavior to encourage families who live a mile or less from school. For families who live farther away, encourage remote drop-offs (where groups meet at a designated spot a mile or less from school and walk and bike together). Another way to include all students is to organize a walk and bike *at* school event.

Identify and Inform All Interested Parties

Once you have finalized the details of the event, invite local representative neighborhood associations, interested community groups such as senior walking groups and biking and walking groups, law enforcement, transportation planners, and local business owners to participate with their own children or others. Send a press release to the media telling them who will participate, number of children involved, and the best location and time to join the event.

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Children's Involvement

Children will be more excited about the event if it is heavily promoted at school. Have students create posters in art class and then hang posters throughout the school. Give teachers fact sheets on why walking and biking are healthy activities, and ask them to discuss bike and pedestrian safety in class. Work with music teachers to teach fun songs that address physical activity, which the children can sing at the event. Partner with a local sporting good store to get t-shirts or prizes donated for children that will participate.

Keep Up the Momentum

Oftentimes, schools discover that a one-day walking and biking event inspires a bigger movement. Once children have experienced an event, they usually express interest in continuing to walk and bike to and from school. Schools can work with parents to organize ongoing programs that will ensure frequent physical activity opportunities for children. As involvement in these programs grows, parents, teachers, and local leaders can leverage this enthusiasm to push for environments that support healthy choices and create safer and more connected communities.

Additional Resources

<http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/get-set/event-ideas/50-event-ideas>

<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/srts/pdf/walktoschoolfactsheet.pdf>

<http://icsw.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/Safe%2DRoutes%D2002/promotion.html#2>

<http://www.walkbiketoschool.org>