



## Plan Your Event

Walk to (or at) School Day is not a one-size, fits all event. With celebrations occurring across the world, Walk to School Day activities vary from school to school, community to community, state to state and even country to country. Following are a number of planning ideas:

### First-time Event Tips

The National Center for Safe Routes to School offers ten tips on that cover all steps of the planning process.

1. **Start Small:** It's okay to start small. Or big. You can always build on your successes with more components next year. Or, if the school's enthusiastic and partners are ready to help, aim high and follow up the flier with other promotional materials and planned activities.
2. **Plan Early (if you can):** When time is on your side, plan as early as you can. Depending on how your school operates, it might be a good idea to get the ball rolling two months before your event date. Many organizers get approval from the school (or the organizer is the school principal) in the previous school year. They don't take any other steps at that point besides getting the date on the school calendar.
3. **Get the Principal On Board:** Get the principal's approval before moving forward on tasks. Approach the principal with an outline of your ideas for the event as early as possible. While at minimum the principal's approval is needed, he or she can also be what makes the event really shine.
4. **There's no need to go it alone.** Don't try to plan and carry out the event all by yourself. Recruit other adults and students to help. Find partners to help you plan the event or to donate items that could make your event even more of a success. For instance, a local grocery store may be willing to donate bagels, oranges or some other refreshment for participants.
5. **Include All Students:** Include everyone at the school. Explore ways to participate and learn about how to provide access for all students. For example:
  - **Walk from Home:** Encourage students and their families to walk to school. They might join other families and form groups in their neighborhoods to travel to school together.
  - **Designate a Starting Point:** Identify one or more locations where students and their families will gather to walk or bike to school together or where families can park and make their way to school when they're ready.
  - **Walk AT School:** Walk at school during an assembly, recess or as part of a class activity. Sometimes student aftercare providers will get involved by walking or bicycling from school to the after-school facility. These events can foster a lifelong appreciation for walking and bicycling and develop important safety skills. They're also the easiest way to include every student.



6. **Provide Incentives (if you can):** Give out incentive items or tokens if you can. Print stickers and certificates using the templates provided to registered members, or order prizes such as pencils, badges or reflective gear.
7. **Communicate with Parents:** Communicate with parents early and often about the event. Distribute fliers 2 weeks before the event, and send out reminders the week and day before the event. Include your contact information in the promotional materials in case parents have questions or concerns. Intercom announcements are another good way to get the word out and reinforce safety tips.
8. **Get the Word Out:** Get the word out beyond the school. Promote the event to the community, elected officials and students. Think strategically. For example, if speeding is a problem, you may want to involve local law enforcement. If sidewalks are missing or in bad repair, you may want to invite your local public works department.
9. **Register Your Event:** **Register your event.** Thousands of schools and communities around the country register their events. Make sure your event is counted by registering.
10. **Review the Get Started Guide:** **Review the Get Started Guide** for step-by-step guidance on planning an event.



## It's Not too Late to Start Planning

Many successful events have gotten started with little time to spare. An event can be simple. In fact, it's possible to plan a Walk to School event in one week. [Download the 7 Steps in 7 Days flyer](#) prepared by National Center for Safe Routes to School.

## Event Ideas and Activities

- **Kick off a school mileage club.** To learn more about mileage clubs see year long walk to (or at) school ideas.
- **Hold a class-by-class competition.** Reward the class that has the greatest percentage of students walking with a breakfast, an extra recess, or a pizza party.
- **Hold a "Best Ways to Get Your Parents to Walk/Bike to School With You" contest.** Have students come up with one-sentence ideas for getting parents to walk with kids. Publish a list of winners.
- **Have students draw a memory map (cognitive map) of their walk to (or at) school.** Invite them to write or draw what they saw, what was interesting what would make the walk safer, and what changes would make them more likely to walk again soon.
- **Hold a treasure hunt.** Ask students to identify certain landmarks on their way to/or around school.
- **Have students decorate an old pair of sneakers.** Ask them to wear their decorated shoes to school during the walk.
- Have students and community **volunteers complete a walkability assessment** in the neighborhood around the school.

Visit the [national event website](#) or our Walk to (or at) School Day [Pinterest board](#) for additional tips.



## Celebration Ideas

- **Decorate the routes to school with banners or signs.**  
Get the students to make the signs, banner and flags.
- **Greet the children upon arrival at school** with banners, balloons, flags, or even the school band, creating a festive occasion.
- **Partner with local grocery stores** to provide healthy treats and other refreshments for students who walk to school.
- **Check with law enforcement agencies, city transportation departments, and health organizations** to see if they have any give away materials/trinkets.
- **Identify volunteers** who will come into classes and conduct pedestrian safety lessons.
- **Include the names of all the students who walked** to (or at) school on a poster, website, newsletter, etc.



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## Resources

- [Coloring page: Always Wear a Helmet](#)
- [Helmet Safety Guide CDC](#)
- [Walking to School Safety Tips](#)
- [Activity Sheet: Color the Signs](#)
- [How to Get a Bike Train Rolling at Your School](#)
- [Webinar: Let's Share Bicycle Breakthroughs](#)
- [Bicycle Safety Tips](#)
- [Apply for Riding for Focus Cycling grants](#)
- [Let's Move! Active Schools](#)
- [SHAPE America Recess Toolkit](#)
- [Rails-to-Trails Conservancy](#)
- [CDC - Active People Healthy Nation](#)
- [Good for You. Good for All. Pennsylvania Parks & Recreation](#)
- [Discover the Forest](#) - finds local forests and parks
- [Get Outdoors PA](#)

