



Tips on how to increase your kids' active transportation

1

Teach your kids how to be safe pedestrians and cyclists

- Help kids develop good judgment on where to walk and ride, and where and how to cross streets.
- Give repeated instructions each time you are out to reinforce the safe, active travel behaviour.
- Practice together! Kids need to feel confident and capable in their skills as active commuters and it takes time to develop these important judgment skills.
- Make sure that children's pedestrian skills are developed as appropriate for their age; 4-6 year olds need to always walk with an adult, 7-9 year olds can begin to develop judgment skills when crossing the street, and those who are over age 10 who have demonstrated consistent, safe pedestrian skills can be given some independence in walking places on their own.

2

Gear up for active travel

- The right, comfortable shoes can make all the difference when walking. Running shoes are always a good choice when heading out on foot.
- Having the right outerwear for all sorts of weather - rain, snow and (yes, this is Canada), freezing cold temperatures – can keep your kids walking and riding through almost any weather.
- Comfortable backpacks are a good investment. Backpacks with wide straps that distribute the weight of books and homework will make walking and riding easier for kids.
- Consider a sturdy wagon to lighten the schoolbag load for smaller children. Parents can pull the wagon (often with a little sibling along for the ride) and keep everyone moving together.
- When biking, make sure that safety gear, including a CSA certified helmet, is always used.

3

Be a good role model

- Lead by example and follow safety precautions when walking and cycling so that kids can model this behaviour.
- Try incorporating active transportation into your own commute, for all or part of the distance. Consider biking to a transit link, or getting off a stop a few blocks early to make walking part of your journey to and from work.
- For small trips of under 1km think twice before jumping in the car. Kids will notice these choices.
- Be positive about the opportunities to walk, bike and roll places. This attitude will be adopted by your kids and influence future behaviour. After all, it is great to be able to get places under your own steam.

4

Encourage active transportation in your community

- Get involved with other parents to take turns walking children to school, or organizing a walking school bus.
- Support school efforts to encourage active transportation by taking part in ongoing programs. Consider leading an active transportation committee at the school to increase the number of kids who walk or bike daily.
- Be vocal with municipal leaders about any needed changes to sidewalks, crosswalks, or more crossing guards to make your local community more walkable and safer for cycling.