

## Safe Routes To School



# Get The Facts



The Safe Routes to School Program helps communities make walking and biking to and from school a safe, healthy alternative to taking a car or bus.

## Benefits

**FACT:** Walking and biking gives kids the recommended physical exercise they need.

**FACT:** As a child's grade in school increases, physical activity participation drastically declines.

**FACT:** Walking and biking to school is associated with higher levels of physical activity throughout the day.

**FACT:** Potential benefits of walking and biking include weight control, reduction in the risk of diabetes, and improved mental health.

## Safety

**FACT:** Wearing a helmet is the easiest way to prevent a head injury while riding a bicycle.

**FACT:** Teaching children basic safety skills can drastically improve child walking and biking behavior.

**FACT:** Safe Routes to School provides opportunities to walk and bike, stresses the importance of practicing safety skills and raises awareness.

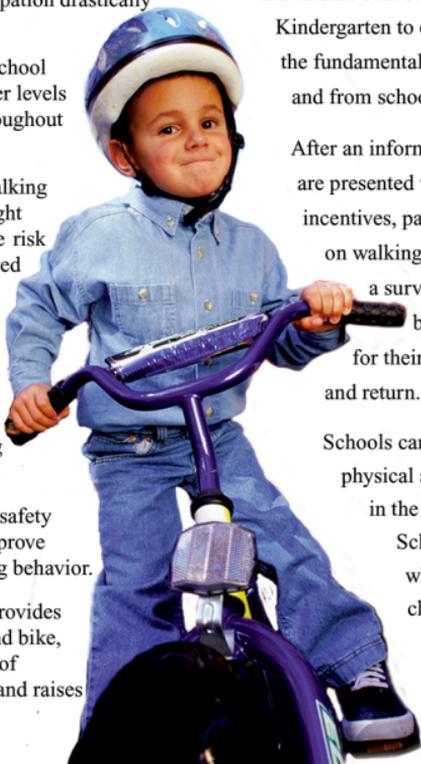
## About the Program

The Mississippi State Department of Health's Safe Routes to School Program conducts walking and biking safety classes at elementary and middle schools throughout the state.

Kindergarten to eighth grade students learn the fundamentals of walking and biking to and from school safely.

After an informational segment, students are presented with backpacks and other incentives, pamphlets and brochures on walking and biking safety, and a survey about walking and biking to and from school for their parents to complete and return.

Schools can get a picture of their physical activity by participating in the Walking and Biking School Snapshot Program, which illustrates how many children walk, bicycle or use other modes of transportation to go to school.



# Safe Routes to School Activities

## Bicycle Rodeos

A bicycle rodeo is a lesson in bicycle safety, which usually features bike inspections, safety lectures, and a miniature course that children can use to practice biking safely. Optional activities include helmet fittings, prizes and drawings, and commercial bike shop booths to give expert advice on using bicycle equipment properly. Bicycle rodeos are great for elementary and middle school kids, because the main focus of a bike rodeo is to teach them safe riding habits and hone their cycling skills.

## Walk-a-Thons

A walk-a-thon is an organized activity used to create a fun atmosphere while promoting a healthy active lifestyle in children. Walk-a-thons teach children to take ownership of their community, to engage in healthy exercise, and that being active can also be fun. A walk-a-thon is also a great opportunity for rural schools interested in Safe Routes to School events because walk-a-thons can take place right on the campus grounds of the school.

## Walk-to-School Day

Every year, millions of walkers from around the world walk to school together. Walk-to-School Day is an international event which gives children, parents, school teachers and community leaders an opportunity to be part of a global event as they celebrate the many benefits of walking. Walk-to-School Day is a one day event, held in the month of October.

## Walking School Bus

A walking school bus is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults. It can be as informal as two families taking turns walking their children to school, or as structured as a route with meeting points, a timetable and a regularly rotated schedule of trained volunteers. A variation on the walking school bus is the bicycle train, in which adults supervise children riding their bikes to school. The flexibility of the walking school bus makes it appealing to communities of all sizes with varying needs.



*To schedule a Safe Routes event at your school or learn more information, please visit our website, [www.HealthyMS.com/saferoutes](http://www.HealthyMS.com/saferoutes)*

**SafeRoutes**

National Center for Safe Routes to School



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



The Mississippi State Department of Health offers these programs and services to communities and schools through funds received from the Mississippi Department of Transportation, which oversees the Mississippi Safe Routes to School Program.