Whether your school or school district has an established Safe Routes to School Program or not, actions for improving safety for walking and biking to school can be taken by schools and school districts. Schools and school districts play an important role in providing messaging to support Safe Routes to School. Below are talking point for schools and school districts to use to validate the school’s support of Safe Routes. Key messages and talking points are grouped by topic area, with the code below indicating which talking points should be targeted to various audiences.

**Key**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Ⓐ | Families and caregivers |
| Ⓑ | Principals |
| Ⓒ | Teachers |
| Ⓓ | Before- and After-School Program Providers |
| Ⓔ | Students |
| Ⓕ | Community |

**Benefits of Safe Routes to School Talking Points**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ⒶⒷⒻ | Safe Routes to School makes walking and biking to school safer through infrastructure improvements, education, and community involvement. It also increases walking and biking participation. |
| ⒶⒷⒸⒹ | Safe Routes to School reduces student absences and tardiness. Walking and biking to school can improve health and reduce student absences.[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| ⒶⒷⒻ | Safe Routes to School reduces traffic congestion for families and community residents. With more students walking and biking there are fewer cars on the neighborhood streets during school pick-up and drop-off times. |
| ⒶⒷⒸ | Safe Routes to School lowers transportation costs for families and school districts. |
| ⒶⒷⒸ | Safe Routes to School supports cleaner air for students and reduces families’ carbon footprint. |
| ⒶⒸ | Children who begin biking or walking to school at an early age (grade 1) are more likely to stay a healthy weight during their early school years.[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| ⒶⒸ | Girls who walk or bike to school perform better on tests. Longer commutes were associated with higher test scores, regardless of how much exercise students got outside of school.[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| ⒶⒷⒸⒹ | Walking and biking increases daily physical activity, forming healthy habits that can last a lifetime, helping children build strong bones, muscles, and joints, and decreasing the risk of chronic disease and obesity.[[4]](#endnote-4),[[5]](#endnote-5),[[6]](#endnote-6) |
| ⒶⒷⒸⒹ | Students who arrive on foot or by bike are ready to learn, are healthy, awake and alert, and have better focus and concentration, which can improve academic performance.[[7]](#endnote-7) |

**Benefits of Safe Routes to School Talking Points (cont.)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ⒷⒸⒹ | Safe Routes to School leads to improved traffic safety habits and increased confidence for students through opportunities to learn about and practice road safety, inspiring confidence and independence.[[8]](#endnote-8) [[9]](#endnote-9) |
| Ⓔ | Safe Routes to School supports cleaner air for students! By walking or biking to school you can make a difference and reduce your family’s carbon footprint. |
| Ⓔ | Did you know walking and biking at a young age can help you stay healthy as an adult? Children who begin biking or walking to school at an early age (grade 1) are more likely to stay a healthy weight during their early school years.[[10]](#endnote-10) |
| Ⓔ | Did you know studies show girls who walk or bike to school perform better on tests? Longer commutes were associated with higher test scores, regardless of how much exercise students got outside of school.[[11]](#endnote-11) |
| Ⓕ | Studies show Safe Routes to School initiatives have health and safety benefits for students, as well as benefits extending to the whole community. |
| Ⓕ | Safe Routes to School helps find solutions to transportation issues such as reduced or no bus service, dangerous traffic congestion at pick up/ drop off times, and student absences and tardiness due to transportation challenges.[[12]](#endnote-12) |

**Walking and Bicycling Safety Talking Points**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ⒶⒸⒹⒺⒻ | Walking and bicycling is a healthy and fun way to get around town and to school! Prepare for a fun trip by following these easy tips: Be aware of your surroundings. Always make eye contact with motorists before crossing the street on bike or foot. |
| ⒶⒸⒹⒺⒻ | Before riding, check your bicycle to make sure your brakes work, your tires have air, and you are wearing a helmet. |
| ⒶⒸⒹⒺⒻ | Remember to always cross the street at a corner or at a crosswalk, and cross with a crossing guard if there is one. |
| ⒶⒸⒹⒺⒻ | Younger children should walk with an adult or responsible older child until they are ready to walk on their own. Walking together is a great way to spend time together as a family! |

**Encouragement Talking Points**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ⒶⒷⒸⒹⒺ | Choosing to walk or bike to school increases physical activity, developing healthy habits that can last a lifetime, and decreases the risk of chronic disease and obesity.[[13]](#endnote-13) Students who walk and bike to school arrive awake and alert, with better focus and concentration, which can improve academic performance.[[14]](#endnote-14) |
| ⒶⒷⒸⒹⒺⒻ | Walk and Bike to School Day is October 10, 2018 {or replace with date for current year}! Join thousands of students across the country riding, scootering, rolling, and walking to school. Register your school for free at [Walk & Bike To School](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/) and plan your route. Participate with a bike train, walking school bus, or by using remote drop-off. |
| ⒶⒷⒸⒹⒺ | Walking and biking to school are solutions to transportation issues such as limited bus service, dangerous traffic congestion at pick up/ drop off times, and student absences and tardiness due to transportation challenges.[[15]](#endnote-15) |

1. Research: Academic Performance and Attendance.www.saferoutespartnership.org/resources/academic-research/academics [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Pabayo, R., et al., 2009  - [*Sustained Active Transportation is associated with a favorable body mass index trajectory across the early school years: Findings from the Quebec Longitudinal Study of Child Development birth cohort, 54,The more traffic surrounding a child's home, the more likely they are to be overweight or obese.*](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6WPG-4X8CCVF-2&_user=10&_coverDate=01%2F31%2F2010&_rdoc=13&_fmt=high&_orig=browse&_srch=doc-info(%23toc%236990%232010%23999499999.8998%231578471%23FLA%23display%23Volume)&_cdi=6990&_sort=d&_do) https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0091743509004393 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Martinez-Gomez, D., et al., 2010 - [*Active commuting to school and positive cognitive performance in adolescents: The AVENA study, Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*](http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=384475)  https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/384475 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Alexander et al., The broader impact of walking to school among adolescents. BMJonline. Accessed 9/16/05 at bmj.bmjjournals.com. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Cooper et al., Commuting to school: Are children who walk more physically active? Am J Prev Med 2003: 25 (4); American Heart Association. Exercise (Physical Activity and Children). Accessed 9/16/05 at www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4596 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
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10. Pabayo, R., et al., 2009  - [*Sustained Active Transportation is associated with a favorable body mass index trajectory across the early school years: Findings from the Quebec Longitudinal Study of Child Development birth cohort, 54,The more traffic surrounding a child's home, the more likely they are to be overweight or obese.*](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6WPG-4X8CCVF-2&_user=10&_coverDate=01%2F31%2F2010&_rdoc=13&_fmt=high&_orig=browse&_srch=doc-info(%23toc%236990%232010%23999499999.8998%231578471%23FLA%23display%23Volume)&_cdi=6990&_sort=d&_do) https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0091743509004393 [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Martinez-Gomez, D., et al., 2010 - [*Active commuting to school and positive cognitive performance in adolescents: The AVENA study, Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*](http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=384475)  https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/384475 [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
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