

Active Lifestyles

5 Smart Reasons To

Walk Or Bike To And From School With Children

Going Green:
Simple Steps for
N.C. Families

Getting to and from school on your own two feet is good for children, adults, teachers and the environment. Here are five major reasons why you should walk or bike to school with your children, grandchildren or neighborhood friends.

Stronger bodies

- ▶ School-aged children need 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Most kids in the U.S. do not get that much. Taking 15 to 20 minutes to walk or bike to and from school is an easy way for kids to get part of their daily dose of activity. Being physically fit helps kids keep a healthy weight. It also reduces their risk of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Smarter brains

- ▶ Studies show that children who are more physically fit do better in school. Children who walk or bike to school are more likely to be fit. So, they are more likely to succeed in the classroom. They get to school wide awake. They are ready to learn each morning. Walking home from school is also a great way to get kids' brains ready for homework.

Better relationships

- ▶ Walking and talking is a great way to connect with children. You can find out what is going on in their lives. Children often feel less nervous about sharing stuff with adults in an open setting. Walking to and from school can also be good for sibling relationships and neighborhood friendships. It gives children an easy time to talk with each other.

Safer communities

- ▶ When parents, grandparents and other adults walk with some children, all children are safer. You can use walking school buses when family members are not available. Reliable adults walk and pick up children along a specific route. When fewer children are driven to school, there are fewer cars. This reduces the amount of traffic in school zones.

Cleaner environments

- ▶ Surveys show that 20 to 30 percent of morning traffic comes from cars taking children to school. This means lots of vehicle emissions also come from these same cars. When more children walk and bike to school, the air quality is better. This is especially true in school zones. While this is important for all children, it is critical for children with asthma.