



401 West Michigan Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3233
317-352-3844 phone
317-634-7817 fax

www.healthbydesignonline.org

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Dear Health by Design Partners:

In 2006, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) launched the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program in Indiana to make bicycling and walking to school safe and routine. SRTS funds help create an environment where children in kindergarten through eighth grade can safely get to school on bikes or on foot. More and more, Americans realize that traffic congestion and air pollution near our schools, coupled with growing health and obesity concerns, make walking and biking to school reasonable, low-cost and attractive transportation options.

INDOT administers the SRTS program that makes reimbursement funds available for approved activities and projects. The Department relies on an application process and a seven member advisory committee to determine the most worthwhile projects. **This letter is to inform you that INDOT will begin accepting 2011 SRTS applications from April 1st through May 27th of this year.** The 2011 application and application guide are now posted on the INDOT SRTS Web page, <http://saferoutes.in.gov>. Student and parent survey forms, directions for submitting survey data, listings of potential infrastructure projects and non-infrastructure activities, recommendations for crafting strong applications, contacts and other relevant information can also be found on the website.

School officials, local transportation officials, health care and law enforcement officials, bicycle and pedestrian advocates and local planners are encouraged to work together to improve bicycling and walking to school. Consider what education and encouragement techniques will get more children bicycling or walking to school in your town. Evaluate improvements that could be installed to make it safer for students to walk to a public or private school. Review policies that discourage children from walking or biking to school and seek changes where possible. Local health officials and schools can partner with parents and local biking and walking advocates to create comprehensive and effective Safe Routes programs.

Facilities for children to bike and walk to school, as well as approved SRTS education, enforcement, evaluation and encouragement programs, are all reimbursable. To learn more about the national Safe Routes to School Program and additional resources, visit the links on the attached information sheet. Please contact Michael O'Loughlin at moloughlin@indot.in.gov or visit the INDOT SRTS Web page to find out more about the Indiana Safe Routes to School Program. Thank you for your work keeping Hoosier schoolchildren healthy and safe!

Sincerely,

Kim Irwin
Executive Director
Alliance for Health Promotion

Michael O'Loughlin
Safe Routes to School Program Manager
Indiana Department of Transportation

Additional Resources and Information

To learn more about the Indiana Safe Routes to School Program and the application visit:
<http://saferoutes.in.gov>

To learn more about the National Safe Routes to School Program visit:
www.saferoutesinfo.org or
<http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/>

For additional resources and information visit:

Safe Routes to School National Partnership: <http://www.saferoutespartnership.org>

Walk to School Day (which will be held 10/5/11): <http://www.walktoschool.org>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/>

Health by Design: <http://www.healthbydesignonline.org/>

Related Data and Information about Walking/Biking to School

- In 1969, 42% of students walked or bicycled to school; only 16% of students between the ages of 5-15 walked or bicycled to or from school in 2001 (the latest year for which data are available).
- The average cost per student using bus transportation was \$737 in 2004-2005, up from \$466 in 1980-1981. Each bus route can cost from \$30,000-\$60,000 per year.
- Nearly 30% of Indiana youth, ages 10-17, are overweight according to the [2009 F as in Fat report](#) from the Trust for America's Health.
- Experts recommend that children get at least 60 minutes of age appropriate physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week.
- Walking or bicycling to and from school is an easy way for children to get some physical activity each day, which all children need.
- It takes about 5-10 minutes for children to walk a quarter of a mile or bicycle an entire mile.
- Physical activity is associated with improved academic performance in children and adolescents.
- The daily walk to school offers children an opportunity to spend time in the natural environment; exposure to nature and time for free outdoor play can have multiple health benefits including stress reduction, relief of ADHD symptoms in children, and increased cognitive and motor functioning.
- Passenger cars, trucks, motorcycles, and SUVs together account for 62% of transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions. The transportation sector is responsible for 1/3 of all carbon dioxide emissions in the US.
- Studies in some cities show that 17-26% of morning rush hour traffic can be school-related.
- Air pollutants can be especially harmful to children because their respiratory systems are still developing; at least 14 million school days are missed annually due to asthma.
- Teaching children walking and bicycling safety skills – such as how to choose where to walk and cross streets, obeying crossing guards, and being visible to drivers - can help create lifelong traffic skills.
- Vehicle speed is a key element in safety. A pedestrian hit by a car traveling 40 mph has a mere 15% chance of survival; at 20 mph, that chance of survival increases to 85%.
- Safety education also includes working with parents, drivers, law enforcement, and local officials.

All statistics are taken from the 2009 Walk to School Day 'Talking Points' resource, except where otherwise noted.
Find the 2010 Talking Points at: <http://www.walktoschool.org/downloads/WTS-talking-points-2010.pdf>