

## Frequently asked questions

### I am concerned my child is not ready to take the bus. How can I prepare her?

School Transportation Services offers First Time School Bus Rider events to help prepare your child to ride the bus. You may also need to ask school specific questions to your school staff. Kindergarten registration may be a good time to discuss concerns.

### Why should we walk when the school is on my way to work?

Although convenient, it may not save you time. Consider leaving a few minutes early to walk to school, or drive then park legally and walk a few blocks to school. It is a great way to spend quality time with your children and get some physical activity too!

### Is there increased chance of bullying if my child walks or takes the bus to school?

Bullying can happen anytime and anywhere. Our children need to know that all incidents of bullying need to be reported to an adult immediately so that it will be addressed appropriately.

### I am concerned about my child's safety while walking to school - speeding, u-turns, too many cars, etc.

Parents need to report their concerns and follow up to ensure a meaningful solution is found. A School Travel Plan committee can help look at issues relevant to their school. Parental involvement is essential to find realistic, long term solutions.

### What about bad weather? It is too cold, too wet, too hot. . . for my child to walk, bike or wait for the bus.

Dressing appropriately for the weather is always important and can ease this concern. On occasion, if you feel it is best to drive, consider the following; give yourself extra time, car pool if possible, avoid idling, follow traffic rules and drop off in designated areas.

## Helpful websites

[www.saferoutestoschool.ca](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca)

[www.schoolbuscity.com](http://www.schoolbuscity.com)

[www.safekidscanada.ca](http://www.safekidscanada.ca)

[www.heartandstroke.on.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.on.ca)

[www.activehealthykids.ca](http://www.activehealthykids.ca)

GOING TO SCHOOL?  
*go active!*



For more information, please call  
York Region **Health Connection** at  
**1-800-361-5653**  
**TTY 1-866-252-9933**  
or visit [www.york.ca](http://www.york.ca)

Funding for the printing of this brochure has been provided by the Town of Markham.

4237 09 2010

# GOING TO SCHOOL?



*go active!*

Nearly 60 per cent of parents say their child's school is close enough that they could reasonably walk or bike.



# ARE you living within walking or busing distance of school?

## iCAN walk or bike to school.

Choosing active transportation, such as walking or biking to school, instead of driving a vehicle has many benefits:

- Increased physical activity is not only needed for good health, but also helps mental well-being, reduces depression and anxiety levels and improves self esteem
- Improved learning and concentration has been seen when students are active before coming to class
- Reduced safety concerns if more children are walking to school with safety in numbers

**Get to know your community by spending valuable time with family, friends and meeting your neighbours.**

## Help your kids to go active.

### Lead by example.

Research shows active parents are more likely to have active kids. Leave your car at home. Go active for all short trips. Planning ahead can help make it happen.

### Keep them moving.

The short walk to and from school counts toward the 90 minutes of daily physical activity children need to be active for health benefits.



## iCAN take the bus to school.

For those who are eligible, busing can be a great opportunity for children to meet friends, be active walking to and from the bus stop and gain a sense of independence. Busing also:

- Reduces school gridlock. Parents can avoid the stress of being stuck in traffic, having parking issues or getting a ticket
- Reduces the risk of pedestrian injury. In 50 per cent of the cases of children who are struck by a car near a school, the drivers are parents driving their children to school
- Reduces the number of cars polluting the air. Declining air quality has been linked with a rise in the number of cases of children with asthma
- Is very safe. Buses are designed to protect children with high cushioned seats to absorb impact from any sudden stops or collisions



**One busload can take 40 cars off the road and save 70,000 litres of fuel!**

**iCAN help make my community more walkable.**

## WHAT is School Travel Planning?

School Travel Planning addresses travel related issues around the school. The benefits of active school travel plans span many connected concerns including health, environment, safety and crime, transportation infrastructure and school curriculum. It will involve important community leaders (e.g. school board staff, municipal staff - traffic engineers, public health nurses, police) BUT parent participation is key to the success.

**Be part of the solution! Children benefit from active, safe school travel each day.**

To get started visit [www.saferoutestoschool.ca](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca), speak to your school administration and invite a York Region public health nurse to work with you through the school travel planning process.



**An Ontario walkability survey found that 75 per cent of elementary students would prefer to walk or bike to school.**

**go active!**