

HIKE IT, BIKE IT, SCOOT IT, SKATE IT

SAFER JOURNEYS FOR
SCHOOL CHILDREN

A whānau and caregivers' guide



Here's what you need to know to help teach your child about staying safe on roads and near railways.

Keep it as a handy reference tool.



WALKING

Teach your child about how to be safe when walking alone or with others.

- Go to the roadside near your home and kneel down so you are the same height as your child.
- Ask your child what they can actually see or hear from their point of view.
- Children can't judge traffic and may not be thinking about what they are doing right then – like trying to cross the road safely.

Teach your child how to do the following (and explain why they need to):

- Walk on the footpath, close to the houses and away from the road.
- Look and listen for traffic at driveways (some driveways are difficult to see).
- Use pedestrian crossings or cross at traffic signals, wherever possible.
- Take care in car parks, school drop-off/pick-up points or busy shopping areas with lots of traffic.
- Walk facing oncoming traffic on roads where there are no footpaths.
- Share the footpath with others, including skaters, scooters, wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

If there are no crossings or traffic signals, talk about and show your child how to:

- find a safe place to cross
- always use the kerb drill.

BLOCKED FOOTPATHS

Teach your child to watch for vehicles.

If a vehicle is blocking the footpath, show them the following steps:

- Check inside the vehicle to see if there's a driver.
- If you can see a driver, stop a couple of metres away and wait to see if they are going to move.
- If you can't see a driver, look and listen for signs the vehicle may move soon, for example:
 - exhaust fumes
 - reverse lights
 - engine noise.

If there's no driver in the car and the engine isn't running, walk around the vehicle on the house side.

If there's no room on the house side, walk carefully around on the road side, looking and listening for traffic from all directions. Or go back and find a safe place to cross the road using the kerb drill.

KERB DRILL

- 1 Take one step back from the kerb.
- 2 Look and listen for traffic coming from all directions.
- 3 If there is traffic coming, wait until it has passed and then look and listen for traffic again.
- 4 If there is no traffic coming, walk quickly straight across the road.
- 5 While crossing, look and listen for traffic, wherever it may come from.

If there are no crossings or traffic signals, talk about and show your children how to find a safe place to cross.

WALKING ON RURAL ROADS

Help your child to:

- walk facing oncoming traffic
- keep as far off the road as possible
- walk in single file, shortest person at the front, so everyone can see oncoming traffic
- listen very carefully. Vehicles can approach at high speed and be heard long before they are seen
- if a vehicle is coming, stop and stay back from the roadside until it has passed
- if you can't see the road ahead clearly, be extra careful.

If there's a narrow bridge, stop in a safe place and:

- listen carefully and scan the distance to make sure there are no vehicles coming
- go onto the bridge and walk quickly across, facing oncoming vehicles
- keep looking and listening for any vehicles that come from behind or in front.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO HELP MY CHILD BE SAFER WHEN WALKING?

- If you usually drive to school, park your car further away from the school and then walk some of the way with your child so they learn about road safety with you.
- Try a walking bus, where children walk to school in an organised group. Talk to your school. They may have walking buses.



Young children should always hold the hand of a responsible older person when walking near traffic.

Ensure your child always wears a helmet when using their cycle, scooter or skateboard.



CYCLING

Children should know how to ride safely and be confident in traffic before attempting to ride to school, with or without you.

Support and help your child to learn how to:

- keep left
- check over their shoulder for traffic
- use the correct lane
- pass other road users safely
- use hand signals
- be safe and courteous when cycling in groups
- share the road and paths
- expect hazards and ride to avoid them.

The official New Zealand code for cyclists has information about the skills needed and available courses:

www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/roadcode/cyclist-code

It is important that you know the correct rule and have the right equipment to keep safe: www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/factsheets/01/docs/01-cycles.pdf



HELMET SAFETY – CYCLING, SCOOTING AND SKATING

To be safe:

- there should be a standards-approved sticker on the helmet
- the outside of the helmet (shell and polystyrene) should be in good condition and not cracked or damaged
- the straps and buckles should be in good order, not frayed or broken
- the cycle helmet should be the right size – with little or no wobble when fitted
- the helmet should be positioned level on the head, with the chin and back straps meeting on the jaw, below the earlobes
- the chin strap should be firm but not too tight
- if the helmet tips sideways, backwards or forwards, it is too loose.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO HELP MY CHILD BE SAFER WHEN THEY'RE CYCLING?

- Ride with them.
- Make sure your child's bike is in good working order with working brakes.
- Make sure the bike has reflectors – it is a legal requirement.
- They need lights if they are cycling in low light or dark conditions.
- Give your child bright-coloured and reflective clothing so other road users can see them more easily.
- Backpacks should also be bright and reflective or be fitted with a high-visibility cover.
- Practise riding the route to school with your child on the weekend when traffic is light.

GOING BY CAR

Help your child to:

- wait until the car has stopped before getting in
- let children in and out of the car on the footpath side only
- understand not to distract the driver. They need to concentrate
- keep their hands and legs inside the car
- check with the driver before opening the windows for any reason
- wait until the car has stopped before taking off the child restraint
- look out for pedestrians and cyclists when opening the door
- use the door handle to close the door gently but firmly.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO HELP MY CHILD BE SAFER AROUND CARS?

- Park safely – away from yellow lines, pedestrian crossings, intersections and driveways.
- Park on the same side of the road as your destination.
- Walk to school with your children, meet them after school and walk them to your car.
- Never call to a child from across the road.
- Make sure child restraints are standards-approved and fitted properly.

AS A CAREGIVER, WHAT AM I RESPONSIBLE FOR?

- Obey variable speed limit or active warning signs near schools when they are activated (40km/h).
- It is the law that:
 - All children under seven must be secured in an approved child restraint appropriate to their age and size.
 - Children aged seven must be secured in an approved child restraint if one is available in the vehicle, and if not, in any child restraint or safety belt that is available.
 - Best practice recommends that children stay in a restraint or booster seat until they are 148cm tall.
 - For more information visit www.nzta.govt.nz/childrestraints



Ensure everyone makes their seat belt click before starting the car on any trip long or short.



TAKING THE BUS

Help your child to:

- stand well back from the road when waiting for the bus
- wait for the bus to stop before getting on or off
- walk on in single file, letting smaller children go first
- listen to what the driver or bus warden says
- carry their bag in front of them so it doesn't get caught in the door
- stay seated and put their bag under the seat or on their knees where no one will trip on it
- get off the bus through the front door, and stand well clear as the bus turns or reverses and until the bus goes
- wait until the bus has gone before crossing the road so they can see clearly up and down the road. Always use the kerb drill to cross.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO HELP MY CHILD BE SAFER AROUND BUSES?

- When picking up or dropping off children at the bus stop, wait on the same side of the road as the bus stop.
- Talk to children about why it's important to be quiet on the bus, and to listen to the driver and bus monitor.
- Dress your child in bright clothing so they can be easily seen.
- Teach your child the safest route to the bus stop. You can walk with them or drive there so they don't have to cross roads alone.
- Have a back-up plan in case you are running late.
- Slow down to 20km/h when driving past a stationary school bus.

SAFETY AROUND TRAINS

Help your child to understand that:

- trains are surprisingly quiet – you may not hear them coming
- trains are heavy – they take a long time to stop
- trains are fast – the average speed of a moving train is 80km/h
- trains have right of way – it's a child's responsibility to stay out of the way of the train.

Help your child to:

- only cross railway tracks at proper crossings
- stop, look and listen for trains
- use the signs, lights and bells to cross safely
- not to walk along the railway tracks
- look both ways – if there are two tracks, there could be two trains
- stay well clear of overhead wires.

WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO HELP MY CHILD BE SAFER AROUND TRAINS?

- Always obey the signs, lights and bells when driving near railway crossings.
- Stand at least 1.5m back from the platform edge to avoid the backdraft of passing trains
- If wearing head phone, stop music or remove head phones before crossing the train tracks and look both ways.



Explain to children the danger of trains, railway tracks and the areas around the tracks.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For general enquiries, or more information about road and rail safety for children, please email info@nzta.govt.nz or visit education.nzta.govt.nz