

Talking with your children about the importance of being active can give them confidence to make healthy choices. Walking and cycling to school is an easy and fun way to incorporate physical activity into their day.



“Keeping fit and keeping safe are both very important issues for our children these days, but there is no reason we can’t have both”

*Karl O’ Callaghan, APM
Commissioner of Police*

For more information visit:
www.walkoveroctober.com.au



*Set your children
on the right path.*

*A guide to promoting walking
and cycling to school*

WALK
Over October



*Get behind your
children becoming
more active.*

Parents have a strong influence on how active their children are. If children are active from a young age they will more likely be active throughout their life.



Leaving the car behind has many benefits.

Children need physical activity to grow and develop. Walking and cycling is a fun activity that has many benefits:

Health

Walking and cycling to school can:

- help children get the recommended amount of physical activity (at least 60 minutes a day)
- build strong bones and muscles
- improve fitness
- help achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

Social

Walking and cycling to school can:

- be a fun activity for children to enjoy with their friends, parents, grandparents, siblings and dog
- help children develop road safety skills making them more aware of their surroundings
- improve self-esteem and confidence
- help the family save money on fuel.

Environment

Walking and cycling to school can:

- help reduce your impact on climate change by cutting down pollution through car emissions
- improve road safety by reducing traffic around schools
- help make a community feel safer by having more people out and about and more 'eyes on the street'.



How much physical activity does your child need?

Watching television, surfing the Internet and playing computer games are all activities that can be fun for children, however they all involve a lot of sitting time.

Remember that:

- children need at least 60 minutes (and up to several hours) of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day
- children should not spend more than two hours a day using electronic media for entertainment (e.g. computer games, TV, Internet), particularly during daylight hours when they could be playing outside.

Walking or cycling to school is an easy and cheap way for children to be active regularly.



Your children have always needed encouragement.

Here are a few tips to get them started safely...

Walk or cycle with other people

- Children under 10 years are still developing their peripheral vision and hearing, so should be supervised around traffic.
- If your child is over 10 years, walk or cycle with them until you are confident they have a well-developed road sense.
- Walking or cycling with your child is a great way to spend time with them – and being active is great for you as well!
- Share responsibility with other parents or grandparents or organise your child to walk in a group with their friends.

Get to know your local area

- Help your child map out a safe route to school. It is usually the way with the least amount of traffic and fewest roads to cross. Use pedestrian crossings where available.
- Make sure your child knows people who live along the route or places they can go if they feel unsafe.

Road safety

- Children under 12 years are allowed to walk and cycle on the footpaths (unless there is a no cycling sign). Teach them to look out for vehicles coming in and out of driveways. Adults are also allowed to ride on the footpath with children under 12 years.
- Teach your child simple road rules such as stop at the kerb, look right, look left, then right again, listen for cars approaching and think before crossing.
- Find out about programs that teach your child how to walk or cycle to school safely. Visit the websites listed on the back of this brochure for more information.

Equipment

- Ensure your child has a water bottle and wears highly visible clothing and shoes.
- Make sure their bike is maintained, helmet meets Australian standards, fits properly and is always done up.
- Reduce the amount your child carries in their school bag.
- Give gifts or toys that promote physical activity (e.g. bikes, sneakers, hats).

Weather

- Avoid walking and cycling in extreme weather.
- Encourage your child to slip on a shirt, slop on some sunscreen, slap on a hat and wrap on sunglasses, even on cloudy days.

Time and distance

- If you live too far from school your child can still be active by walking part of the way. Encourage them to walk to the bus stop, hop off the bus a couple of stops early, or if you do drive them walk the last kilometre together.
- For shorter distances, walking and cycling to school may take less time than driving your children in the car.