

TOWARDS INDEPENDENT ACTIVE TRAVEL

At Bicycle Network, we love seeing children travel independently to school, however we know this is a big step for many parents. We understand most parents feel anxious about letting their child travel independently (or with a friend/sibling) and that's why we've developed some tips on how to help your child travel safely on their own.

WHY WE ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENT ACTIVE TRAVEL



**Develop
self-confidence**



**Get to know the
neighbourhood**



**Make new
friends**



**Increase
physical activity**



**Build
resilience
(coping skills)**

KNOWING WHEN YOUR CHILD IS READY

Things to consider:

- Their age and maturity
- How well they know your local neighbourhood
- Their riding/skating/scooting ability
- If they have any friends on a similar route to/from school
- If the school supports and encourages active travel (i.e. being a registered school with the R2S Program)
- Their road safety awareness (i.e. STOP, LOOK, LISTEN and THINK at road intersections)

HELPING YOUR CHILD TO BECOME MORE INDEPENDENT

STEP 1: DEPENDENT

Younger children (usually 5 years of age)

- Start by introducing small riding, walking or scooting trips to the local park, shops, kindergartens or friend's/family's houses.
- Encourage appropriate independence in the home with everyday activities like getting dressed, brushing teeth or playing in the backyard unsupervised.
- Practice and reinforce road safety messages like STOP, LOOK, LISTEN and THINK at road intersections.
- Observe your child's behaviour and look for signs of readiness.

STEP 2: PRE-INDEPENDENT

Children moving from dependent to independent with your guidance

- Pick one or two mornings a week to ride, walk or scoot with your child to school (continue to reinforce road safety messages).
- Let your child ride/walk ahead (of you) so they can become familiar with the route themselves.
- Take opportunities along the way to discuss any challenges that may arise (i.e. getting lost – make a plan).
- Reward positive behaviour (i.e. when they cross the road safely).
- Slowly build independence by letting your child do things like visit a friend's house down the street or ride their bike around the block.
- Use school driven initiatives such as Ride2School Day (Term 1) or Walk to School Month (October) to trial independent active travel (school supported).
- Set milestones and target behaviours for your child to tick off and achieve (see last page for an example).

STEP 3: INDEPENDENT

Children who are ready to travel to/from school without adult supervision

- Pick one or two mornings a week to trial independent riding, walking, skating or scooting to school (continue to reinforce road safety messages).
- Renegotiate and agree with your child on any milestones and boundaries as she or he gets more capable and confident.
- Consider whether it is appropriate to give your child a mobile phone (to support their independence).

Active Travel Checklist

Name: _____

Age: _____ Grade: _____

TRANSPORT CHOICE:	Bicycle	Walk	Scoot	Skate
				

THIS WEEK I TRAVELLED TO SCHOOL WITH MY GUARDIAN/OLDER SIBLING:

1 DAY	2 DAYS	3 DAYS	4 DAYS	5 DAYS
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When I cross the road, I should?

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MAKE SURE YOU PRACTICE THESE STEPS AT EACH ROAD CROSSING.

I KNOW THE WAY FROM MY HOUSE TO SCHOOL?	YES	Not sure	If you don't know the way to school by yourself, you may need to practice a few more times with your guardian/sibling so you feel confident.
HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE ME TO TRAVEL TO SCHOOL? minutes		
I CAN WALK WITH A FRIEND OR SIBLING TO SCHOOL?	YES	Not sure	Talk to your friends at school who might live close to you and see if they would like to walk, ride, scoot or skate with you to school. If you are unsure who lives nearby, ask your guardian for help or ask your school to hold a Ride2School Squad session. Details can be found on our website.
I HAVE WORKED OUT AN ACTIVE TRAVEL PLAN WITH MY GUARDIAN/SIBLING?	YES	No, but I will	Make sure you develop an Active Travel Plan (find out how in our parent portal) with your child
I AM READY TO WALK, RIDE, SKATE OR SCOOT ON MY OWN?	YES	Not yet	Keep practicing all of the steps above until you are ready to ride, walk or scoot to school by yourself.