

## Core Knowledge Content

### What is Active School Travel?

Active School Travel is an initiative geared towards encouraging families to choose active transportation for the trip to and from school. Active transportation programs encourage school communities to walk, wheel (e.g., cycle, scoot, wheelchair or skateboard) or bus to and from school. Active transportation increases physical activity, improves physical, mental and emotional health while also benefiting our environment.

### Why Teach about Active Transportation?

According to the 2018 [ParticipACTION](#) Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, 21% typically use active modes of transportation (e.g., walk, bike). With increasing concerns about the health related to declining activity levels and environmental problems caused by air pollution it is important for students to walk, bike or bus to and from school whenever possible.

Motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of injury and death for children and youth in Ontario, and they are preventable. Road fatalities, injuries and trauma have enormous impacts on individuals, families and communities. The goal is to reach out to young people and provide the life-skills they need to be safe pedestrians, passengers, riders, and drivers to prevent collisions from happening in the first place.

### The Benefits

There are so many benefits to having an Active School Travel Program, including:

1. Improving student academic performance by making children more alert and better prepared to learn
2. Contributing to the daily goal of 60 minutes of moderate or vigorous activity for children, improving their health and overall fitness
3. Reducing traffic congestion and improving safety for everyone in school zones
4. Reducing Greenhouse gases emissions protecting environment
5. Promoting life-long habits that foster independence and active lifestyles, preparing children for their future

### Sustainable Transportation

Sustainable Transportation refers to modes of transportation of people or goods that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. All modes of active transportation are sustainable. Sustainable transportation also includes mechanized modes of transportation which use energy efficiently:

1. School bus
2. Carpooling
3. Public transportation (bus, subway, light rail, etc.)

### Pedestrian and Wheels Safety

The goal is to provide young people with life-skills they need to be safe pedestrians, cyclists, passengers, and drivers to identify road risks and explore ways to minimize those risks.

### Mapping

Using maps of the school area, students can identify common routes to school and features that facilitate active travel such as crossings, road signs, bike lanes and stop lights, and potential hazards that can create a barrier to active travel such as overgrown shrubs or missing sidewalks. Students can further work with their families to identify routes that they can take to get to school or destinations near their home.

### Common Terms

School boards, public health departments and community advocates have long promoted Active School Travel through programs. Terms and phrases commonly associated with such programs include:

- Active and Safe Routes to School
- Active School Travel
- School Travel Planning
- Walk to School, Bike to School
- Active and Sustainable School Transportation

### Regional Events

**October - iWalk Campaign:** October is International Walk to School Month, also known as **(Walk)tober**, including IWALK Day which takes place on the first Wednesday in October. All month long, hundreds of Ontario schools come together to participate in and celebrate activities that support walking as the main way of getting to school. Additional resources and promotions will be available and encouraged this month.



**February – Winter Walk Day:** While winter weather can hold some challenges to staying active, this day celebrates how fun it can be to get outside in the winter. Schools all across Ontario celebrate with creative events that get kids moving and staying warm while still engaging in active school travel.

**April - Spring into Spring Campaign:** As Spring rolls around, this is a great time of the year to get students to think about enjoying the outdoors. Many schools across the country organize events to welcome spring by walking to school and spending more time outdoors. April also highlights other great environmental celebrations such as National Wildlife Week and Earth Day!



**May/June - Bike Week (May) and Bike Month (June) Campaign:** What better way to welcome summer than with by cleaning off that bike and riding to school! Schools across the province organize activities in and out of the classroom to engage students to choose cycling. Activities can include community bike days or bike handling safety training so that students will be comfortable and excited to get on a bike!

# Teaching Tool

## Topic: Active School Travel

### Resources

[Active and Safe Routes to School \(ASRTS\)](#)

[Active School Travel](#)

[Niagara Student Transportation Services](#)

- [Blue's Pedestrian Safety Video \(nsts.ca\)](#)
- [Cycling Safety Education – virtual bike rodeo](#)

[Active & Safe Routes to School – Activity Tool Kit](#) – includes lesson plans from Grades 1-8

Active School Travel – Resource for Educators from [Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit](#)

[Metrolinx](#)

- [Grade 1: Science & Technology](#)
- [Grade 5: Social Studies](#)

[Ontario Road Safety](#)

[Parachute Canada](#) – Elementary Road Safety

[Peterborough Moves](#)

[The Let Grow Project](#)