

School Tip Sheet

Way2GO! Active Travel to School

What is active travel to school?

Active travel is people-powered, like walking, biking, and boarding all or part-way to school. It includes public transit: research shows that children who take the bus are more physically active!

Why active travel?

- improves self-confidence
- reduces stress
- boosts feelings of happiness
- improves concentration and school performance
- allows social time with friends and family
- increases independence

7-9%

... of Canadian kids get enough daily exercise. Students who identify as girls are less likely to participate in physical activity than students who identify as boys as they age.

24%

... of Canadian 5- to 17-year-olds use active travel. This number is in decline!

79

... students from around the CRD participated in focus groups in 2017.



Can Schools Encourage All Students to Be Active Travelers?

YES! Students in the Capital Region spend over half of their time in school Monday to Friday, but their commute is an often-overlooked opportunity to be active.

In 2017, the Way2Go! study conducted focus groups with 79 students who identified as girls between the ages of 7-15 to explore active travel to school from their perspective. These students discussed key concepts and ideas important to promoting active travel in their school districts. What we learned from participants can be used to increase active travel in all students.

Essentials of the Way2Go! Research

The research found different age groups have different thoughts about active travel to school. Elementary school students just want to have **fun**. Middle school students want to **be with friends** and **save the environment**. Secondary school students want to be **independent**.

The students thought that the following could increase active travel to school:

- visually attractive routes
- participating with trusted friends and family
- increasing knowledge about sharing the road
- overcoming the barrier of a long commute
- having access to events to promote active travel to school
- feeling safe while using active travel to school



What can your school community do to promote active travel to school?

PARTICIPATE in the **Way2Go!** campaign on Instagram. See way2go.islandhealth.ca for details. Prizes are available!

Make it **EASY!** Install covered bike and board racks for easy access. Provide locks and repair equipment.

Make it **SAFE!** Work with your local municipality to audit and improve the sidewalks, lighting and traffic calming devices (like speed bumps, raised crosswalks, and updated signs) around your school. Map safe routes and share them with students and parents through your parent advisory council.

Make it **INVITING!** Designate a calm and clean “dry-off” room for students to get cleaned up when they arrive at school. Make it a safe and inclusive space for all genders, and share your school’s improvements and ideas with the [Island Health Healthy Schools Initiative](#).

Make it **ATTRACTIVE!** Work with [BC Transit](#) to give bus stops around your school a face-lift with better lighting, seating, and schedules.

Make it **FUN!** Changing driving habits with a “[Drive-to-Five](#)” Zone (parking a five-minute walk from school) gives kids the chance to enjoy their active commute. Involve your parent advisory council in brainstorming solutions and planning active school travel events with [CRD Active and Safe Routes to School](#), such as a walking school bus, [Bike to School Week](#) or [Walk and Wheel to School Week](#).

“When you’re in a car, and you’re looking by the window, everything is going by so fast. Sometimes that’s really boring, so kids tend to stick their nose in a device. It’s better when you’re getting your exercise, you’re breathing fresh air. You don’t hurt your eyes.” – Sara, Grade 8

“A safer spot to put your bikes. Where people won’t take it if you don’t have a lock.” – Oakley, Grade 7

“Something not good about walking to school is... sometimes there’s traffic, and if you fall or really hurt yourself, there’s no one there to help.” – Lily, Grade 3

“If you were to bike and get here early, better lighting in the bathrooms, because they’re really bad. Then you could do your make up.” – Alexandra, Grade 9

“I honestly think that taking the bus is more attractive than getting a ride from your parents.” – Laquisha, Grade 9

What should I know about the Way2Go! campaign?

Who: Students aged K-12 in the CRD

What: Kids can join our social media campaign and enter to win for prizes!

Where: On the way to and from school

When: May 7-17, 2018

Why: Continue the conversation about active travel to school with your students and parents and build on existing programs and efforts at your school to get kids moving!

Visit way2go.islandhealth.ca to join in!