

Safe Walking/Biking

Facilitate Student Commuting Groups

A Walking School Bus or Bicycle Train is a group of children commuting to school as a group with adult supervision. The recommended adult to child supervision ratio is 1:8 or less, however children with physical disabilities or in wheelchairs will require more care. Similarly, a remote drop-off program can accommodate students who live too far to walk or bike. However, the group will need to be accompanied by an adult or adults to school from drop-off locations. Encouraging parents to form commuting groups and choose remote drop off locations also helps build community.

How to Encourage Parents to Coordinate Commuting Groups:

- Encourage parents to plan the safest routes to and from school with their children and choose meeting points if friends are involved. Parents should practice these routes with their children before they are used for commuting.
- Ask parents for help by writing emails, posting a message in the school newsletter, or by asking in person at Parent Teacher Organization/Parent Teacher Association meetings. Not sure what to say in an email? Use this template: <http://bit.ly/CDPSCGPHE>.
- Network at parent teacher conferences
- Promote the benefits of walking and biking in school communications. Need facts to use? Use these: <http://bit.ly/CDPSATFS>.
- Launch social media challenges to generate excitement about commuting groups. Some examples: <http://bit.ly/CDPSSMC>.

How to Create a Walking School Bus or Bicycle Train:

1. Choose a safe meeting point or 2 to 3 safe meeting points. Ideal meeting places are a student's home, or public places such as parks, malls, or churches that are 1 mile or less from school.
2. Routes should be tested with parents on weekends.
3. Make sure that parents and students are aware of biking and walking safety tips by sending information out in emails, in school newsletters, or by having posters with safety tips visibly displayed at schools. See Campus Safety Tips on page 8.

FREE Website for Arranging Commuting Groups:

The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) has created a web-based tool called WayToGo with a SchoolPool section for parent networking. Participating schools have individual SchoolPool webpages linked to maps highlighting clusters of families who may be able to work together to form walking and biking groups. Parents who 'opt in' get website access to view other parents' contact information. Consider the following tactics to advertise MyWayToGo SchoolPool to parents:

- Newsletters and emails
- Websites and social media
- Registration and open houses
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Weekly folders
- Provide information sheets in traffic lines

DRCOG even provides templates for many of the communication tactics listed above! To learn more about WayToGo promotional tools visit <http://www.waytogo.org/hidden/optinresources>. To set up a SchoolPool webpage for your school call DRCOG at 303-455-1000.