

23 QUICK IDEAS FOR YOUR WALKING WEDNESDAYS CLUB



Contact Green Action Centre if you would like any help with starting a Walking Wednesdays Club or a full-time Walking School Bus at your school. We can help you organize traffic audits and safety workshops for your school, and provide help with safety training for students and adult volunteers, as well as with route planning for your Walking School Bus.

Call on us at 925-3773 or asrts@greenactioncentre.ca for more information or more resources.

Here are some fun ideas to help you implement a Walking Wednesdays Club, or a daily Walking School Bus at your school. It's up to your school to tailor the day's activities to suit your own needs and schedule! If you cannot walk on Wednesday choose another day of the week. If you want to celebrate cycling, running, rollerblading or skateboarding you can do that too. Be flexible and have fun!

1. Strike a "Walk to School Committee" of older students at your school. Ask them to calculate, post and announce your weekly "walk to school" results every week.
2. On the first Wednesday of every month, have 5 parent volunteers become "Walking School Bus Drivers." They would meet students at various predetermined locations in the community and walk safely and happily to school together.
3. On the first Walking Wednesday of each month, invite parents and grandparents into the school for refreshments. This would encourage more family members to walk to school and help to develop a sense of community.
4. Have a monthly draw for the students who walk or choose another form of active transportation (ie: bike, scooter or roller blade) to get to school. Each day the homeroom teachers ask who has walked to school and give the walking students a ballot to fill out. Students drop off their ballot at a centralized draw box placed in a school common area. Once a month have a draw for a prize like a book, shoelaces, reflective strips for backpacks or something else. At the end of the year put all the names of the walking students in a big draw box for a major prize – like a new pair or running shoes or a bicycle!

5. Have a drop off location approximately one kilometre away from school for those students who have to be bussed or driven by their parents. Have parents, teachers or school volunteers meet the dropped off students and walk with them to school. This 10-minute walk puts the whole school off on the right foot!
6. Have a mapping exercise where students identify their own safe route to and from school. Kids will learn landmarks, street names and be able to identify potential traffic dangers in your neighbourhood and community. They can then grab their crayons and map out their best way of getting to school. An activity like this will fit with existing curriculum – math, science, social studies and art.
7. Have a theme for each day of the week, or if your walking school bus only walks once a week have a theme for each week of the month. (Theme ideas could include: Walking/Wheeling Wednesdays, Tobogganing Tuesdays, Fun shoe Friday [students wear fun and decorated shoes on this day], etc...)
8. Make a “Golden Shoe” trophy and have it as a prize for the classroom that walks the most. The award could be made each week, month, term or year.
9. Write a theme song for your Walking School Bus to sing as you walk to school. Brainstorm other songs about walking that could be sung, like: “These Boots Were Made for Walking” – Nancy Sinatra; “I’m Walkin’” – Fats Domino; etc...
10. Get kids to design a banner for the school to hang outside proclaiming that the school is a walking school.
11. Have kids design posters and signs to carry on their walking days.
12. Get students to write letters to the Mayor, their city councillors, MLAs and MPs indicating that they walk to school and they would like to have safe areas designated in their communities. This can be a powerful tool for getting much-needed crosswalks, stop signs, speed bumps and street signage installed in the area.
13. Do a traffic audit with students at the school. Have the principal, councillor, local community police or RCMP officer, city planners and administration from other schools in the area present at the audit. Observe and brainstorm things that can be implemented in the area to make students’ walk to school safer.

Take the next steps to have some of this change implemented in the neighbourhood.

14. Have alternative “park and walk” areas for those who drive to school. Ask a local business if they will allow parking in a small area of their lot for one day per week.

15. Have a celebration tree planting!

16. Have students write in “walk to school diaries” each time they walk. What did they see or hear as the walked to school? What was the weather like? How did this differ from the last time they walked to school? What changes did they notice in their community? Who did they meet along the way?

17. Encourage school staff to set an example for the students by walking or cycling to school themselves.

18. Have the students who cannot walk to school do laps of the playground for their walking credit.

19. Post information that your school has a Walking Wednesdays Club or Walking School Bus on the school website. Have photos of walking days and examples of what your school does to promote a healthy lifestyle with the students. Put a notice in the newsletter and posters up around in libraries, community centres and local businesses in your area.

20. Twin with another school in the area that has a Walking School Bus or Walking Wednesdays Club and share ideas, resources and even community volunteers. Students could have pen pals at the other school to share ideas, observations and enthusiasm!

21. Partner with a seniors’ centre and have able-bodied seniors lead your school’s Walking School Bus.

22. Have a “Walk-pool program” for students who live close together. Parents share in the responsibility of walking the students on alternating days.

23. Have a card or “passport” stamped each time the students walk to school. After a certain number of stamps, students could be eligible for a prize.

The **Walking Wednesdays Club** is part of **Green Action Centre’s Active and Safe Routes to School Program**. Please see www.greenactioncentre.ca for more information on the **Walking Wednesdays Club** or starting a **Walking School Bus** at your school.