



2. INTRODUCTION

Welcome! You are entering a world where children walk and cycle to school in a fun and safe environment. There is fresh air. Laughter. Friends. People are connecting with nature and their community. This is Active and Safe Routes to School.

“Independence should be a cause for celebration.... Kids are competent. Kids are capable. Kids deserve freedom, responsibility and a chance to be part of this world” —Lenore Skenazy, Free Range Kids

2.1 ACTIVE AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

The Active and Safe Routes to School program’s goal is to increase the number of students walking, cycling and using other active modes of transportation for the trip to and from school. This results in a number of personal and community benefits, including increased physical activity levels for children and a healthier lifestyle for the entire family; reduced traffic congestion around schools; safer, calmer streets and neighbourhoods; and improved air quality and fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

Active and Safe Routes to School offers many tools for schools to use, all of which draw upon the principles of Community-Based Social Marketing (section 2.3). These components fall in the area of education, community mobilization and encouragement. They can be used as stand-alone efforts or combined to create a larger initiative.

History of Active and Safe Routes to School

Around the world, concerns for children’s health and safety have led to many communities adopting Active and Safe Routes to School programs in an effort to ensure their children are encouraged to be safe and active at least twice a day when travelling to and from school. Many European programs have been in place since the 1970s and have led to an 85% reduction in traffic-related injuries in children.

In Canada, the program was pioneered in Ontario and British Columbia in the late 1990s, with programs established in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Manitoba and Alberta in subsequent years. In 2009, these programs formed the Canadian Active and Safe Routes to School Partnership, which joined communities across Europe, the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand, Japan and Australia in promoting safe and active travel to and from school.

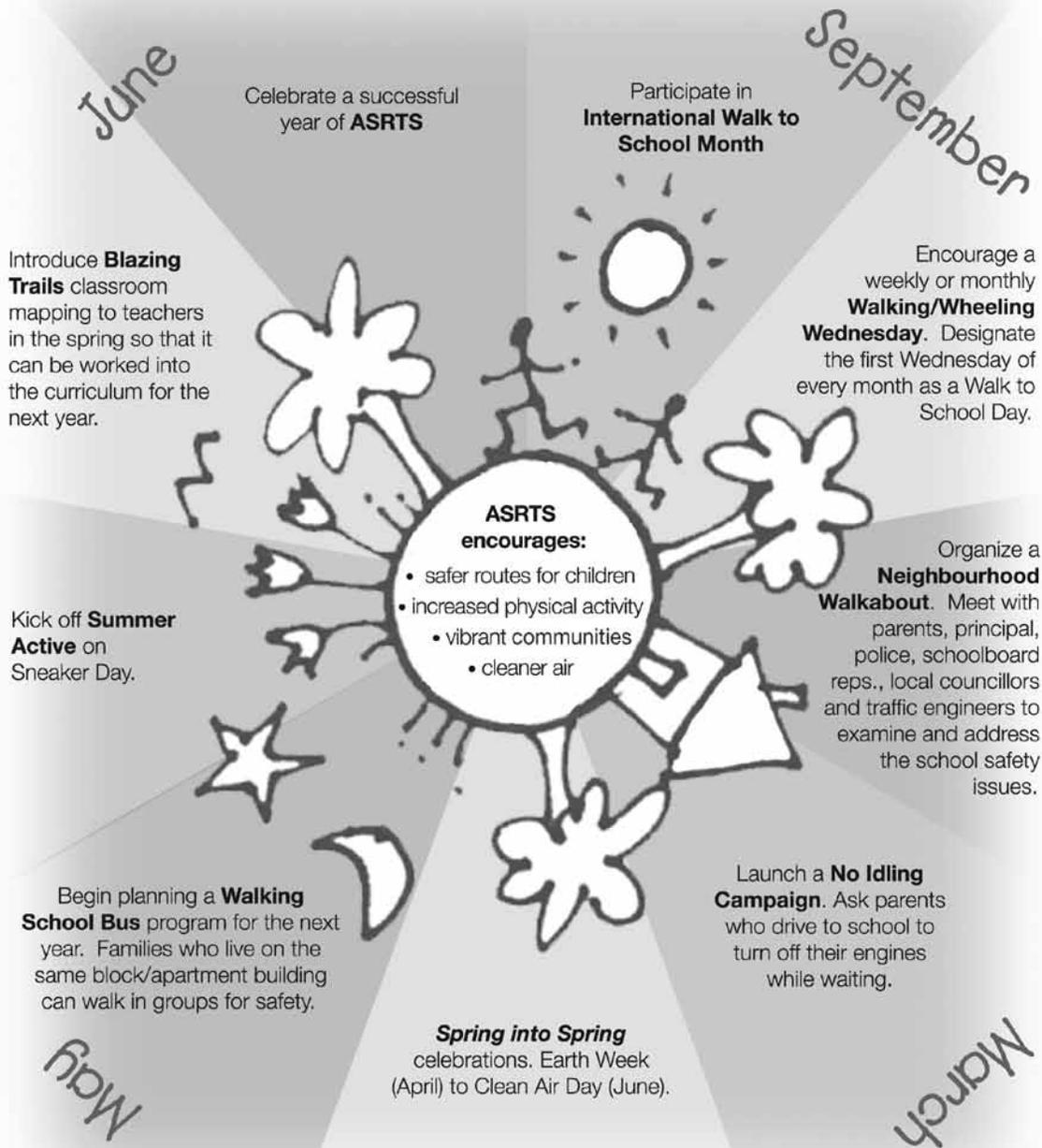
A School Travel Plan is both a policy document and a process. It addresses the issues of sustainability, safety and health associated with 'the school run' using a collaborative, community-based approach.

The eight distinct social marketing components of the Active and Safe Routes to School program include:

1. Special Events:
 - International Walk to School Month – IWALK (October)
 - Clean Air Day (first Wednesday in June)
2. Walking/Wheeling Wednesdays Club
3. Walking School Buses
4. Walking Buddies
5. Walk-a-Block Zones
6. Neighbourhood Walkabouts and Walkability Surveys
7. Best Routes to School Maps and Mapping Activities (Blazing Trails)
8. Idle-Free Zones

This handbook and resource guide provides detailed materials and ideas, and tools to help you initiate some or all of these components in your school or community, with suggested timelines throughout the year. Use the components as a toolkit and select those that are right for your school or community.

Active and Safe Routes to School Through the Year



www.saferoutestoschool.ca



—Ruth Hooker School (Selkirk)

2.2 SCHOOL TRAVEL PLANNING

Recently, the Active and Safe Routes to School program has gone one step further than simply providing tools – School Travel Planning.

School Travel Planning addresses the issues of sustainability, safety and health associated with ‘the school run’ using a collaborative, community-based approach. Key community stakeholders (school divisions, municipalities, police, public health professionals, parents, educators, and children) work together to address challenges and improve opportunities for active transportation to and from school.

The physical and attitudinal barriers to walking, cycling and other environmentally friendly and healthy modes of travel are each addressed. As well, all aspects of how children travel to and from the school are investigated and documented. A key emphasis is placed on determining the extent to which a community allows for the independent mobility of children. Each school writes a School Travel Plan, which includes a section describing the actions they plan to implement, such as:

- **Introduction of school infrastructure** – e.g. bike shelters, bike racks, lockers
- **Education** – e.g. safety training for walking and cycling, awareness raising
- **Community mobilization** – e.g. walking school buses, walking buddies, ride sharing
- **Encouragement** – celebrations of physical activity and the environment such as International Walk to School Month (October) and Clean Air Day (June) along with events such as Car Free Day (September 22nd) and recognition and rewards for walking/cycling
- **Engineering improvements at or near school sites** – e.g. pedestrian crossings, adult crossing guards, repairs and upgrades to sidewalks, and signage

School Travel Planning complements the social marketing components of the Active and Safe Routes to School program, such as the Walking School Bus, Walking Wednesdays Club, and Best Routes to School mapping activities. The School Travel Plan serves to formalize the process to ensure these initiatives are built into the school plan and thus become an ongoing, integral part of how the school operates.

The School Travel Planning process involves **five mandatory steps**:

1. Program Set-up
2. Data Collection and Problem Identification
3. Action Planning
4. Implementation
5. Ongoing Monitoring

For more information on School Travel Planning, see the following documents from Green Communities Canada:

- Review of International School Travel Planning Best Practices:
www.saferoutestoschool.ca/downloads/STP-Best-Practice-Final.pdf
- School Travel Planning Review & Recommendations:
www.saferoutestoschool.ca/downloads/STP-Review-Recommendations-Final.pdf

If your school is interested in developing a School Travel Plan, contact Active and Safe Routes to School in Manitoba at (204) 925-3773, asrts@greenactioncentre.ca

From September 2007 to March 2009, Green Communities Canada and selected provincial partners conducted a School Travel Planning pilot project. More information on the pilot and its case studies can be obtained from www.saferoutestoschool.ca. Active and Safe Routes to School in Manitoba ran a similar pilot project in 2009-2010. For more information, visit www.greenactioncentre.ca – under programs!

Behaviour change rarely occurs as a result of simply providing information.



—Stevenson School (Winnipeg)

2.3 COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL MARKETING

Community-Based Social Marketing is based upon research in the social sciences that demonstrates behaviour change is most effectively achieved through initiatives that are delivered at the community level and that focus on removing barriers to an activity while simultaneously enhancing and promoting the activity's benefits.

To promote behaviour change, Community-Based Social Marketing uses a variety of effective “tools,” including:

- Seeking **commitment** to an initial small request
- Using **prompts** as gentle reminders to their commitment
- Developing community **norms** that support people engaging in sustainable behaviour by observing other members of the community behaving in a similar way
- Effective **communication** strategies that are captivating, credible, well-framed and easy to remember
- Creating **incentives** that motivate people to adopt the sustainable behaviour
- Removing **external barriers** that impede the sustainable behaviour

This information was drawn from the book “Fostering Sustainable Behaviour: An Introduction to Community-Based Social Marketing,” written by Doug McKenzie-Mohr and William Smith (1999). For more information on Community-Based Social Marketing, visit Doug McKenzie-Mohr's website at: www.cbtm.com.