

## **Active School Travel for Parents and Community Members**

- Active school travel can be part of many problems we face today: inactive children, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, traffic congestion, overscheduled parents, and road safety,
- Canadian data suggests that around 30% of Canadian kids are active on the way to school, and Manitoba is around the average (1/3 of kids).
- Expectations of what children can do independently vary widely around the world.
- Sometimes we need to question our perceptions of risk.

### **Common Barriers to Active School Travel**

- Distance
- Fast-moving traffic
- Weather
- Convenience
- Lack of sidewalks and bike lanes
- Stranger danger

### **Changing Behaviours**

- Identify all the perceived barriers from your audience's POV
- Connect with the reasons that would resonate most personally and immediately?
- Tier behaviours from easiest to most difficult to allow for incremental change
- Have people set an intention and make it public
- Creating new social norms through positive social pressure ("good influences")

## **Low effort**

- Challenge yourself to use active transportation on occasion, especially biking for slightly longer journeys
  - Participate in events like the Commuter Challenge, which ask for a temporary change in travel modes.
  - Ride a bike or walk with your child on short trips community trips to build their skills.
- Already walk your kid to school? Invite your child's friends to join you if they live nearby.
- Do your research to get inspired. Try searching "walking to school Japan" or "biking to school Netherlands". Often what has been done elsewhere can apply here, too.
- Report problems to the city: broken sidewalks, uncleared snow, repeat traffic violations, etc. Posting on social media with a city hashtag holds them accountable for following up.
- Still driving sometimes? Be conscientious and add extra activity to the trip.
  - Drop children off a block or two from the school or park and walk with them (Park and Walk a Block). This reduces traffic chaos immediately surrounding the school.
  - Commit to not idling around schools. Idling vehicles dramatically reduce air quality around schools.
  - Talk to parents of your children's friends about carpooling, which can mean one less car in the school area. While not active, reducing total traffic is part of making communities safer places to walk and bike. For bonus points, combine with Park and Walk a Block.

## **Medium effort (often requires a connection with schools)**

- Advocate for changes in policy and priorities with the school principal, parent council and division superintendent
- Join or start a walking school bus. Splitting the responsibility can help keep it fair.
- Know and collaborate with the champions for sustainability and active school travel in your school community (other parents, teachers, etc.)
- Coordinate a campaign to change problematic behaviours and habits among parents (e.g. erratic driving around the school, idling.)
- Connect Green Action Centre with the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) team at your child's school, student-led green team, or parent
- If your school has a problem with theft, but is willing to put in bike racks or equipment lockers, coordinate a fundraiser for active travel facilities.

## **High effort**

- Lead a bike train in your community