



Preschooler

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

focus

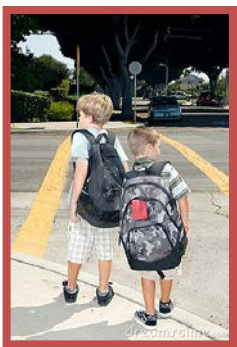
Active transportation is a great way to travel. With a little planning, it can easily be integrated into daily life. Active transportation contributes to children's physical activity participation and improves overall health.

Summer is the perfect time to add active transportation to your routine

Canadian children travel to places in a variety of ways: cars, buses, bikes, scooters, wagons, strollers and walking. Walking, biking, and using a scooter are all active modes of transportation. A 2012 Canadian study found that only 28% of children walk to school while 58% of their parents walked to school when they were kids. The distance between home and school is often the main barrier to using active transportation. While driving your children or having them take the bus can be more convenient, there are benefits to using active transportation.

Adding active transportation to your child's day will contribute to their physical activity and increase their likelihood of meeting Canadian activity guidelines. Active transportation is cost-effective and friendly to the environment by reducing the reliance on cars.

Active transportation isn't just for getting to school. You can walk, bike, or scooter to get to various locations such as a friend's house, shops or parks. Summer is the perfect time to add active transportation to your routine. Longer days make it easy to walk or bike to nearby destinations.



What's a Walking School Bus?

A walking school bus is a group of students walking to school under the supervision of an adult. A 'walking school bus' can be as simple as families taking turns supervising students, or a more organized route and timetable can be developed. If students live far from schools and usually take a bus, the bus may stop a short distance from the school and the students can walk the remainder of the way together. A walking school bus is a great way to develop healthy behaviors among new kindergarteners.

Do You and Your Child Use Active Transportation?

The Health Outcomes and Physical activity in Preschoolers (HOPP) Study at McMaster University asked the parents of 3-to-5-year-olds about active transportation. About 40% of parents reported that their child sometimes or always travels to school, preschool, daycare, or main childcare arrangement by walking or biking.

Benefits of Active Transportation

- ★ Increases daily physical activity
- ★ Cost-effective
- ★ Provides social opportunities
- ★ Reduces greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants

Tips for Increasing Active Transportation from ParticipACTION

- ❖ Make active transportation comfortable. Be sure to wear proper footwear and a comfortable backpack and dress for the weather.
- ❖ Teach your children to be safe pedestrians and cyclists. Lead by example. Always wear a helmet and show children where and how to cross roads safely.
- ❖ Pledge to use active transportation for any nearby destination - leave the cars, wagons and strollers at home!
- ❖ Develop a Walking School Bus to and from your school, preschool or daycare. Be sure to take the safest route.
- ❖ Encourage your community and school to host bike safety workshops and install bike racks at schools, parks and shops.

Did You Know?



Are we Driving Our Kids to Unhealthy Habits?

The 2013 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity is available at:

www.activehealthykids.ca

Don't forget your helmet!

Helmets can reduce the risk of injury to the brain by 88% when worn correctly. Be sure to wear a helmet for all wheeled activities.



The Child Health & Exercise Medicine Program at McMaster University is working to advance child health through excellence in research.

To learn about our current studies, visit us online at fhs.mcmaster.ca/chemp

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Active Healthy Kids Canada (www.activehealthykids.ca)
- Best Start Resource Centre (www.beststart.org/haveaballtogether/campaign.html)
- Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (www.cflri.ca)
- Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (www.csep.ca/guidelines)
- Caring for Kids (www.caringforkids.cps.ca)
- McMaster University Child Health & Exercise Medicine Program (fhs.mcmaster.ca/chemp)
- ParticipACTION (www.participaction.com)

References:

- 2012 National Results- Executive Summary. Children's Mobility, Health and Happiness: A Canadian School Travel Planning Model (2012). Available at: <http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/downloads/Executive%20Summary-CLASP%20Results-May%202012.pdf>.
- Are we Driving Our Kids to Unhealthy Habits? The 2013 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity. Available at: www.activehealthykids.ca
- Protect Your Head, Wear a Helmet. Durham Region Health Department. Available at: http://www.durham.ca/departments/health/injury_prev/
- Starting a Walking School Bus. Available at: <http://www.walkingschoolbus.org>