

ChangeLab Solutions



Safe Routes to School & Law



Recorded on October 19, 2015

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Today's Presenters



Alexis Etow, JD
Staff Attorney



Diane Dohm, MSCRP
Transportation Planner

Today's Guest Speakers



Cristina McKenney

Safe Routes to School Manager
Eagle Prep
Phoenix



Sarah Prasek

Safe Routes to School Program Manager
Living Streets Alliance
Tucson

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Healthier communities for all through better laws and policies.



ROADMAP

- Safe Routes to School: The Basics
- Safe Routes to School: The Law
- Guest Speakers: Cristina McKenney & Sarah Prasek
- Q&A

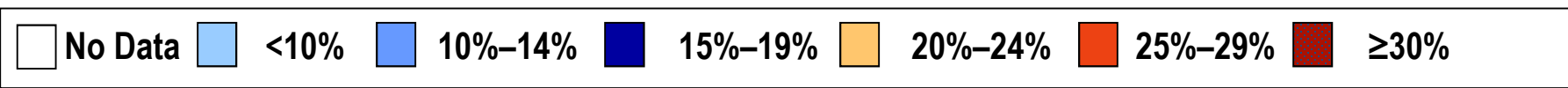
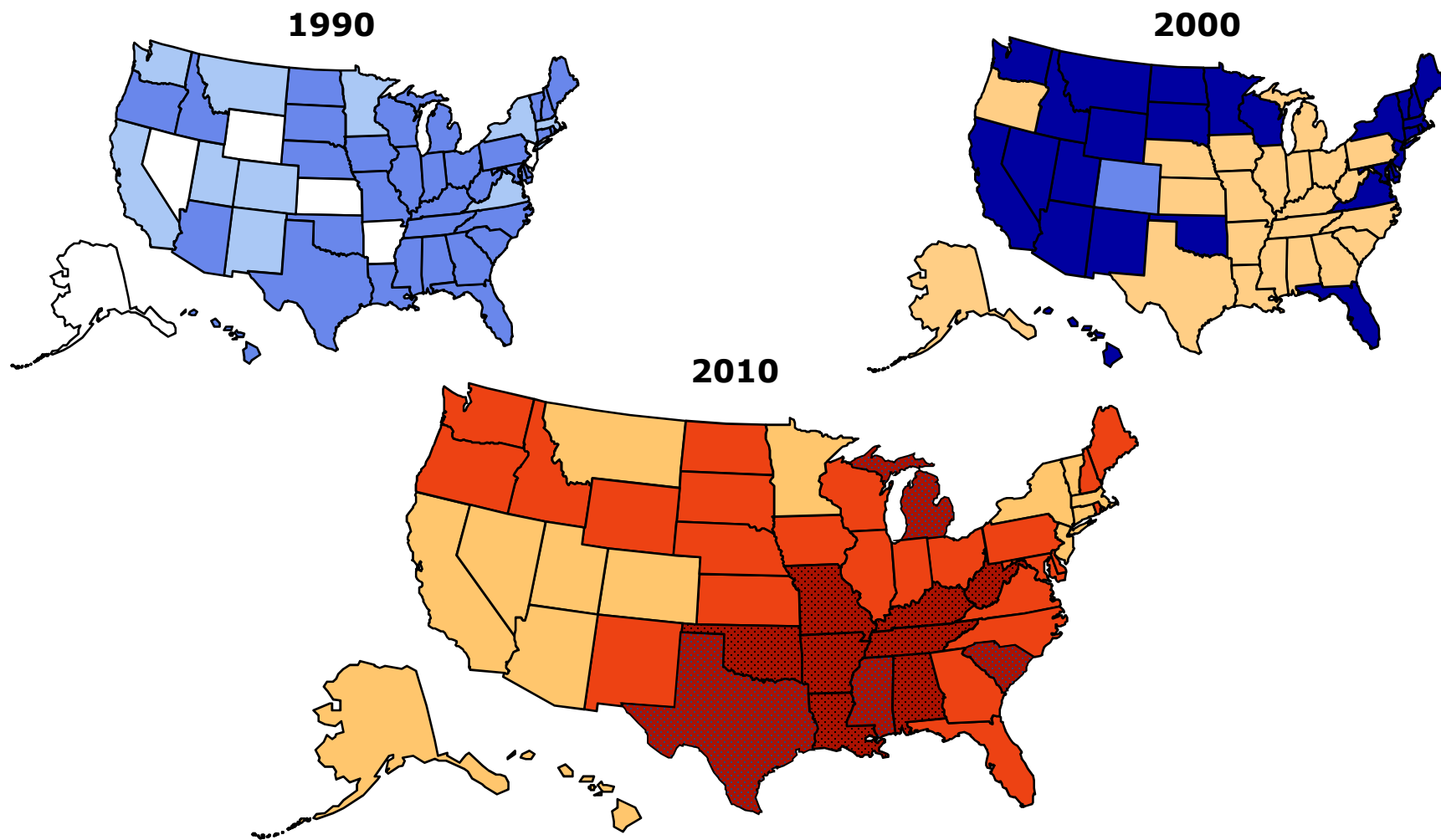


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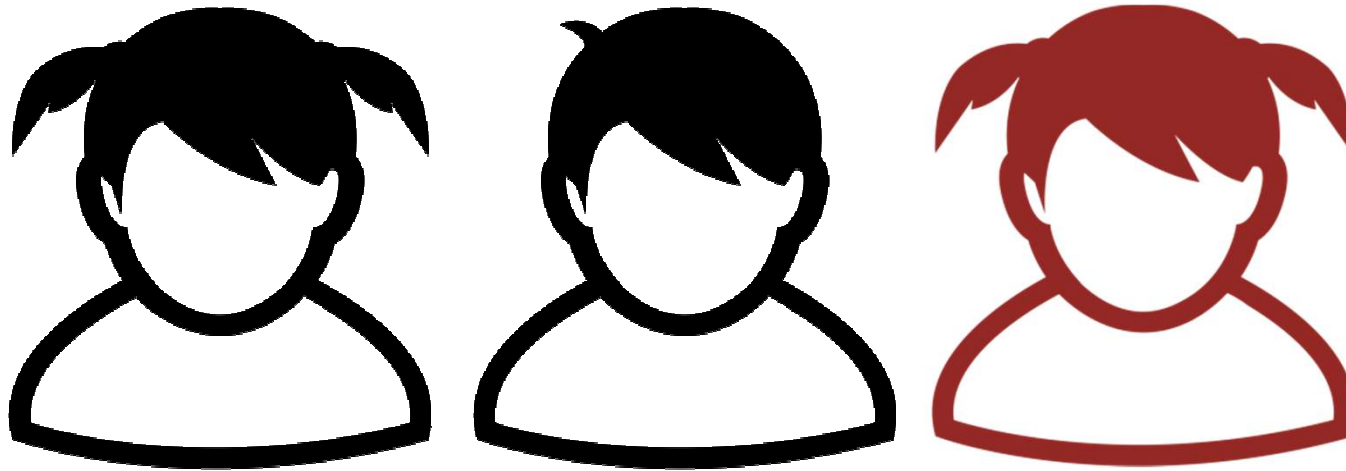
Safe Routes to School: The Basics



Obesity Trends* Among U.S. Adults: 1990, 2000, 2010



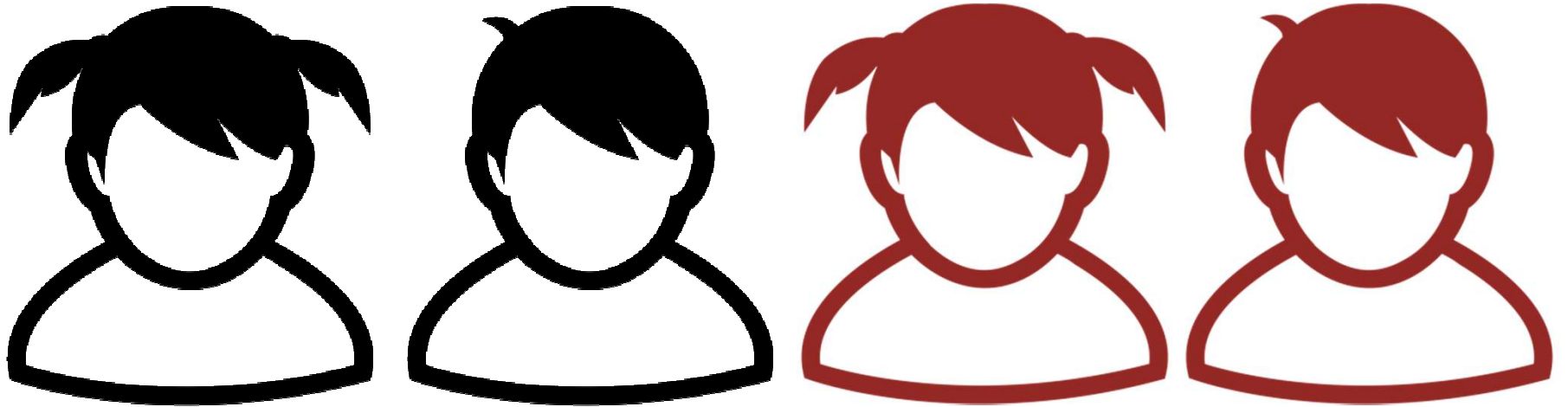
(*BMI ≥30, or about 30 lbs. overweight for 5'4" person)



1/3

of **CHILDREN** are overweight or obese

IN RURAL, LOW-INCOME, OR NON-WHITE
COMMUNITIES,



40-50%

of **CHILDREN** are overweight or obese



Around **40%** of our roads do not have sidewalks





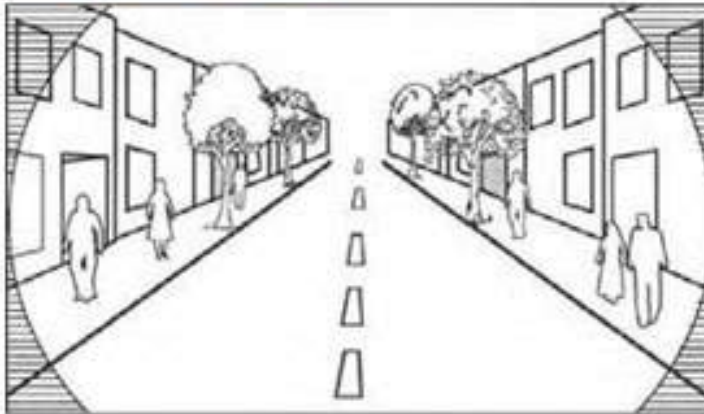
Children are **13X** more likely to be injured on a street like this...

Ewing, Frank and Kreutzer, 2006

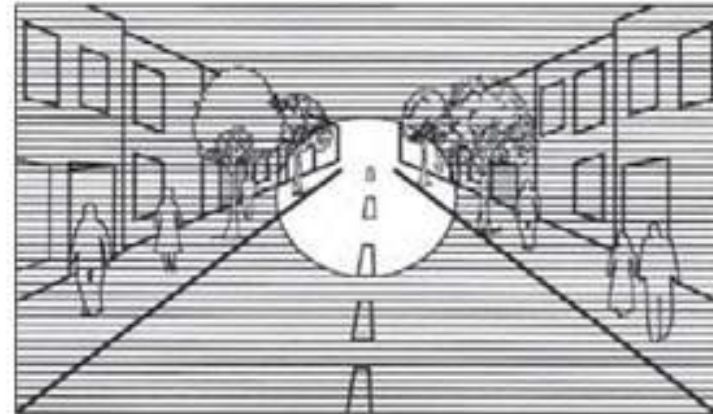


...than on a street like this

WHY SPEED MATTERS

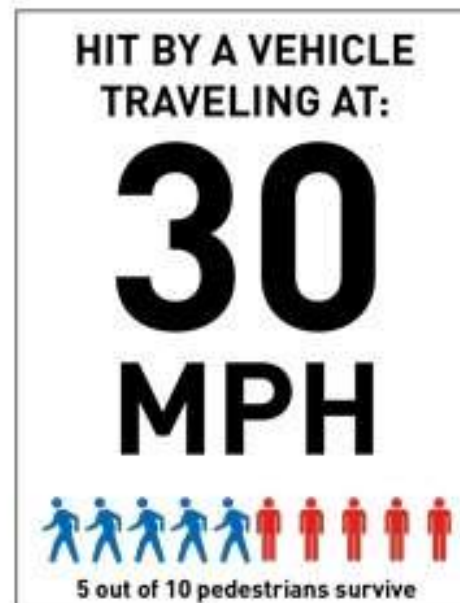
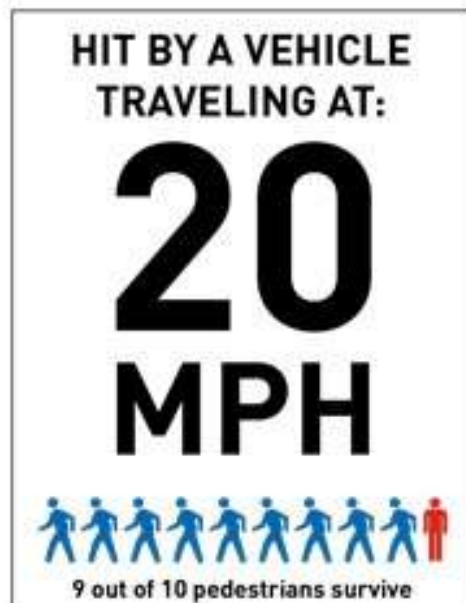


Field of vision at 15 MPH



Field of vision at 30 to 40 MPH

A driver's field of vision increases as speed decreases. At lower speeds, drivers can see more of their surroundings and have more time to see and react to potential hazards.



POLL

Did YOU walk/bike to school when you were a kid?

1. Yes, unsupervised
2. Yes, supervised
3. No, lived too far away
4. No, other reasons



POLL

Do your kids walk/bike to school?

1. Yes, unsupervised
2. Yes, supervised
3. No, live too far away
4. No, other reasons



Children Walking/Biking to School

1969



48%

Children Walking/Biking to School

1969



48%

2009



13%

Children Walking/Biking to School

Lives within 1 mile of School

1969



89%

Children Walking/Biking to School

Lives within 1 mile of School

1969



89%

2009



35%

Safe Routes to School: “The Five E’s”



Safe Routes to School:

~~“The Five E’s”~~

Six



EDUCATION



ENCOURAGEMENT



ENGINEERING



ENFORCEMENT





EVALUATION

One more "E" ... EQUITY



Benefits of Safe Routes to School



Good for Kids



By **walking or bicycling** to school...
children get more physical activity,
lower their risk of obesity,
and arrive **focused and ready to learn.**



**Good for
Communities**

Safe Routes to School: “Policy & Program”



A photograph of a busy school street scene. In the foreground, a young boy in a blue helmet and dark clothing is riding a small blue bicycle on a paved sidewalk. Next to him, a man in a light blue t-shirt and green shorts is walking, carrying a white bag and a rolled-up paper. In the background, two yellow school buses are stopped at a street intersection. A group of children and adults are gathered around the buses, some on bicycles. A red stop sign is visible on the right side of the street. The scene is set against a backdrop of lush green trees under a clear blue sky.

SRTS Policy Levels

School Districts

Local Gov't

Regional (MPO)

State

Federal

Safe Routes to School

Approaches to Support Children Walking and Bicycling to School



School	School District	Town/City/County	Regional
 <p>Arrival/Departure Policies Schools can use approaches like staggering pick-up and drop-off times to give students time to get clear of car traffic.</p>  <p>Remote Drop-off Schools can designate a place near school where students can be dropped off or picked up, reducing traffic congestion while encouraging children to be physically active.</p>	 <p>Bicycle Parking Districts can make bicycle parking and security a priority, and they can support storage for other forms of active transportation, like skateboards and scooters.</p>  <p>Safe Routes to School Policies Districts can implement policies instructing principals to encourage groups of students to walk or bicycle to school together and spelling out how the district and schools support walking and bicycling.</p>  <p>School Wellness Policies Districts can use these federally required policies to call on schools to set goals and guidelines that support Safe Routes to School.</p>  <p>Shared Use District agreements can expand access to school facilities like gyms, fields, and playgrounds during non-school hours.</p>  <p>Smart School Siting Policies that help guide the process of deciding where to locate new schools can make it easier for children to walk or bicycle, while ensuring that neighborhood schools serve a diverse range of residents.</p>	 <p>Crossing Guards Adult patrols at busy intersections can improve safety conditions and make families more comfortable with allowing their children to walk or bicycle to school.</p>  <p>Safe School Zones A combination of strategies can create safer zones around schools for children arriving or leaving school, particularly during peak hours.</p>  <p>Complete Streets Local policies can change how streets and trails are designed, allowing people of all ages and abilities to get around safely and easily on foot, bicycle, or public transportation.</p>  <p>General Plans These basic required plans for local development can call for safety and roadway improvements, traffic-calming measures near schools, and more.</p>  <p>Bicycle/Pedestrian/SRTS/Trail Plans These plans promote a coordinated approach to enacting strategies that support bicycling, walking, trails, and Safe Routes to School.</p>	 <p>Transportation Planning Communities can work to ensure that transportation funds are directed toward improving street safety for students.</p>

SOME APPROACHES CAN BE USED BY ADDITIONAL JURISDICTIONAL LEVELS.



Policy reaches
more people, and
policy
institutionalizes
good ideas.

www.changelabsolutions.org/safe-routes/welcome

**“Beginner”
Policies**

[Introduction: Safe Routes to School](#)

[Role of School Districts in Student Health](#)

[About Safe Routes To School](#)

[How to Work With School Boards](#)

[General Resources](#)

[Instructions](#)

[Getting Started](#)

[The Policies](#)

[Beginner](#)

[Support for Active Transportation](#)

[Support for Safe Routes to School](#)

[Roles of Districts, Schools,
Parents/Guardians, and Students](#)

[Minimizing Driving](#)

[Following the Law](#)

[District Task Force](#)

[School Teams](#)

[Traffic Safety Education](#)

[Walking School Buses and Bicycle Trains](#)

[Walk to School Day and Other](#)

[Promotional Activities](#)

[Enforcement](#)

[Incorporation into Student and Parent
Handbooks](#)

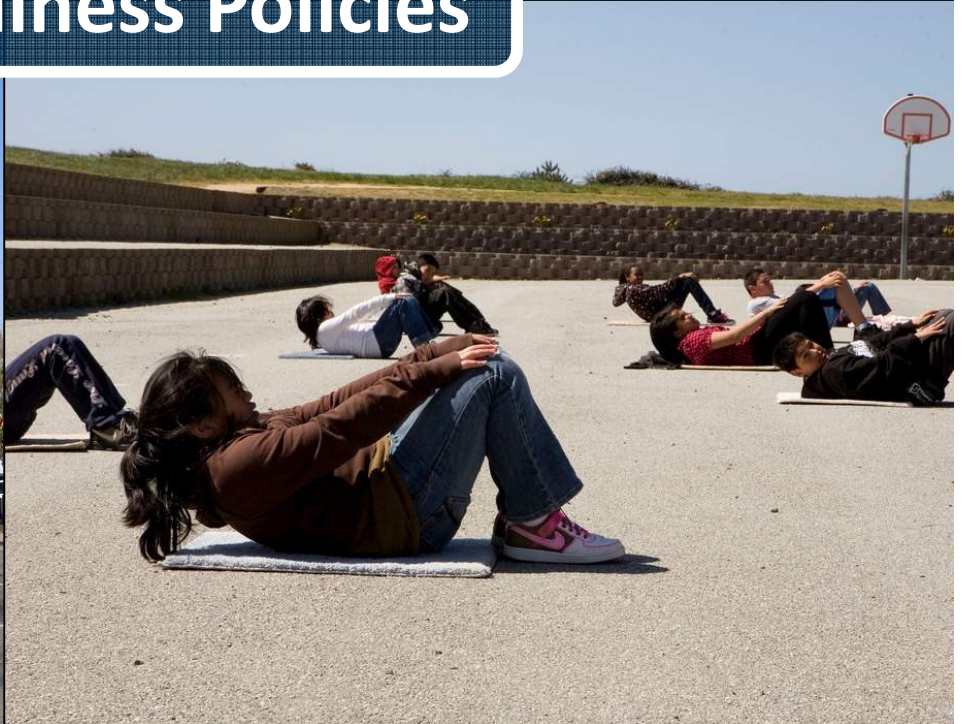
[Incorporation into School Wellness Policy](#)

[Intermediate](#)

[Advanced](#)



School Wellness Policies

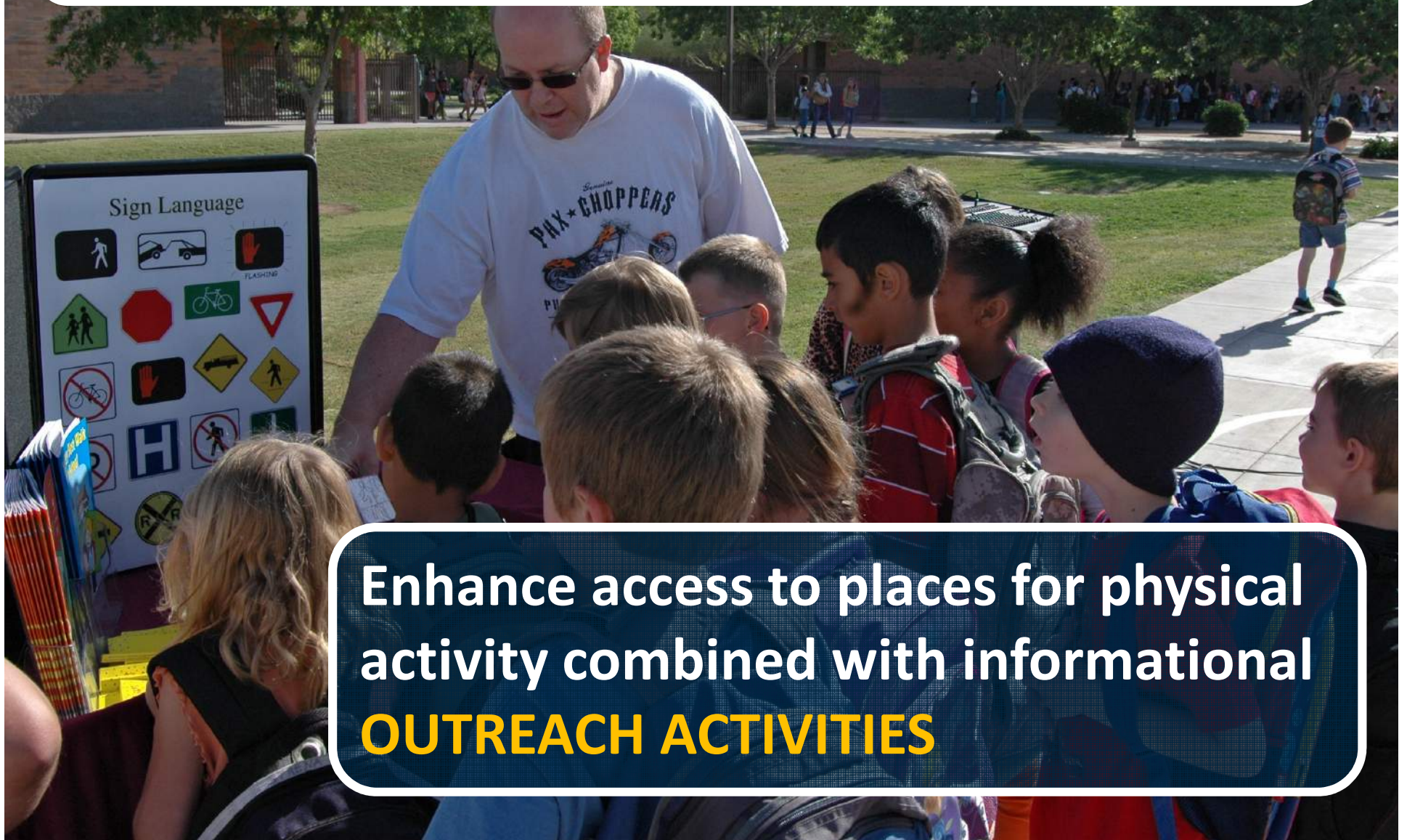


SNAP-ED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGIES



**BUILD
CAPACITY** to
implement active
living policy at
the community
level and by
community
organizations

SNAP-ED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGIES



Enhance access to places for physical activity combined with informational
OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

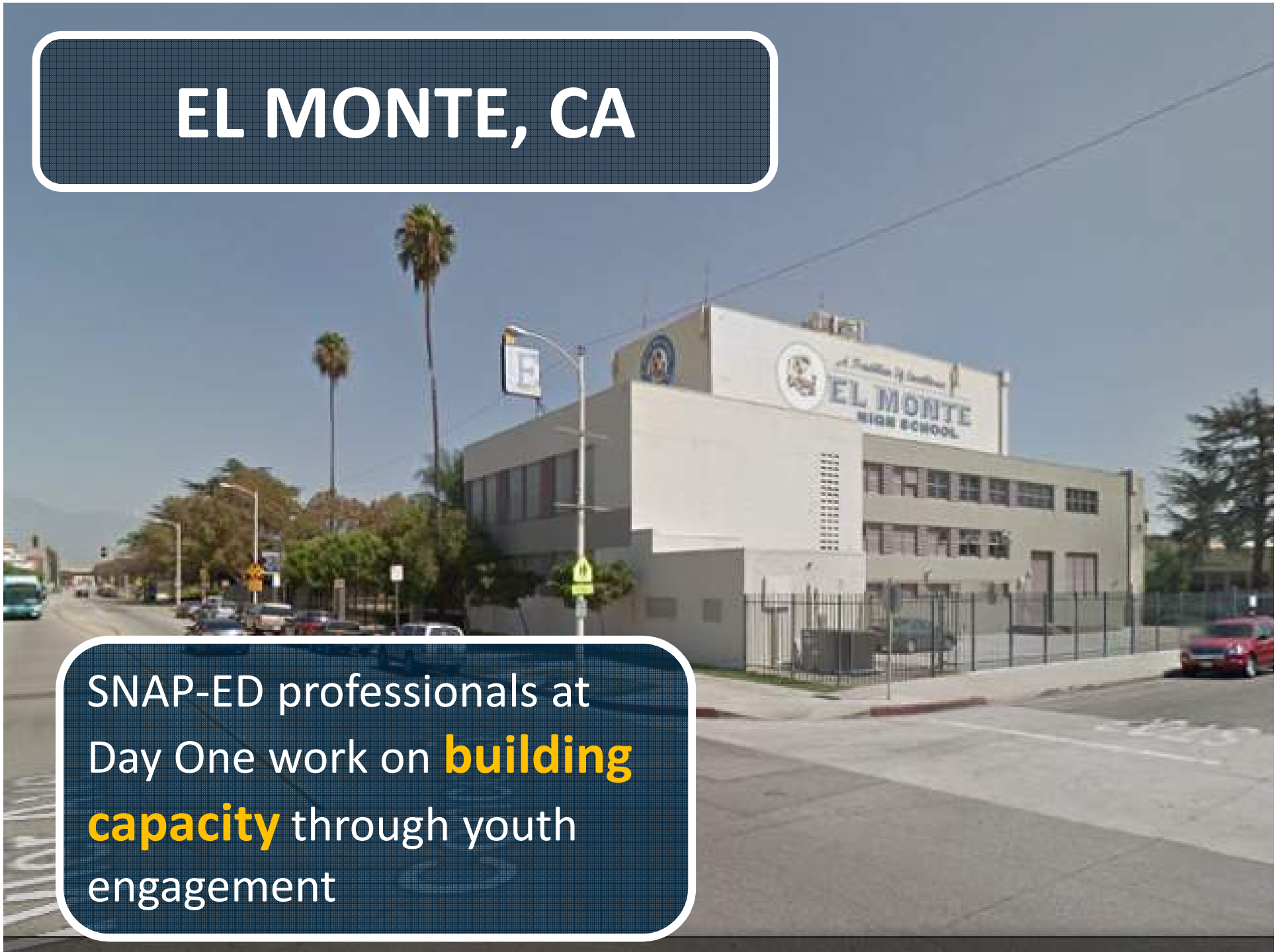
SNAP-ED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGIES

A woman wearing a white t-shirt with the 'Be BRIGHT' logo is interacting with a group of children at a table. The children are also wearing 'Be BRIGHT' t-shirts and some have backpacks. The scene appears to be an outdoor event or school activity. The background shows a brick wall and other people.

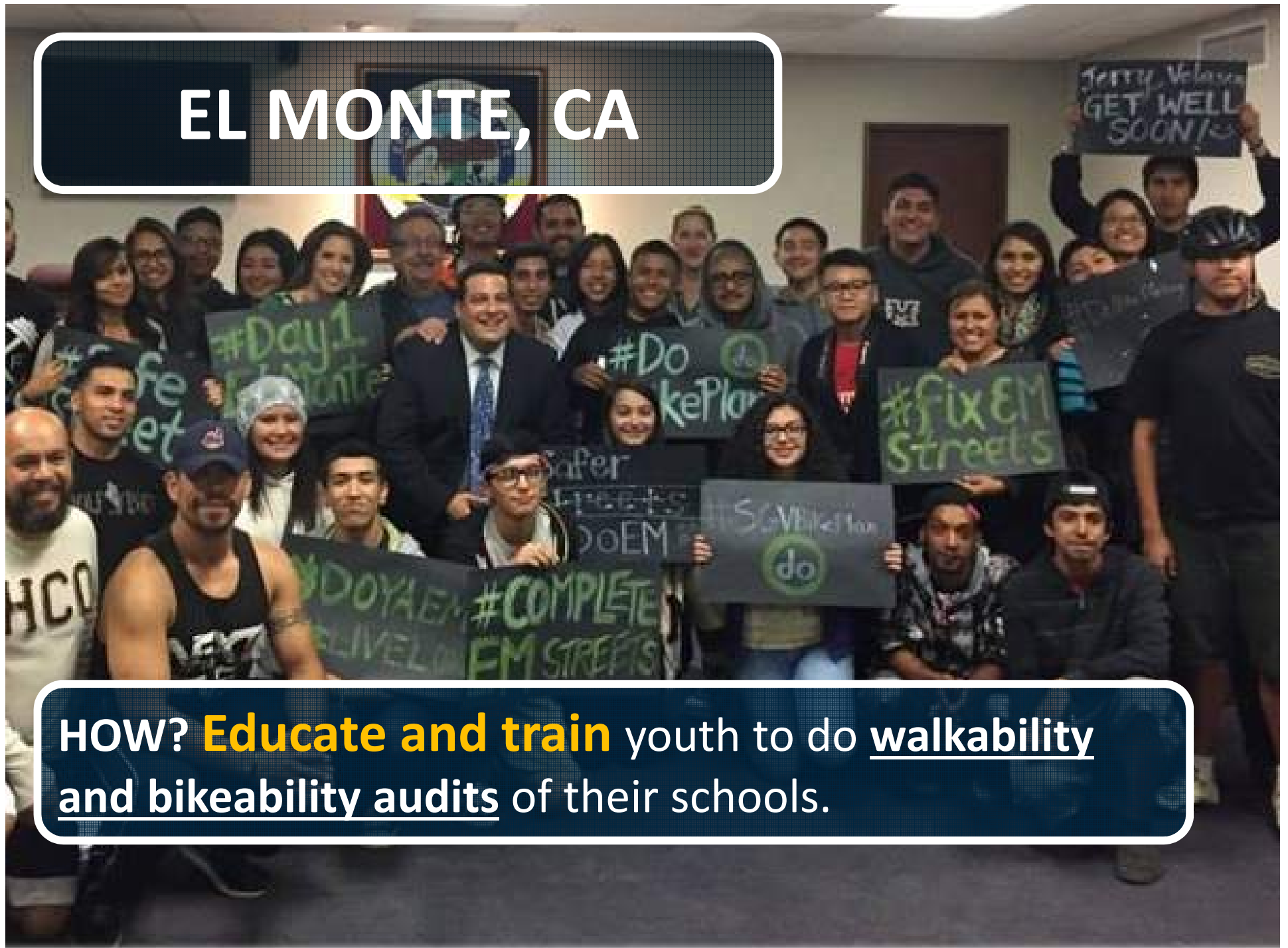
ENGAGE local businesses, government, civic organizations, community groups, and citizens in active living

EL MONTE, CA

SNAP-ED professionals at
Day One work on **building
capacity** through youth
engagement



EL MONTE, CA



HOW? **Educate and train** youth to do walkability and bikeability audits of their schools.

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Safe Routes to School: The Law



Liability

101

Liability Basics

Negligence =



DUTY



BREACH



CAUSATION



DAMAGES



DUTY:

**Did the school act with
*reasonable care?***



BREACH:

Did the school *breach*
its duty by acting
carelessly?



CAUSATION:

Did the breach *cause*
the injury?



DAMAGES:

Was someone *injured*
as a result?



A note about immunity ...

Important Takeaway

NO LIABILITY unless...

- ✓ Someone did not act with reasonable care.

AND

- ✓ That carelessness caused an injury.



Managing Risk

#1: Assess your environment



#2: Be proactive



#3: Use reasonable care



- ✓ Screen, Train, Monitor
- ✓ Identify Potential Hazards

#4: Clearly define roles

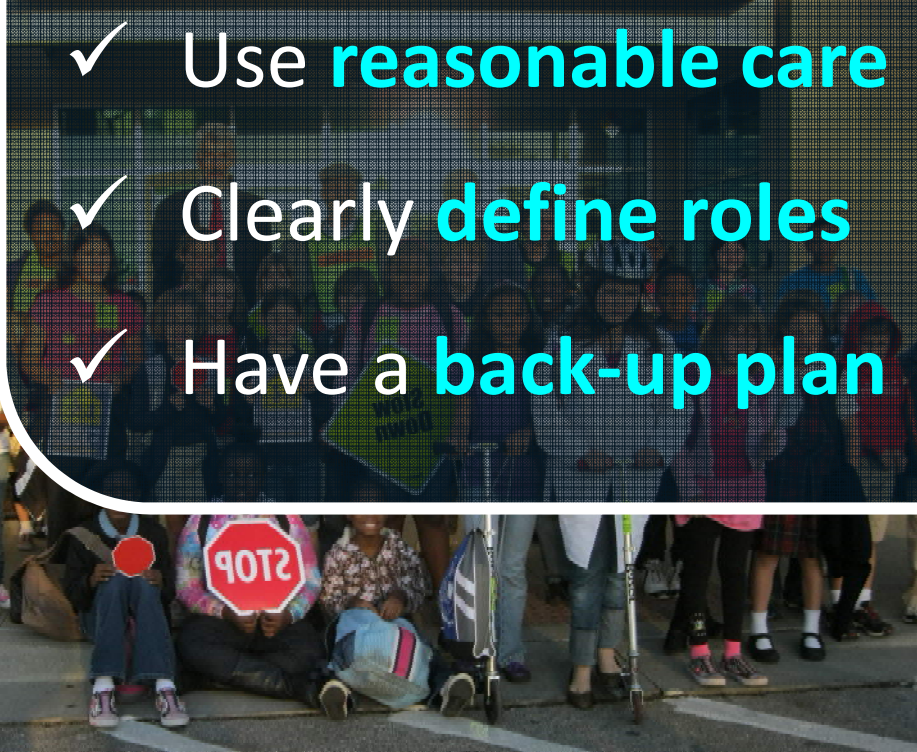


#5: Have a back-up plan






- ✓ **Assess** your environment
- ✓ Be **proactive**
- ✓ Use **reasonable care**
- ✓ Clearly **define roles**
- ✓ Have a **back-up plan**



ChangeLab Solutions

RESOURCES

changelabsolutions.org | nplan.org | January 2014





Covering Your Bases

Basic Tips About Insurance for Nonprofit Organizations


Insurance coverage is one of the basic ways that nonprofits can protect themselves from the risk of liability. This fact sheet contains a checklist of the steps a nonprofit should consider in acquiring insurance.

Nonprofit organizations like ChangeLab Solutions engage in a wide variety of activities that bring great benefits to local communities – organizing farmers' markets, managing Safe Routes to School programs, leading afterschool activities for active children, and a vast array of other programs. But conducting activities of any kind inherently brings some risk of liability for injuries or mishaps.

Insurance coverage is one of the basic ways that nonprofits can protect themselves from the risk of liability. Acquiring insurance protects a nonprofit by ensuring that the organization can continue to function even if the unexpected occurs. Because nonprofit leaders are often pulled in many directions and don't necessarily have expertise in the intricacies of nonprofit insurance needs, this checklist is intended to help nonprofits assess their general insurance needs and understand the steps and precautions that will make insurance work for them.

changelabsolutions.org | nplan.org | July 2010



Volunteers and Liability



The Federal Volunteer Protection Act

People who volunteer for a nonprofit or school may be concerned about a lawsuit if an injury occurs. This fact sheet provides an overview of legal protections designed to shield volunteers from liability.


Volunteers are crucial to the fight against childhood obesity—leading kids in physical activity through Safe Routes to School programs and after-school activities, teaching cooking and gardening classes, and encouraging healthy lifestyles through many other programs. Volunteers often make it possible for financially stretched schools, nonprofits, cities, and counties to do more to create healthy communities and help children lead healthier lives.

But people sometimes worry that they could be at risk of liability if an injury occurs while they are volunteering. Fortunately, a federal law—the Volunteer Protection Act—provides volunteers with significant protections from liability associated with volunteer activity in every state but one.¹ Some states also have laws that provide additional protections for volunteers.

The Volunteer Protection Act protects volunteers under many circumstances, although it does not eliminate the possibility of a lawsuit. It does not shield the nonprofit or governmental agency using the volunteer's services from liability; it only protects the volunteers themselves.

changelabsolutions.org | nplan.org | July 2010



Safe Routes to School:



Minimizing Your Liability Risk

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs can help reduce schools' risk of liability while making it safer for students to walk or bike. This fact sheet explains why liability fears shouldn't keep schools from supporting SRTS programs, and offers practical tips for schools and community advocates.

Some schools have been reluctant to support Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs due to concerns about being sued if an injury or problem arises. But such fears are largely unwarranted. By acting responsibly and understanding the liability issues in question, schools, nonprofits, and parent groups can help students reap the health and academic benefits of SRTS programs while minimizing the risk of a lawsuit. In fact, well-run SRTS programs can even reduce schools' risk of liability by identifying potential dangers and putting measures in place to protect children against injury.

Because nonprofits, parent groups, and schools may all be involved in SRTS programs, it can be important for each of these groups to understand SRTS and liability. This fact sheet explains why liability fears shouldn't stop school districts from supporting SRTS programs, provides an overview of liability and negligence, and offers practical tips on how school districts and others can reduce their risk of liability.

Because liability issues vary from state to state, consulting with a local lawyer may be helpful in understanding your specific issues, as well as in structuring SRTS programs to minimize liability concerns.

ChangeLab Solutions

**Guest Speaker:
Cristina McKenney**

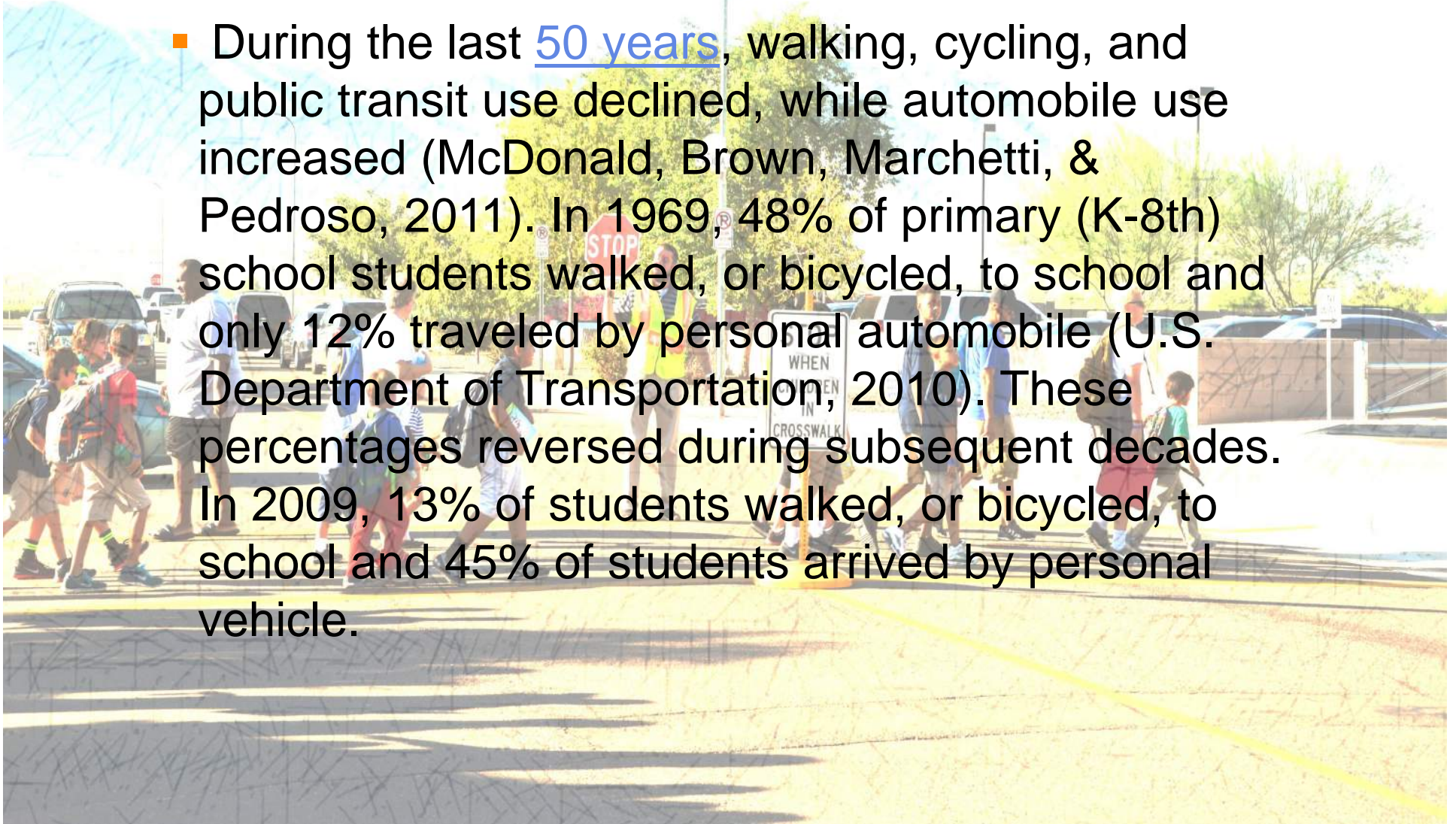


Why Safe Routes to School?



School Travel Trends

- During the last [50 years](#), walking, cycling, and public transit use declined, while automobile use increased (McDonald, Brown, Marchetti, & Pedroso, 2011). In 1969, 48% of primary (K-8th) school students walked, or bicycled, to school and only 12% traveled by personal automobile (U.S. Department of Transportation, 2010). These percentages reversed during subsequent decades. In 2009, 13% of students walked, or bicycled, to school and 45% of students arrived by personal vehicle.



Contributing Factors

- Increased distances between home and school
- Neighborhoods built lacking sidewalks and crosswalks
- Traffic speeds and volumes increased
- Parental fears increased

When driving to school became the common form of transportation to school the following occurred:

- walking and cycling received less priority in planning decisions,
- traffic volumes increased, making walking and cycling more difficult,
- parents feared for children's safety,
- walking and cycling became unpopular,
- parents no longer considered using these modes in daily activities, and
as a result : obesity rates in children increased

Active Kids Learn Better



active kids learn better



physical activity at school is a win-win for students and teachers

GRADES:



STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES:

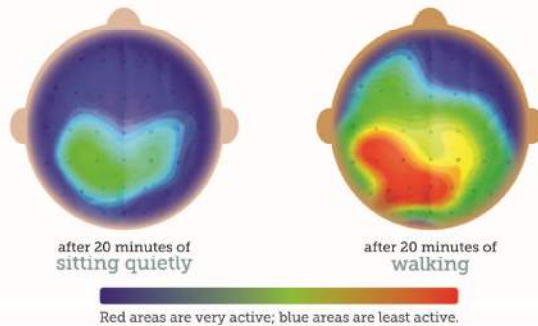


JUST ONE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE LESSON CREATES:



physically active kids have more active brains

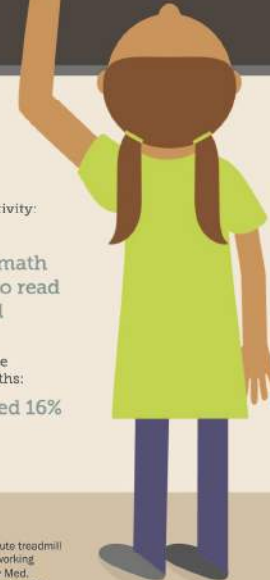
BRAIN SCANS OF STUDENTS TAKING A TEST:



MORE RESULTS:

after 20 minutes of physical activity:
students tested better in reading, spelling & math and were more likely to read above their grade level

after being in a physically active afterschool program for 9 months:
memory tasks improved 16%



SOURCES: Donnelly J.E. and Lambourne K. (2011). Classroom-based physical activity, cognition, and academic achievement. *Prev Med*, 52(Suppl 1):S36-S42. Hillman C.H. et al. (2009). The effect of acute treadmill walking on cognitive control and academic achievement in preadolescent children. *Neuroscience*, 159(3):1044-1054. Kamiyo K. et al. (2011). The effects of an afterschool physical activity program on working memory in preadolescent children. *Dev Sci*, 14(5):1046-1058. Kibbe D.L. et al. (2011). Ten years of TAKE 10!: integrating physical activity with academic concepts in elementary school classrooms. *Prev Med*, 52(Suppl 1):S43-S50. Nelson M.C. and Gordon-Larsen P. (2006). Physical activity and sedentary behavior patterns are associated with selected adolescent health risk behaviors. *Pediatrics*, 117(4): 1281-1290.

Learn more about why active kids learn better and how schools can help at activelivingresearch.org/activeeducationbrief.

A win-win for students and teachers



EAGLE and SRTS

While EAGLE's program began as a grassroots effort, to date we have received \$135,000 in SRTS funding from ADOT to develop a SRTS program, and an additional \$80,000 has recently been awarded to our school to continue to grow our program and expand it into three other network schools, through 2017. Studies show that SRTS increased the proportion of students walking and biking to school and that these effects built over time. Our rates of participation fall within the same model and show that we are successfully making walking and biking part of our school's culture.

2010 - 2 walkers , 1 volunteer

2011 - 29 walkers , 9 volunteers

2012/13 - 63 walkers, 17 volunteers

2013/14 - 103 walkers, 14 volunteers

2014/15 – 131 walkers, 21 volunteers

The Vision

Our program's vision is to give our students added opportunities for physical activity, while reducing their exposure to traffic and pollution around campus. Further, we are implementing SRTS activities and events to: educate EAGLE students, parents, and the public; develop and improve relationships with local law enforcement; and continue planning efforts to create safer local streets.



Walking School Bus

Three daily walking routes that chaperone and escort students to school in the mornings and afternoons.

1. Improved health and fitness
2. Better behavior and focus in class
3. Positive interaction with a caring adult
4. Less traffic congestion and air pollution around schools
5. Social opportunity for kids



Program Summary



WHEN?

Year long, morning and afternoon

WHERE?

3 staged routes

HOW MANY?

30-40 children per route

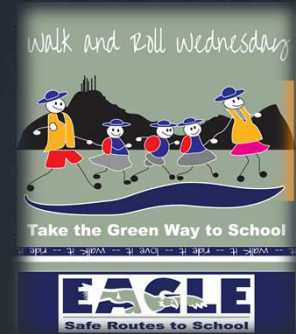
1-2 adult leaders and one junior leader,

Walk n' Roll Wednesday



1. Measure student interest in biking to school
2. Continue to reduce traffic in the drop off area
3. Continue to teach safe walking behavior and begin teaching safe biking behavior
4. Instill in children self-confidence and independence
5. To give families who are not ready to commit to the Walking School Bus and opportunity to participate

Program Summary



WHEN?

Every Wednesday morning from November to April

WHERE?

1 staged route serving

HOW MANY?

31-45 children per route (last school year)
caregiver strongly suggested, waiver of liability
necessary

Golden Sneaker

- Awarded monthly to classes that demonstrate the highest level of involvement and participation
- Different criteria each month
- At year end, the Golden Sneaker Award is awarded to the class that most consistently demonstrates support and participation of the different SRTS programs and events



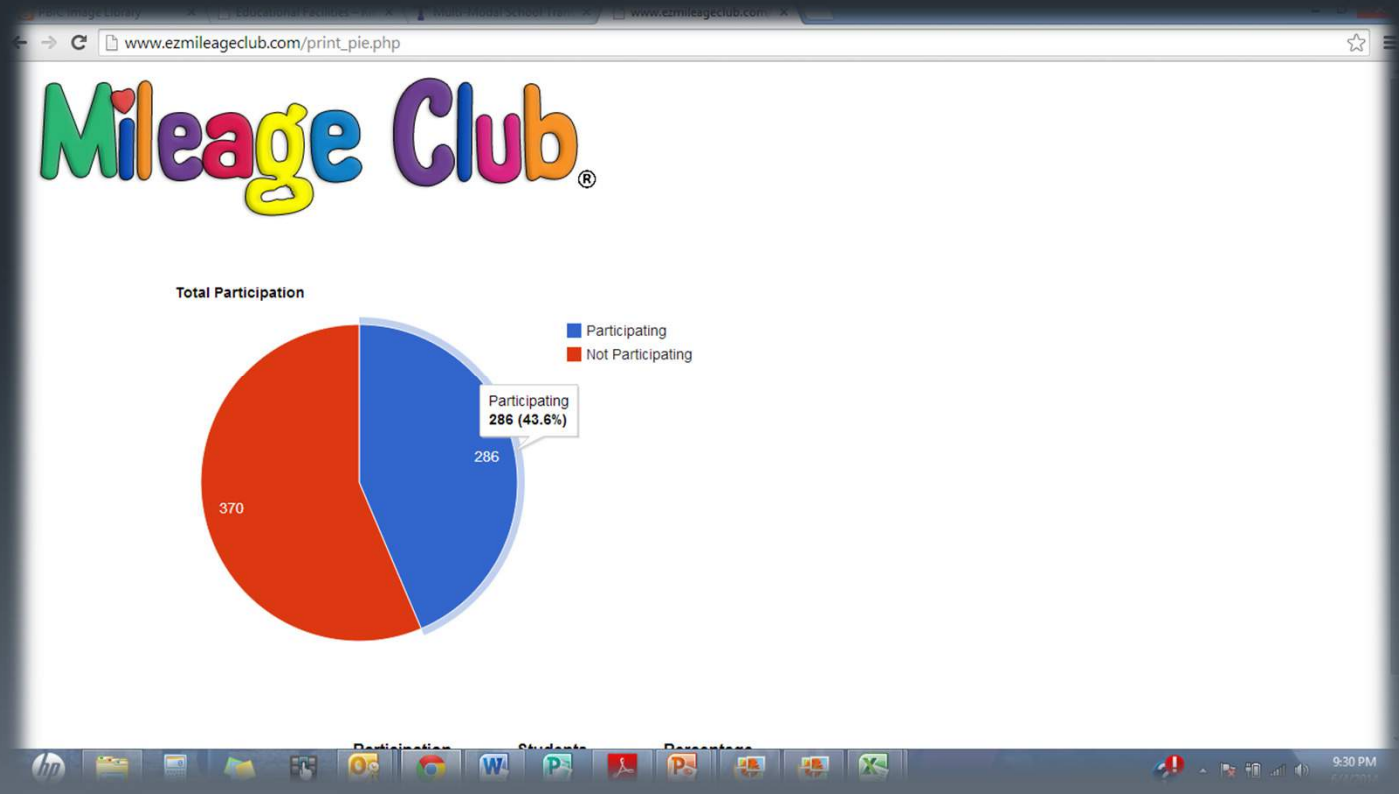
Yearly Events



- **Walk to School Day**: Annual event usually held the first Wednesday of October, as part of International Walk to School Day, to give students practice with safe, supervised walking, while exposing them to a fun way to increase their physical activity
- **Bike Rodeo**: Safe biking skills are taught/tested on a premade course, and students receive free helmet fittings
- **Bike to School Day** another annual event usually held in late April or early May to raise awareness of the need for safer bicycling routes, reduced school zone congestion, and environmental protection

Mileage Club

- A fun way to track our students' bicycling and walking miles, and award incentivizing prizes to students as they achieve different mileage goals



Pedestrian and Bike Safety Education



Questions?

Cristina McKenney
Safe Routes To School
Program Coordinator
EAGLE College Prep
Elementary
Cristina.mckenney@eagle
prep.org
Cell: 602-387-0678



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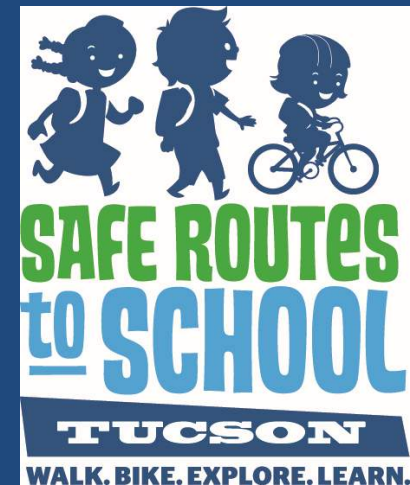
**Guest Speaker:
Sarah Prasek**



Safe Routes to School Tucson

Program of Living Streets Alliance in partnership with the City of Tucson

- Region-wide reach
- Two-pronged approach (pilot schools & regional outreach)



SRTS Pilot Schools

- Work closely with in-school SRTS champion(s)
- Develop travel plans; organize & assist with events/activities; kick-off WSB in November 2015.

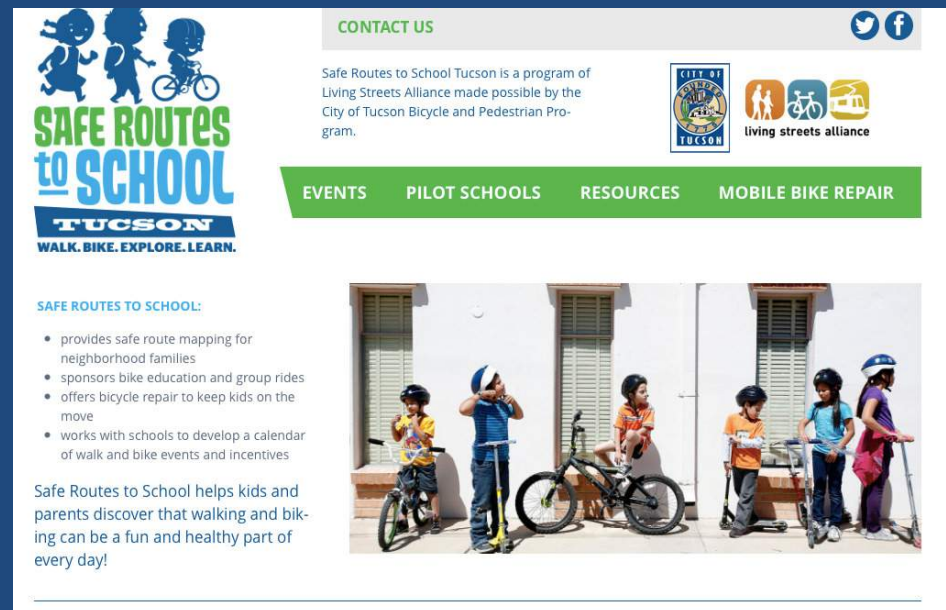


Regional Outreach

SRTS Tucson website

- Ready to use materials and instructions for SRTS activities, activity ideas, lesson plans
- SRTS Tucson event listings and registration

srtstucson.org



The screenshot shows the homepage of the SRTS Tucson website. At the top left is the logo for 'SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL TUCSON' with the tagline 'WALK. BIKE. EXPLORE. LEARN.' and an illustration of three children. To the right is a 'CONTACT US' section with social media icons for Twitter and Facebook. Below this is a paragraph explaining that SRTS Tucson is a program of the Living Streets Alliance, supported by the City of Tucson Bicycle and Pedestrian Program. Logos for the City of Tucson and the Living Streets Alliance are also present. A green navigation bar contains the following menu items: 'EVENTS', 'PILOT SCHOOLS', 'RESOURCES', and 'MOBILE BIKE REPAIR'. Below the navigation bar is a photograph of six children standing in front of a building, some with bicycles and scooters. To the left of the photo is a section titled 'SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL:' with a bulleted list of services: provides safe route mapping for neighborhood families, sponsors bike education and group rides, offers bicycle repair to keep kids on the move, and works with schools to develop a calendar of walk and bike events and incentives. Below the list is a short paragraph stating that SRTS Tucson helps kids and parents discover that walking and biking can be a fun and healthy part of every day.

Regional Outreach

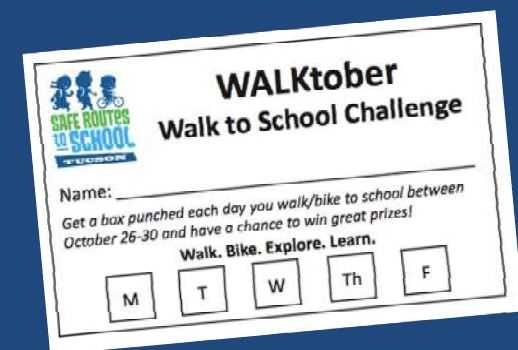
Region-Wide Events

- Kidical Mass bike rides
- WALKtober and ApROLL challenges



WALKtober and ApROLL Challenges

- Weeklong walk and bike to school challenges open to all schools in Tucson, surrounding jurisdictions, and Pima County
- Easy online registration
- Materials provided (posters, punch cards, parent flyers, prizes)
- School competition – winning schools win grand prizes



2015-2016 Challenges

Oct. 26-30, 2015



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL
TUCSON
WALK, BIKE, EXPLORE, LEARN

WALKTOBER

Walk to School Challenge

OCTOBER 26 - 30, 2015

Walk or bike to school and...
**GET STRONG,
BE GREEN, HAVE FUN,
WIN PRIZES!**




DURING THE LAST WEEK OF OCTOBER

1. WALK OR BIKE TO SCHOOL.
2. GET YOUR CARD PUNCHED EACH DAY.
3. TURN IN YOUR CARD ON FRIDAY.
4. WIN GREAT PRIZES!



TELL YOUR FRIENDS TO JOIN YOU.
If your school has the most walkers/bikers in the Tucson area, you will be entered into a drawing for a new bicycle, scooter, or other grand prize.



Apr. 11-15, 2016



SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL
TUCSON
WALK, BIKE, EXPLORE, LEARN

ApROLL

BIKE & WALK TO SCHOOL CHALLENGE

APRIL 11 - 15, 2016

Bike or walk to school and...
**GET STRONG,
BE GREEN, HAVE FUN,
WIN PRIZES!**




DURING THE SECOND WEEK OF APRIL

1. BIKE OR WALK TO SCHOOL.
2. GET YOUR CARD PUNCHED EACH DAY.
3. TURN IN YOUR CARD ON FRIDAY.
4. WIN GREAT PRIZES!



TELL YOUR FRIENDS TO JOIN YOU.
If your school has the most walkers/bikers in the Tucson area, you will be entered into a drawing for a new bicycle, scooter, or other grand prize.

Take Aways

- Find champion(s)
- Mix events and ongoing projects
- Make it fun; make it EASY!



www.saferoutestucson.org
www.facebook.com/SRTSTucson

sarah.prasek@livingstreetsalliance.org

DISCLAIMER

The information provided in this discussion is for informational purposes only, and does not constitute legal advice. ChangeLab Solutions does not enter into attorney-client relationships.

ChangeLab Solutions is a non-partisan, nonprofit organization that educates and informs the public through objective, non-partisan analysis, study, and/or research. The primary purpose of this discussion is to address legal and/or policy options to improve public health. There is no intent to reflect a view on specific legislation.

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QUESTIONS?




WHERE TO START

- Outreach & Education
- Raise Awareness: What is active transportation? Why is it important?
- Identify Key Stakeholders
- Work with Existing Relationships



WHO TO ENGAGE

- 
- **Identify & Engage** community-based organizations working on biking and walking issues (e.g. bike coalition)
 - **Identify & Engage** person responsible for transportation at the school/district (e.g. Assistant Superintendent of Personnel, Principal, or other employee)

SAFE SCHOOL ZONE POLICIES



SAFE SCHOOL ZONE POLICIES



Reduce **speed limits** near schools

SAFE SCHOOL ZONE POLICIES



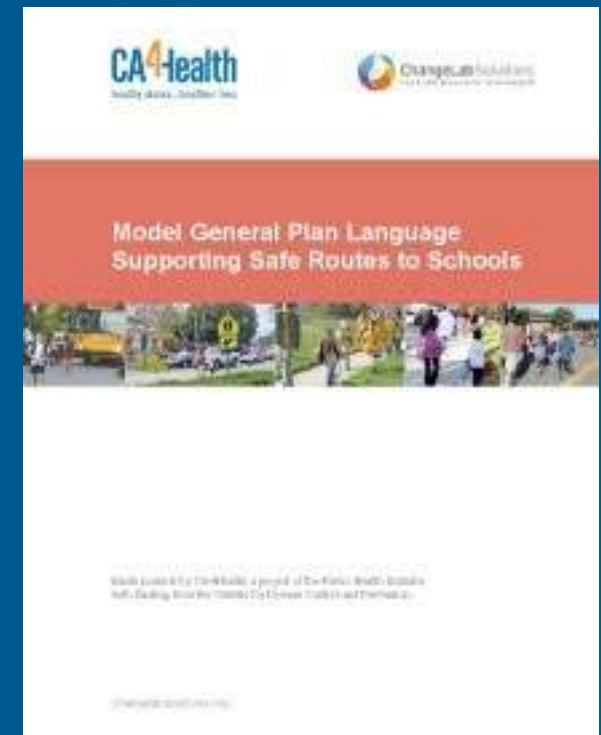
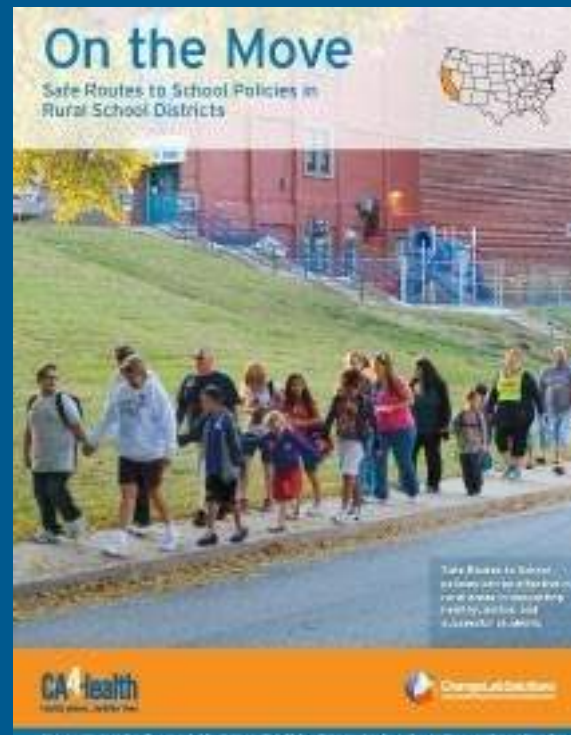
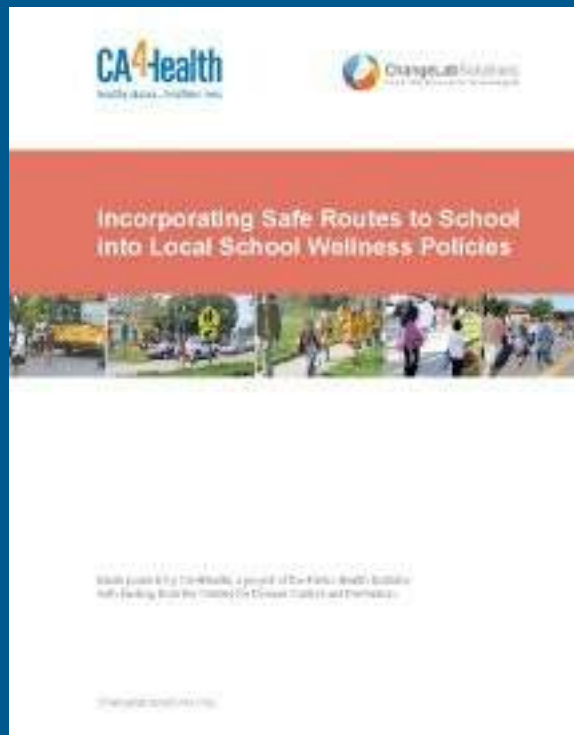
Prioritize **biking and walking infrastructure** near schools



Bike parking
policies support Safe
Routes to School

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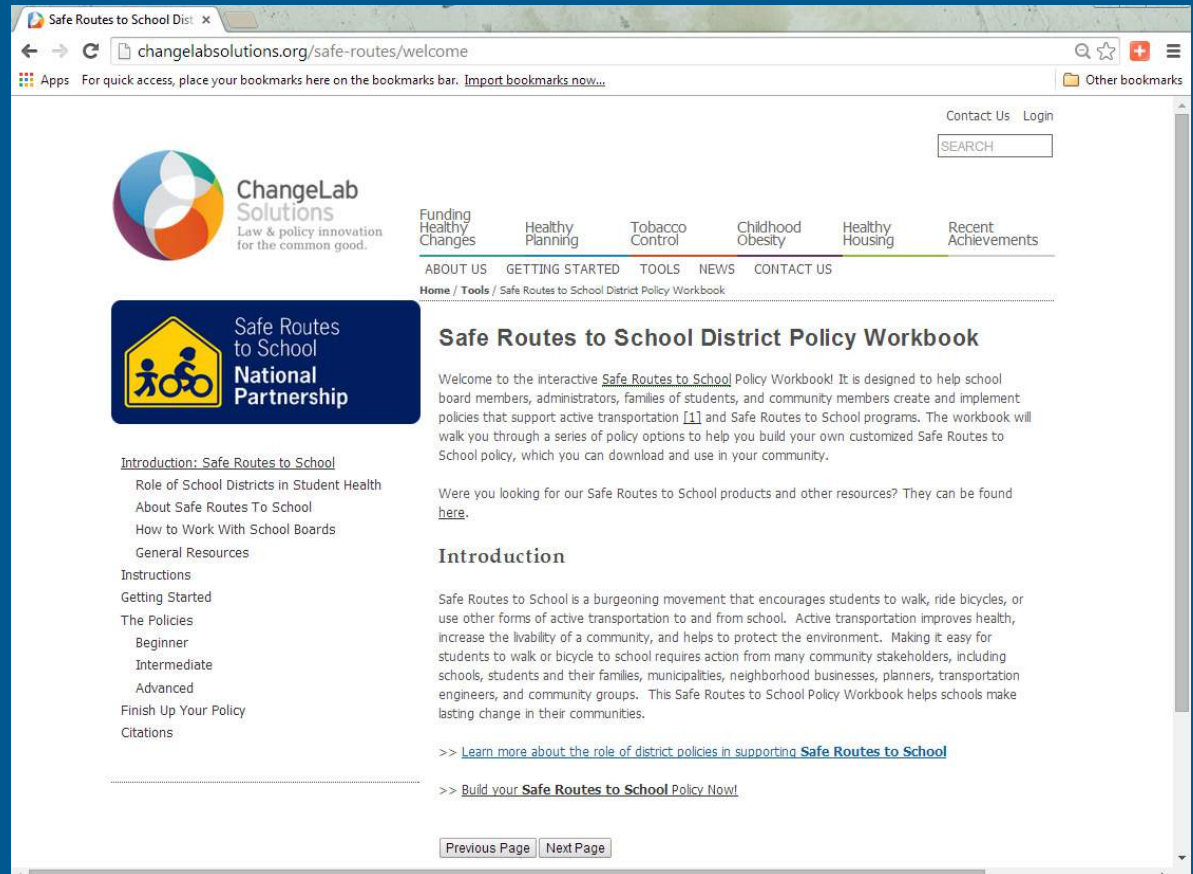
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



www.changelabsolutions.org

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SRTS District Policy Workbook:



The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the ChangeLab Solutions website. The URL in the address bar is changelabsolutions.org/safe-routes/welcome. The page features the ChangeLab Solutions logo and navigation links for various topics: Funding Healthy Changes, Healthy Planning, Tobacco Control, Childhood Obesity, Healthy Housing, and Recent Achievements. A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area is titled "Safe Routes to School District Policy Workbook" and includes a welcome message, a list of resources, and navigation buttons for "Previous Page" and "Next Page".

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Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Safe Routes to School District Policy Workbook

Welcome to the interactive [Safe Routes to School](#) Policy Workbook! It is designed to help school board members, administrators, families of students, and community members create and implement policies that support active transportation [1] and Safe Routes to School programs. The workbook will walk you through a series of policy options to help you build your own customized Safe Routes to School policy, which you can download and use in your community.

Were you looking for our Safe Routes to School products and other resources? They can be found [here](#).

Introduction

Safe Routes to School is a burgeoning movement that encourages students to walk, ride bicycles, or use other forms of active transportation to and from school. Active transportation improves health, increase the livability of a community, and helps to protect the environment. Making it easy for students to walk or bicycle to school requires action from many community stakeholders, including schools, students and their families, municipalities, neighborhood businesses, planners, transportation engineers, and community groups. This Safe Routes to School Policy Workbook helps schools make lasting change in their communities.

>> [Learn more about the role of district policies in supporting Safe Routes to School](#)

>> [Build your Safe Routes to School Policy Now!](#)


[Previous Page](#) [Next Page](#)

www.changelabsolutions.org/safe-routes/welcome

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FACT SHEETS

changelabsolutions.org | nplan.org July 2010



Safe Routes to School: Minimizing Your Liability Risk

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs can help reduce schools' risk of liability while making it safer for students to walk or bike. This fact sheet explains why liability fears shouldn't keep schools from supporting SRTS programs, and offers practical tips for schools and community advocates.


Some schools have been reluctant to support Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs due to concerns about being sued if an injury or problem arises. But such fears are largely unwarranted. By acting responsibly and understanding the liability issues in question, schools, nonprofits, and parent groups can help students reap the health and academic benefits of SRTS programs while minimizing the risk of a lawsuit. In fact, well-run SRTS programs can even reduce schools' risk of liability by identifying potential dangers and putting measures in place to protect children against injury.

Because nonprofits, parent groups, and schools may all be involved in SRTS programs, it can be important for each of these groups to understand SRTS and liability. This fact sheet explains why liability fears shouldn't stop school districts from supporting SRTS programs, provides an overview of liability and negligence, and offers practical tips on how school districts and others can reduce their risk of liability.

Because liability issues vary from state to state, consulting with a local lawyer may be helpful in understanding your specific issues, as well as in structuring SRTS programs to minimize liability concerns.

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Volunteers and Liability The Federal Volunteer Protection Act

People who volunteer for a nonprofit or school may be concerned about a lawsuit if an injury occurs. This fact sheet provides an overview of legal protections designed to shield volunteers from liability.


Volunteers are crucial to the fight against childhood obesity—leading kids in physical activity through Safe Routes to School programs and after-school activities, teaching cooking and gardening classes, and encouraging healthy lifestyles through many other programs. Volunteers often make it possible for financially stretched schools, nonprofits, cities, and counties to do more to create healthy communities and help children lead healthier lives.

But people sometimes worry that they could be at risk of liability if an injury occurs while they are volunteering. Fortunately, a federal law—the Volunteer Protection Act—provides volunteers with significant protections from liability associated with volunteer activity¹ in every state but one.² Some states also have laws that provide additional protections for volunteers.

The Volunteer Protection Act protects volunteers under many circumstances, although it does not eliminate the possibility of a lawsuit. It does not shield the nonprofit or governmental agency using the volunteer's services from liability; it only protects the volunteers themselves.

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changelabsolutions.org | nplan.org March 2012



Smart School Siting How School Locations Can Make Students Healthier and Communities Stronger

Locating schools within communities can mean healthier students by making it easier for students to walk and bike to school, and to use school playgrounds and facilities outside of school hours.

Forty years ago, nearly half of all students walked or biked to school.¹ Now, only 13 percent do.² Why this change?

The biggest reason is because today's schools are located too far from children's homes for walking or biking to be practical.³ In recent decades, due to a variety of pressures, schools have increasingly been built on the outskirts of communities.⁴ As a result, two-thirds of schools are now located far from where children live.⁵ Meanwhile, obesity rates for children and adolescents have more than tripled,⁶ and nearly a third of children are overweight or obese.⁷

But locating schools *within* communities can mean healthier students by making it easier for students to walk and bike to school, and to use school playgrounds and facilities outside of school hours. Districts can promote healthy school siting by locating schools near where students live, whether by retaining centrally located schools or by building new schools within communities instead of on their outskirts.

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More fact sheets

Crossing with Confidence

Managing Risk When Creating
Crossing Guard Programs in California



With careful planning and implementation, schools, cities, and counties can reduce their risk of liability when creating and operating crossing guard programs.

CA4health
healthy places...healthier lives

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Made possible by CA4Health, a project of the Public Health Institute, with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Get Out & Get Moving

Opportunities to Walk to School through
Remote Drop-Off Programs



Understanding the legal implications of implementing a remote drop-off program can help school districts, parents, and active transportation advocates determine whether a remote drop-off program is appropriate for their community.

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OTHER RESOURCES

The screenshot shows the ChangeLab Solutions website. At the top right, there are links for 'Contact Us' and 'Login', and a search bar. The main navigation menu includes 'Healthy Planning', 'Tobacco Control', 'Childhood Obesity', 'Healthy Housing', and 'Recent Achievements'. Below the navigation, there are links for 'ABOUT NPLAN', 'CHILDHOOD OBESITY NEWS TOOLS', and 'ASK US'. The breadcrumb trail reads 'Home / Tools / Safe Routes to Schools'. The main heading is 'Safe Routes to Schools'. Underneath, there is a 'CONNECT WITH US' section with social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Tumblr, and a 'Give Now' button. The main content area starts with a paragraph about walking or bicycling to school. Below that is a section titled 'Safe Routes to Schools' with a sub-heading 'Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs encourage children and their families to walk or bike to school by sponsoring walk-to-school days and organizing "walking school buses" in which children and families walk to school as a group. We work with advocates, school officials, and others to provide legal information that addresses common barriers to SRTS.' This is followed by a link to 'model SRTS policies'. A 'Related Publications' section lists two articles: 'Backing Off Bike Bans' and 'Creating Pedestrian-Friendly Streets'. The 'Backing Off Bike Bans' article includes a thumbnail image of children walking to school. The 'Creating Pedestrian-Friendly Streets' article includes a thumbnail image of a group of people walking on a sidewalk. At the bottom of the page, there is a section titled 'Let's Walk to School!' with a thumbnail image of children walking to school.

Contact Us Login

SEARCH

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Healthy Planning Tobacco Control **Childhood Obesity** Healthy Housing Recent Achievements






ABOUT NPLAN CHILDHOOD OBESITY NEWS TOOLS ASK US

Home / Tools / Safe Routes to Schools

Safe Routes to Schools

CONNECT WITH US

Get the latest news, join discussions on public health issues, show us change in your community, or make a donation.


By walking or bicycling to school, children can easily incorporate exercise into their day and increase their overall physical activity. But the percent of children walking or riding bicycles to school has dropped dramatically over the past four decades.


Safe Routes to Schools


Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs encourage children and their families to walk or bike to school by sponsoring walk-to-school days and organizing "walking school buses" in which children and families walk to school as a group. We work with advocates, school officials, and others to provide legal information that addresses common barriers to SRTS.

See below to review our list of publications related to SRTS. Be sure to check our [model SRTS policies](#).

Related Publications

 **Backing Off Bike Bans**
Most school districts around the nation recognize that whether children are allowed to bike to school is a family choice. But in a few districts, school officials take one look at morning...

 **Creating Pedestrian-Friendly Streets**
How can we make streets more walkable? And how can communities address legal issues that may emerge, especially around liability?
On September 22, we hosted a webinar on key practical and...

 **Let's Walk to School!**
In 1969, approximately 50% of children walked or bicycled to school, including almost 90% of children living within one mile of school. Today, fewer than 15% of schoolchildren walk or bicycle to...

<http://changelabsolutions.org/childhood-obesity/safe-routes-schools>

ChangeLab Solutions

Thank you!

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aetow@changelabsolutions.org



Join us in the national public health conversation!
Twitter: **@ChangeLabWorks**
Facebook: **ChangeLab Solutions**