

# Neighborhood Walk and Bike Activities

## Overview

Walking, running, and bike riding are all great activities to get moving while connecting with neighbors. Get outside to explore the neighborhood with your neighbors with a weekly/biweekly neighborhood walk or bike ride. Not only are neighborhood walk and bike activities enjoyable for children, but they also allow parents to connect one another, building a more supportive community.

## Take Action

### Why Walk and Bike?

Research shows that just 30 minutes of walking per day can reduce one's risk of heart disease, diabetes, and other heart and lung-related diseases (Better Health). Not only does walking and biking benefit our health, but it also benefits our environment. By reducing our time spent

driving, we are reducing our carbon emissions and helping our neighborhood to be a greener (and healthier) place.

Walking Programs can range anywhere from taking a daily walk to a park with friends and family to walking a specific route around the neighborhood every Saturday morning.

Walking is a simple exercise that anyone can participate in and the best part - it's free! While other sports and activities may require special equipment, walking requires little to no equipment and can be adapted to fit various environments and modified needs.



Biking Programs are a great way to get active outdoors and go further distances, such as the grocery store or a favorite local shop. Neighborhood biking programs can include activities such as a weekly neighborhood bike parade or riding bikes as a family to pick up a few groceries at a local store.

## **Equipment**

Use the checklists below to assure that you and your family and friends have everything they need to participate in safe and adventurous walking and biking neighborhood outings:

### **Bike Equipment for Safety and Adventure**

- Appropriately sized helmets
- Appropriately sized bikes, scooters, rollerblades, etc.
- Responsible adults for supervision
- Safe pathways away from busy traffic and other hazards

### **Walking Equipment for Safety and Adventure**

- Safe and comfortable walking shoes
- Responsible adults for supervision
- Safe pathways away from busy traffic and other hazards

The great thing about neighborhood walking activities is that they require little to no equipment and are accessible for many.

## **Safety**

Take what we know about the Five E's of Safe Routes to School Programs and expand to apply them to your neighborhood walk and bike activities. The Five E's of Safe Routes to School include: Education, Encouragement, Engineering, Enforcement, and Evaluation.

- **Education** - to teach pedestrian and bicycle safety
  - Host a neighborhood bike safety night at your local park and teach children and their families the importance of driving slowly through

neighborhoods, use of appropriate equipment, and how to safely share the roads and sidewalks with other commuters.

- **Encouragement** - to promote active transportation through events, such as walk and bike to school days
  - Organize a walk or bike to school day once every few months or create a summer walk/bike train to a local park.
- **Engineering** - to improve the built environment to be more conducive for walking and biking
  - Attend a town hall meeting or address a letter to your local representative discussing why your neighborhood requires updated walkways or sidewalks for safe walking and biking programs.
- **Enforcement** - to improve safety through partnership with law enforcement
  - Contact your local law enforcement office or community representative and share your plans with them or invite them to participate in your next walk or bike program! Forming a relationship with local law enforcement is a great way to get the entire community involved while ensuring safety in your neighborhood.
- **Evaluation** - to assess, plan and implement programs that will improve participation and safety
  - Ask for feedback from neighbors and family members after each event. What was their favorite part about the event? What could they do differently next time?

Neighborhood Walk and Bike activities may look more flexible and less structured, but the Five E's of Safe Routes are still important aspects of assuring that you and your children are staying safe and healthy.

### **Get Creative with Various Activities**

- Create a schedule of weekly or monthly family and friend neighborhood outings to the nearby park. Whether you and your neighbors commit to walking or biking together once a week or once a month, a schedule will help everyone to stay organized and committed to your program.
  - Use google calendars to send out email invites to your neighbors. If you want to avoid using email, create a schedule that people can print

out and hang on their refrigerators instead!

- Host an informal fun run/walk for a special occasion. Whether you are celebrating the Fourth of July, a birthday, or other special occasion, a fun run or walk can be a way to bring friends and family together to get active and form healthy relationships.
  - Create a course map that is clear and easy to understand. Ask other family members to use sidewalk chalk to mark the path around the neighborhood so no one gets lost. Have people stationed at various points along the course to guide people in the right direction (this would be a great job for your local law enforcement to get involved!)
- Organize a parade down the main drive of your neighborhood. Contact local law enforcement officials and other city representatives that could help block off a section of the neighborhood for a bike parade.
  - Expand your parade to include individuals from nearby neighborhoods. Be inclusive of various speeds and take it slow! Allow families to participate with scooters, rollerblades, bikes, and by foot.

### **Spread the Word and Connect with Neighbors**

- If you do not know many of your neighbors, no problem! Neighborhoods often have private organized Facebook or NextDoor pages where neighbors can connect. Try posting on one of these private social media websites asking about interest in forming a neighborhood walk or bike outing.
- Find a school staff member that may be able to help you connect to parents in your area.
- Start a Walk to School or Bike to School Initiative for fellow students that live in your neighborhood. Connect with parents to form a schedule, route, and safety norms for all to be safe and supportive throughout their journey to school.

## **Tips**



Gather your group of neighbors to designate a few safe routes to walk or bike. Make sure everyone



Plan a few walking paths that are wheelchair accessible. Invite neighbors and friends of all

agrees of which adults are

accessibilities to join in on the fun!

supervising and which routes they are taking. This will alleviate any stress or worry that parents may have allowing them to take turns staying home.



Choose a pace that works for everyone involved. Plan to have an adult at the front, middle, and end of the group, making sure all



Work with a local bike shop or a nearby Goodwill to see if bikes can be donated to neighbors that may not have their own bikes.

children are comfortable and accounted for.

For more activities and ideas like this one, be sure to [sign up for our news and updates](#). And if you like what you see, please [donate to support our work](#) creating more ways to help build a healthier future for kids.

## Additional Resources

[Walk & Bike to School \(Website\)](#)

[Bicycling to School Together, A Bike Train](#)

[Planning Guide](#)

[Bike Safety Tips in Spanish \(Safe Kids](#)

[Bike Safety Tips in English \(Safe Kids](#)

[Worldwide\)](#)

[Worldwide\)](#)

