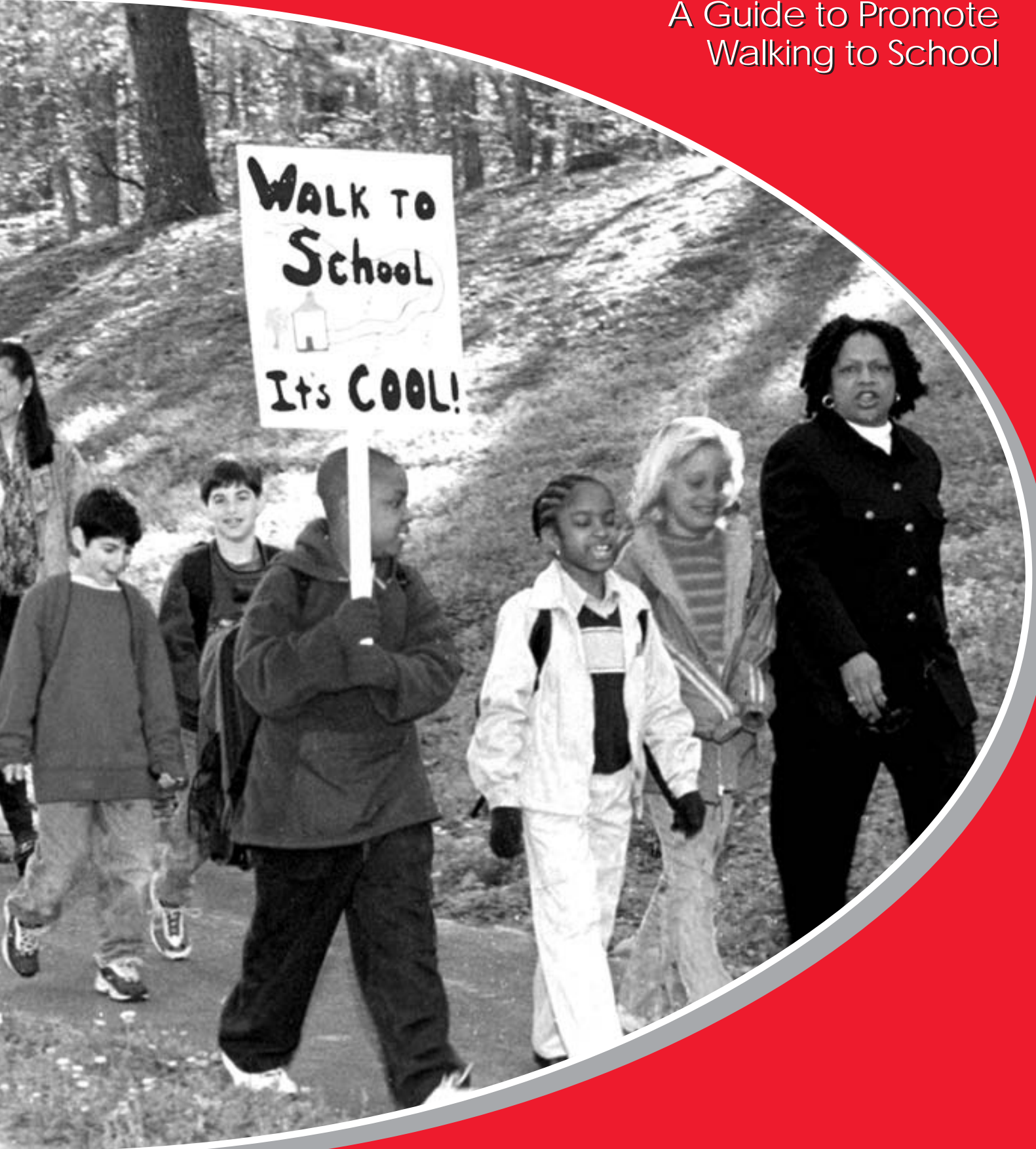


Kids walk-to-School

A Guide to Promote
Walking to School



Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



CHILDREN
WALKING
25
SLOW DOWN



KIDSWALK-TO-SCHOOL

**A Guide to Promote
Walking to School**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity

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For further information on walking to school contact the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mailstop K-46, 4770 Buford Highway, NE, Atlanta, Georgia, 30341-3717; www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk.htm

KIDSWALK-TO-SCHOOL

A Guide to Promote Walking to School

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KIDSWALK-TO-SCHOOL:

A Guide to Promote Walking to School

Remember when children walked and rode bicycles everywhere—to school, their friends' houses, the park, or the store—and parents seldom feared for their safety?

Being active and exploring their surroundings comes naturally to children. Unfortunately, young people today are not as free to walk and play outdoors because our neighborhoods are no longer kid-friendly. Many of our communities have been designed to be convenient for cars, not for children.

Children's freedom to explore their communities is greatly limited when walking is not safe or enjoyable. Today, only 13% of all trips to school are made by walking and bicycling. Of school trips one mile or less, a low 31% are made by walking; within two miles of school, 2% are made by bicycling. Sadly, this deprives our neighborhoods of the activity and laughter of children walking and bicycling to and from school together.



Is There a Solution?

Yes! KidsWalk-to-School is a program that aims to get children to walk and bicycle to and from school in groups accompanied by adults. This gives kids a chance to be more physically active, to practice safe pedestrian skills, and to learn more about their environment. At the same time, KidsWalk-to-School encourages people to change their neighborhoods for the better, working together, to make walking a safe and enjoyable part of everyone's lives.

Who Should Use KidsWalk-to-School?

KidsWalk-to-School is for anyone who wants to make traveling to and from school a safe, active, and enjoyable part of children's lives again. The program is great for neighborhoods that have an elementary school within walking distance—usually within a mile. But the KidsWalk-to-School program can also be adapted for children of all ages, those who live in neighborhoods further from the school and those in neighborhoods without safe routes to school.

Why Is It Important for Children to Walk to School?

Kids today don't have as many opportunities to be physically active as they once did. Most schools do not have physical education classes every day, and many elementary schools are removing recess from the daily schedule. At home, today's children have a wider variety of television programs and video games to entertain them. These realities are keeping kids from getting regular physical activity and may be contributing to a growing number of overweight children, which has increased by 63% over the past 30 years.

Here are some potential benefits to children who are physically active:

- Makes them more alert and helps them do better in school.
- Improves their self-image and independence.
- Contributes to a healthy social and emotional development.
- Increases likelihood that children will grow into adults who lead more active lifestyles, improving their chances for better health.

Is KidsWalk-to-School Just for Children?

No, participating in KidsWalk-to-School is good for the whole neighborhood, not just for children. Here are some of the benefits:

- Children and adults in the neighborhood get more physical activity.
- Fewer people driving means less traffic in and around homes and schools, therefore . . .
 - People walking in the community are safer, and
 - Exhaust from the cars is reduced.
- Crimes are less likely to happen when more people are outside keeping an eye on their neighborhood.
- Neighbors have more chances to get to know each other and become friends.

What Can You Do?

Get together with neighbors to bring back the days when children traveled safely through neighborhoods. Use the *KidsWalk-to-School* guide to help you develop a walk-to-school program that is right for your neighborhood. Get into action and walk with a child on the path to better health for you, your children, and your community!