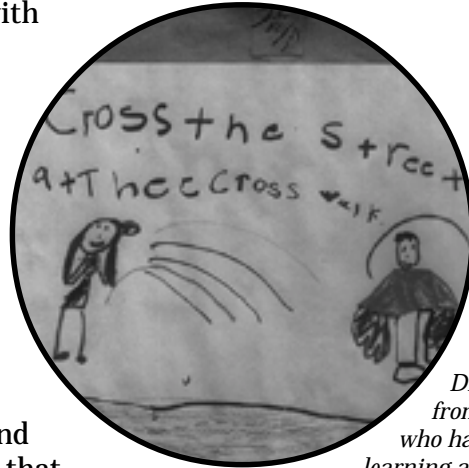


## SAFETY TIPS

Here are some simple rules to reinforce and practice with your children. Remember your child's limitations; children under 10 years of age are developmentally limited when it comes to judging speed and distance accurately, and very young children may not be able to read the street and pedestrian signs yet. It is important to know the abilities of your own child because all children develop uniquely.



*Drawing from a child who has been learning about pedestrian safety. Oakland, California*

### Walking Safety

Practice and remind children to

- Walk on the sidewalk. If there is no sidewalk and you have to walk in the road, face the traffic so that you can see cars coming and keep as far from the roadway (as far away from the traffic) as possible.
- Cross only at corners or marked crosswalks. (If there is a crosswalk button, press the button and wait for the walk sign to indicate that it is safe to cross.)
  - a. Stop at the curb or edge of the road, look left, then right, and then left again (left-right-left) before you step into the street. If a car is parked where you are crossing, make sure there is no driver in the car. Then go to the edge of the car and look left-right-left until no cars are coming. Keep looking for cars while you are crossing.
  - b. Walk, don't run. This gives time for drivers to see you before you enter the roadway.

### Bicycling Safety

Practice and remind children to

- Always wear a helmet that is properly fitted and complies with Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Standards.
- Ride on the right side of the road or trail in a single file (one bicycle behind another) in the same direction as other vehicles and come to a complete stop before crossing streets.
- Stop completely before crossing railroad tracks and go straight across the tracks slowly.
- Always use proper hand signals when turning and stopping.
- Be courteous to pedestrians.
- Use a bicycle bell to alert pedestrians that you are passing (this is effective for preventing crashes).

## School Bus Safety

Remind children:

- When the bus arrives, stand at least three giant steps (6 feet) away from the curb.
- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk on the sidewalk or along the side of the road until you are five giant steps (10 feet) ahead of the bus. Then you can cross the street.
- Be sure the bus driver can see you and you can see the bus driver.
- Never walk behind the bus.
- If you drop something near the bus, tell the bus driver. Never try to pick it up first because the driver may not be able to see you.

## Stranger Danger Safety

Remind children:

- Stay with a group.
- If a stranger offers you a ride, say “NO!”
- If a stranger follows you on foot, get away from him or her as quickly as you can. If a stranger follows you in a car, turn around and go the other direction.
- Never leave school with a stranger.
- Tell a trusted adult if a stranger is hanging around the school, playground, or public restroom.
- Leave items and clothing that display your name, so that a stranger can read it, at home.
- If you arrive home alone, call your mother, father, or other trusted adult to let them know you are home and all right. Keep the door locked, don't open the door for strangers, and don't tell strangers that you are home alone.
- Never accept things from a stranger.
- If a stranger asks you a question, don't talk. Run away.
- Don't go anywhere with a stranger.

Be sure every kid knows every adult helping with the program!



*A great resource for teaching and practicing safety with your children is the National SAFE KIDS campaign ([www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)). See Resources, p. 43.*

## **Traffic Calming: Make Your Community Safer and More Pedestrian Friendly**

What is traffic calming? Traffic calming is a way to make streets safer and more pedestrian friendly by changing their design in simple ways such as adding

- medians;
- raised or enhanced crosswalks;
- roundabouts or mini-circles;
- chicanes;
- curb extensions; and
- trees and other landscaping.

These physical changes to the roadway environment affect the driver's perception of the street and cause a positive change in behavior.

Because traffic-calming methods change existing street, sidewalk, bikeway, and intersection conditions, they must meet the safety and design standards of the local jurisdiction. For these measures to be installed, they must be reviewed and approved by the city planning or transportation office.

The approval process often involves a survey of residents who will be affected and an analysis of the project's effect on the nearby area. It is always helpful to seek assistance from city or county staff and from local elected officials who might have an interest in creating walkable communities. Don't expect your traffic-calming plan to be approved and installed quickly. The plan must compete with many other roadway needs in your community, and the entire process usually takes between one to three years to complete.

Other measures that you will want to consider to make your community more walkable, bikable, and livable include

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant design features;
- marked crosswalks;
- well designed curb ramps;
- street and sidewalk lighting improvements;
- pedestrian signal timing upgrades;
- neighborhood speed watch programs;
- additional or modified street signage; and
- traffic signal enhancements.

Be sure to consider the different solutions to your particular issue and choose the traffic-calming method that is most likely to have the intended effect. For example, the posting of a stop sign to calm traffic is not a preferred method. Stop signs tell motorists to stop at a specific point; however, as cars move away from the stop sign and the intersection they tend to accelerate faster to make up for lost time. Traffic engineers call this behavior "speed spiking" or simply driving at erratic speeds. Other methods to calm neighborhood traffic are

preferred. The ideal traffic calming solution would be to smooth out the speed instead of stopping it altogether. These methods reduce noise, lessen air pollution, and create more civil driving behavior.

What about the school zone? Traffic calming around the school zone will be vital to the success of the KidsWalk-to-School Program. A variety of roadway improvements may be necessary to enhance safety and mobility for children in school zones. The use of well-trained crossing guards has been found to be one of the most effective features for assisting children to cross streets safely. Local law enforcement may be necessary in situations where drivers are speeding or not yielding to children in crosswalks or when they are making turns. Other helpful measures include parking prohibitions at intersections near schools, speed tables near crosswalks, and flashing speed limit signs.

If the school is not on a principal roadway carrying more than 4,000 vehicles per day, appropriate traffic calming features should be used to hold traffic to less than 25 m.p.h. Primary traffic management guidelines include

- Separating the modes of transportation (cars, buses, and pedestrians).
- Keeping all turning movements in the school zone at low speeds.
- Placing cones on the center line of the street before and after school to slow traffic.
- Planting trees and other landscaping along the streets.
- Providing well-identified pedestrian crossings with flashing lights.
  - a. Use school crossing guards.
  - b. Give priority to pedestrians and bicyclists.
  - c. Do not allow motorists to cross main pedestrian routes.

For more information on traffic calming, contact Walkable Communities. (See Resources, p. 49.)