

# WALKSMART VERMONT!

Critical Content, Concepts, and Skills for Pedestrian Safety

## In-Field Guide



**A Curriculum Supplement**

Developed by  
**Center for Health and Learning**

in collaboration with Local Motion

**SafeRoutes**  
Vermont Safe Routes to School



CENTER FOR  
**Health & Learning**



Center for Health and Learning, under funding from the Vermont Department of Transportation and the U.S. federal program called Safe Routes to School, has developed two curricula for safety education in walking and bicycling intended to be used in elementary and middle school classrooms. They are *WalkSmart-BikeSmart Vermont!* and *BikeSmart-OnBike Vermont!* As a result of pilot testing and implementation of the curricula, additional tools were created to assist safety educators in the classroom and in outdoor instructional environments to allow easy access to the key concepts, lessons and skill building exercises. This in-field guide is intended to supplement, and not replace the full curricula.

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If you have questions or comments about this material, or would like more information on other health and safety related learning for Vermont and beyond, please contact Center for Health and Learning at (802) 254-6590 or [info@healthandlearning.org](mailto:info@healthandlearning.org).

# WALKING IN TRAFFIC

STATION

A

**You are a Pedestrian** • Where to Walk • Light & Bright • Be Alert

**Time:** 10-15 min  
( $\frac{1}{3}$  of class time)

**Setup:** ID area with needed features & secure with cones; if indoors, mark off “street” and “sidewalk” with blue tape

**Props:** Examples of bright vs. dark clothing; reflective vest, flashlight, and blinky light; iPod with headphones and/or cellphone; spray chalk or blue tape as needed

**Notes & Tips:** This module can easily turn into just talking at the kids, as it inherently has few opportunities for activities. Ask questions and involve them throughout.

NOTES

1

**Define  
“Pedestrian”**

- ★ Ask kids what a “pedestrian” is. Someone will eventually say, “A person who walks,” or something to that effect.
- ★ Ask them to raise their hands if they walk to school, to a friend’s house, to the park, around town. Have them keep their hands up, and keep asking until everyone’s hand is up.
- ★ Look around at all their raised hands. Tell them, “You are ALL pedestrians!”

2

**Intro  
Walk  
Smart**

- ★ Ask them why they walk:
  - a) To get exercise
  - b) To be with friends
  - c) To help the earth
  - d) Because it’s FUN!
- ★ Explain that drivers sometimes don’t follow the rules or are distracted. Tell them, “It’s YOUR job to stay safe while you’re walking!” Tell them, “Today, you are going to learn how to WALK SMART.”

# WALKING IN TRAFFIC *cont'd.*

STATION

A

You are a Pedestrian • ***Where to Walk*** • Light & Bright • Be Alert

NOTES

3

**Explain  
Where  
to Walk**

- ★ First choice is to walk on the SIDEWALK. Either side of the road is fine if they are on the sidewalk.
- ★ If there is no sidewalk, they should walk as far off to the edge of the road as possible. If they are walking on the edge of the road, they should walk FACING TRAFFIC.
- ★ Give them the visual of walking “face to face.” They should be able to see the faces (not the backs!) of the drivers in the lane next to them.

4

**Practice  
Where  
to Walk**

- ★ Divide kids into two groups. Have one group be the SIDEWALK group, and the other be the ROAD group.
- ★ First have the sidewalk group walk on the sidewalk. (If none is available, mark one with spray chalk or blue tape as appropriate.) Narrate what they’re doing as the other group watches. Note how they can be on either side of the street, how they can walk next to each other, and so on.
- ★ Then, with the sidewalk group watching, have the road group walk on the edge of the road. Again, narrate their progress, highlighting how they are walking on the left (“face to face”), how they are single file, and so on.
- ★ Gather them all back together. Ask what they need to watch out for when they’re walking. You’ll get all kinds of answers—dogs, potholes, mud, scary people—just acknowledge each and keep going. Tie it all together by telling them, “Walking Smart means paying attention to what’s going on!” Demonstrate exaggeratedly what paying attention looks like.

# WALKING IN TRAFFIC *cont'd.*

STATION

A

You are a Pedestrian • Where to Walk • ***Light & Bright • Be Alert***

NOTES

5

## Demo Appropriate Clothing

- ★ Ask what kinds of clothes can make you safer when you're walking. "Clothes that are light and bright—that is, clothes that can be seen from far away!" Show examples of clothes and have kids rank them by their appropriateness for walking.
- ★ If there is time, have kids line themselves up in order of "light and bright-ness." This will take some negotiation—let them work it out, as they will internalize the concept in the process.
- ★ Ask what else can help them be seen, especially when it's dark out. Show them a flashlight, a reflective vest, and a blinky light. If you are giving out blinky lights, now would be a great time to put one on each kid's pack.

5

## Discuss Traffic Noises

- ★ Set up a scenario for them: "You're walking down the road. Facing traffic. Light and bright, got your blinky going. Doin' it right—lit up like a Christmas tree so everybody can see you. Suddenly you hear tires on gravel. You look behind you, and see a car driving on the shoulder right towards you. What do you do?!?"
- ★ They will of course say, "GET OUT OF THE WAY!" You say, "Correct!" Then redo the scenario with headphones on, groovin' like an iPod commercial. Narrate the whole thing again, but make it clear you don't hear the noise—and don't get out of the way.
- ★ Ask them what kinds of traffic noises they need to be listening for: oncoming cars, trucks beeping, people hollering "Look out!" As they continue to list things, play the idiot with the headphones and mime tripping over things and getting hurt.

# CROSSING ROADS

STATION

**B**

**Edges** • L-R-L • Barriers • Straight Across • Intersections • Getting a Ball

**NOTES**

**Time:** 10-15 min  
( $\frac{1}{3}$  of class time)

**Setup:** ID area with needed features & secure with cones; if indoors, mark off “intersection” with blue tape

**Props:** A ball; a car parked next to the curb; spray chalk or blue tape as needed

**Notes & Tips:** Be sure to arrange in advance to have a car parked in an appropriate location for this station. It works well to use your own.

**1**

**Explain  
Edges**

- ★ Have all the kids line up on the sidewalk facing the street. Have them stand to one side of the car that you’ve parked by the curb. (If there is no sidewalk, make one with spray chalk; if indoors, lay out the street, sidewalk, and car with blue tape.) Ask them all to point to the edge of where they’re safe.
- ★ Most will point to the curb or the edge of the pavement. Explain that this is the **EDGE**: the place where you make a decision about whether it is safe to keep going.
- ★ Get down to their level and ask, “But can you see both ways?” They’ll say no, because the car is in the way. Lead them carefully out to the edge of the car and trace an imaginary line on the ground parallel to the car. Explain that this is the **SECOND EDGE**.
- ★ Ask them, “Is there **ALWAYS** a second edge?” Toss out a handful of scenarios and ask them with each if there is one edge or two:
  - a) Bike in the gutter (only one edge, because they can see over the bike)
  - b) Dumpster parked next to the curb (two edges, because they have to go to the edge of the dumpster to see past it)



# CROSSING ROADS *cont'd.*

STATION

**B**

Edges • *L-R-L* • Barriers • Straight Across • Intersections • Getting a Ball

NOTES

**2**

## Learn Left-Right- Left

- ★ Line the kids up next to each other on the sidewalk. Have them look left, then right, then left again. Call out which way to look, increasing the pace and mixing up the order. Have them practice this for a minute or so, until everyone can look the right way on command.
- ★ Explain that you always look left first because that is where the cars closest to you are coming from. Then you look right to check for cars coming from the other direction. Then you look left again to make sure a car didn't sneak up on you when you're looking right. Demonstrate all this in an over-the-top kind of way.
- ★ Call out "Left! Right! Left! — Left! Right! Left!" in military fashion, helping kids look in the appropriate direction as you call it out. Go slowly—at least 1 to 1½ seconds between each—so as not to force kids to look faster than they can actually see anything.

**3**

## Apply L-R-L to Edges

- ★ Explain that looking left-right-left is what you do at EDGES. Ask them to step forward to the edge. Make sure everyone steps to the curb. Now have them look left-right-left, talking them through each step. ("Okay, first look LEFT to check for cars in the lane that's closest to you. Then look right...")
- ★ Then ask them, "Are you done? Can you cross the street safely? NO!" Bring their attention back to the parked car and the SECOND EDGE. Explain that, now that they've looked L-R-L at the first edge, it's time to step out to the second edge and look L-R-L again. Have them all do it.
- ★ Have a kid who is on top of things demonstrate L-R-L at both edges at a normal pace. Praise and reinforce.

# CROSSING ROADS *cont'd.*

STATION

B

Edges • L-R-L • **Barriers** • Straight Across • Intersections • Getting a Ball

NOTES

4

## Discuss Barriers

- ★ Ask them what they should do if there's something in the way and they can't see left AND right. Someone will probably respond that you go out to where you can see (the second edge). Affirm that this is correct —IF the thing that is in the way gives them a safe place to stand (such as a parked car).
- ★ Help them understand what kinds of barriers do and don't form second edges that they can safely go out to:
  - a) Parked car (yes)
  - b) Untrimmed bushes (no)
  - c) Dumpster (yes)
  - d) Snowbanks (no)
- ★ Ask them what they think they should do with a barrier that they can't go out to. Lead them to the idea that, if they can't stand in a safe place and see both ways, they need to find another place to cross the street.
- ★ To underscore this point, lead them from where you've been discussing barriers to a crosswalk (either real or chalked/taped) a few feet away. You will want to position yourself strategically for this station so as to have a crosswalk right next to where you start.



# CROSSING ROADS *cont'd.*

STATION

**B**

Edges • L-R-L • Barriers • ***Straight Across*** • Intersections • Getting a Ball

NOTES

**5**

## Practice Crossing Straight

- ★ Line the kids up one behind the other at the crosswalk. Ask them if there is one edge or two. (Set it up so there is only one edge—i.e., so they can clearly see both ways.)
- ★ Explain the drill: each child will look left-right-left (saying it out loud) to make sure no cars are coming, then walk (NOT run!) across the road in a straight line. Give each a cue to start, and move them all across briskly (one student every five seconds or so). Cross them back if it looks like they could use more practice.
- ★ Once they're all gathered together again, reiterate the key points:
  - a) Look left-right-left before crossing
  - b) Walk, don't run (you could trip if you run)
  - c) Go straight across (a straight line is the shortest distance across)

# CROSSING ROADS *cont'd.*

STATION

B

Edges • L-R-L • Barriers • Straight Across • **Intersections** • Getting a Ball

NOTES

6

## Explain How to Navigate Intersections

- ★ Explain what an intersection is: a place where two roads come together. This makes intersections a little complicated—which means they are especially important places to Walk Smart!
- ★ Explain that the main thing to pay attention to at intersections is how many directions you have to look to be safe. You need to look in every direction that cars might be coming from, which might include looking BEHIND you.
- ★ Tell them that the first thing to look for at an intersection is a CROSSWALK. Emphasize that a crosswalk doesn't make them safe—they still have to Walk Smart—but it is the place where cars are most going to be looking for people in the street. Demo this as you talk, walking across the crosswalk and conspicuously looking both ways.
- ★ Ask what else you might find at an intersection. (Traffic signals.) If they don't get it, point upward or show a picture of a traffic light. Ask how they know if it's their turn to cross:
  - a) If there is a walk signal, they wait for the white walking light
  - b) If there is NO walk signal, they wait for the green traffic light
- ★ Emphasize that, as with "plain" crosswalks, the signals don't make them safe—they still have to Walk Smart. Cars that are making a turn might cross the crosswalk, or a car coming from the other direction might not see the red light and just drive right through. Always look left-right-left (and behind!) before crossing.

# CROSSING ROADS *cont'd.*

STATION

**B**

Edges • L-R-L • Barriers • Straight Across • Intersections • ***Getting a Ball***

NOTES

**7**

## **Demo Getting a Ball**

- ★ Ask the kids, “What happens to a ball that rolls out into the street and gets run over by a truck?” (It gets squashed!) “And what would happen to YOU if you ran after the ball? (I’d get squashed!) Ask which is worse — the ball getting squashed, or you...
- ★ Drive home the bottom line: you NEVER run out into the street after a ball, or a dog, or anything else. What do you do instead? You ask an adult for help!
- ★ Do a call-and-answer with a series of objects: “What do you do if a ball rolls out into the street?” (You ask an adult for help.) “What do you do if your bike rolls out into the street?” (You ask an adult for help.) Do this for four or five different things, having them shout out the answer each time.
- ★ While you’re doing this, casually roll a ball out into the street (assuming it is not a hazard to do so). Turn around and say, “Oh no—the ball rolled into the street! What should I do?” They will all shout the answer. Then you say in a very little-kid voice, “I need a grownup to help me!” They will all laugh like crazy...

# ON AND OFF...

STATION



**Getting in and out of a Car •** Getting on and off a Bus

**Time:** 10-15 min  
( $\frac{1}{3}$  of class time)

**Setup:** Car pulled up to curb; bus pulled up to curb; danger zone in front of bus marked with chalk

**Props:** Bus; car; chalk

**Notes & Tips:** It is extremely useful to have an actual bus for this station. If at all possible, arrange to have a bus left at the site for the duration of the training.

NOTES

1

## Explain Safe Car Exiting

- ★ First discuss how to get out of the car if you are dropped off at school. Assuming the training is occurring at the students' own school, ask one of them to describe where cars come from, how they approach the school, and where they drop kids off. Once you've gotten them to the point where the car is pulled up to the curb, ask them which side they should get out on. As you ask—"This side... or this side?"—pantomime getting out first on the street side and then on the curb side. Lead them all to the conclusion that the curb side is much safer.
- ★ Then tell them that the same thing applies if they're getting out of a car that's parked along the road—always get out on the side *AWAY* from the street.
- ★ Finally, briefly discuss getting out of the car in a parking lot. Explain that the difference between a street and a parking lot is that, in a parking lot, *BOTH* sides of the car can have traffic on them. So they should get out on the same side as the driver so they have an adult with them.

# ON AND OFF... *cont'd.*

STATION



Getting in and out of a Car • ***Getting on and off a Bus***

NOTES

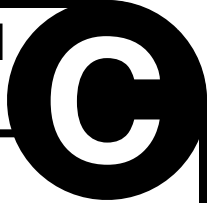
**2**

## **Explain Safe Bus Exiting**

- ★ Line all the students up as if they were about to get on the bus. Tell them they're all going to get on, but that, before they do, you need to show them the DANGER ZONE. Point to the area in front of the bus and ask why it is dangerous for them to be there. Make sure they get two key points about being in the danger zone:
  - a) You can't see around the bus
  - b) The bus driver can't see you
- ★ Explain the procedure if your house is on the SAME side of the street as where you get off the bus:
  - a) Get CLEAR of the doors
  - b) Walk straight to the EDGE of the road
- ★ Explain the procedure if your house is on the OTHER side of the street as where you get off the bus:
  - a) Step off the bus and take FIVE BIG STEPS toward the EDGE of the road
  - b) Turn LEFT and walk TEN BIG STEPS past the front of the bus
  - c) LOOK at the driver and wait for his signal to go
  - d) Walk past the front of the bus to the edge of the bus and look LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT and wait until it is safe to cross the road.
- ★ A couple of key safety tips to emphasize:
  - a) Always cross in FRONT of the bus
  - b) If you drop anything next to or in front of the bus, DON'T bend down to get it—tell the driver and ask for help

# ON AND OFF... *cont'd.*

STATION



Getting in and out of a Car • ***Getting on and off a Bus***

NOTES

**3**

## Practice Safe Bus Exiting

- ★ Have all the students get on the bus. If you have an adult who can act as an assistant, have them go into the “danger zone” and crouch down to child height. Let students take a look so they can see how a child in the danger zone is nearly invisible.
- ★ Give the students their instructions: after you get off the bus, they will file off one by one. You will tell them either “same side” or “cross the street,” and they will head out accordingly.
- ★ As students get off the bus, talk them through what they’re doing (especially the ones who are crossing the street). ***Be sure that the setup is completely safe for the kids who are crossing the street—i.e., that the area is cordoned off and there is no chance of traffic coming through.*** Hold them to the specific instructions you gave them—five steps out, ten steps up, wait for the driver, walk to the edge, look L-R-L, and cross.