

# How to Get Started:



*In 2006, when our kids were in kindergarten and 3rd grade we were contacted by a neighbor to get together at her house to discuss ways to get our kids to school together instead of us all driving them by ourselves. She had volunteered on a Safe Routes to Schools committee at our school to organize our neighborhood school pools. Three families agreed to bike once a week on Walk to School Day Wednesdays at the start. It worked so well that now we bike with them whenever we can if the weather permits. We don't use a formal system; we just call each other the night before or sometimes in the morning. And when we can't bike we set up carpools. My daughter has made a good friend we might not have met without the SchoolPool. My son now walks to the middle school and we all still bike with the younger kids to school whenever we can.*

– Sheri, Sycamore Park mom, Mill Valley

1. Kentfield School Districts has identified the families who live in your neighborhood. The district will help to send out the initial email to solicit interested parents and Street Coordinators within your area. The District will then supply you with a list of the parents who responded.
2. Host an initial gathering either in your home or another location within your neighborhood. People are more likely to attend if it is close and convenient.
  - Contact your interested parents to invite them through both email and with follow-up phone calls. The phone calls are particularly important – people are more likely to attend if you reach out to them personally. There will be some respondents who will offer to make phone calls or host a gathering at their house. Make use of these volunteers to help you to call the people on your list and invite them to the gathering.
  - This gathering will be both a social, so you can meet each other, and an opportunity to start getting organized.
  - If you know neighbors who have not yet responded who you think might be interested, invite them as well.
3. Start the gathering with informal social. Make sure there is food – you can make it a potluck, a tea gathering, or even a barbecue.
4. After the initial social interaction at the gathering, encourage people to sit down and introduce themselves, include their name, the ages of their children, where they live, and share how they are currently traveling to school, and what a greener mode might work for them.
5. Give a presentation on the SchoolPool program. Let them know the advantages and benefits of SchoolPooling. Explain how the program will work and how you will assist people. Give them guidance on rules and agreements. Ask for questions or discussion.
6. Divide your group up into smaller groups of families that live near each other. Identify the street coordinator for each of these clusters. Some of these clusters may be larger than others and some families may not have others within their clusters. Make sure everyone who is interested is assigned to a cluster so they can get started. Have each cluster create a contact list. (*Note: if your initial meeting is too small to divide into networks, then develop a plan for those present and then promote it to grow your neighborhood network*).
7. Provide your Street Coordinator with guidance on forming their SchoolPool Network (see handout).