

Title: Family Mouse Behind the Wheel

Grade level: 1 and 2



**SAFE ROUTES
TO SCHOOLS**

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Introduction

This activity for grades 1 & 2 is literature based. It is a read-aloud of *Family Mouse Behind the Wheel* by Wolfgang Zuckermann.

The story involves a family of mice who want to visit their grandmother so they buy a car to get there. However, there are no roads on which to drive the car, so they build a road. One thing leads to another and pretty soon the whole forest is gone. The family learns their lesson and moves to a new tree and leaves their car behind.

Objective

The story shows students how our transportation choices affect our natural environment and our physical health. It provides an example of the power of community involvement to address the dangers of over development.

Set Up

Use the classroom's read-aloud corner, carpet, or circle meeting area.

Materials

A copy of *Family Mouse Behind the Wheel* by Wolfgang Zuckermann (out of print).

Preparation

Note: This course can only be taught by Marin County Safe Routes to Schools instructors as the book is out of print

Discussion:

1. Discussion: Introduce Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S)

SR2S is a program that teaches kids the importance of walking and bicycling as a way to get around. SR2S programs work to increase safety by teaching kids walking and bicycling skills and etiquette.

Discuss The Four Fantastic Reasons to bike and walk to get around. (Ask students to provide reasons if they have previously discussed them or have ideas.) When walking and biking, we're:

- cutting down on pollution
- getting good exercise
- cutting down on traffic
- having fun!

2. Survey: Who already walks or bikes to school?

Conduct a brief oral survey. Ask students to raise hands if they sometimes bicycle, walk, skate, scooter or carpool to school.

3. Read Aloud: *Family Mouse Behind the Wheel*

4. Discussion: Pollution

Hold an interactive discussion about different forms of pollution. Cover these questions:

- What is pollution? (litter on the ground, garbage floating in the water, the black stuff we see coming out of the backs of cars and the tops of smoke stacks and chimneys)
- What happened in the forest, when the animals all started to drive?
- Could this happen where you live?
- Can we just keep moving to new places? Will we eventually run out of space?
- What can we do to keep the place we live clean and healthy? (walking and biking, picking up litter, recycling...)
- If it's too far to walk or ride, what's better than driving in the car alone? (trains, carpools, ferries, buses)

5. Assessment: Closing discussion

Ask the class whose responsibility it is to make sure that we don't build too many roads and parking lots, killing all the trees and polluting the air. (All answers, such as Parents, Park Rangers, the President, etc., are correct; the answer we need is "us.")