



**SAFE ROUTES
TO SCHOOLS**

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The Signs of Safety

Grade level: 3 through 5 (can be modified to accommodate younger/older students, see variations)

Introduction: This discussion and art activity will prepare students for International Walk to School Day.

Objective: In this lesson students will review the Six Simple Steps to Staying Safe and make signs and banners to improve visibility on International Walk to School Day.

Set Up: Our suggestion is to have the activity set up in one area and to have the introductory discussion away from the materials in order to avoid distraction. We suggest the painting be done outside.

Materials

for hand held “picket” style signs:

blank sign faces (approximately 2ft x 2ft)

white cardboard

heavy posterboard

cardboard covered in paper or painted white

Sign handles (1x1 pine, 2 feet in length)

carpet tacks

hammer

Tempra paint (bright colors)

brushes

containers for mixing paint

containers for water

tarp to cover the floor

newspaper to cover the tables

tape

streamers to decorate the signs

cleaning supplies

additional materials for large banners:

large pieces of cardboard (as big as possible)

or plywood, white sheets (cheap at thrift stores) or canvas

White paint or paper to cover the cardboard or plywood

means for securing banners (can be hung from a fence, attached to poles, tied to saw horses, mounted on wood etc.)

Preparation:

Cardboard pieces for small signs will need to be cut from larger pieces of cardboard (available for free at recycling centers) If time does not permit making a blank sign for each child this works well as an activity for partners, banners can be made by small groups.

The cardboard can then be painted white (paint may also be available free from the recycling center) or covered in paper (colored or white butcher)

Mix paints and set up working area.

Discussion: Introduce the lesson and activity by asking the students if they know about International Walk (and Ride) to School Day, ask for a show of hands. Have one student explain what IW2SD is about. Check for understanding of the word international. Explain that on October 2nd kids all over the world will walk and ride to school to show that we can get around without cars.

Further explanation and instructions may be necessary, particularly for first and second graders. Tell students that a note will be going home to their parents, inviting them to join us for IW2SD, and if they have any questions they should ask their parents. (We want kids asking their parents about IW2SD because many parents are not aware of the event and their child's question will require that they investigate.)

Ask the students if they know the Six Simple Steps to Staying Safe.

Prompt them to provide these answers:

- 1) When walking or biking, stop at every curb or edge.
- 2) Always STOP< LOOK AND LISTEN, especially while crossing.
Look left, look right, then left again, before stepping past any curb driveway or edge.
- 3) Always wear a helmet when riding a bike.
- 4) Always ride in the same direction as traffic.
- 5) Learn all traffic signs and signals
- 6) Look for the safest place to cross the street. Use crosswalks. crossing signals (lights) and crossing guards.

Instruction: Explain that we will be making signs to carry on IW2SD (students can also make signs to mount on their bikes) and signs to place at staging areas and in front of school. These signs will make us easier to see and will send a message to people in cars.

Review the rules for using paints.

Ask the students what some messages they would like to send to car drivers would be. (slow down, kids are walking here, hang up and drive!, share the road, etc.)

Some words and phrases can be put on the board to be copied. Symbols and pictures are great.

As children finish their signs they can bring them to an adult who will nail the sign to the handle.

Tell them that any child that tries to use their sign for sword-play will have their sign confiscated.

Variations:

If your school has a buddy program this is a great activity for older students to do with first and second graders.

One way to structure the activity is to have older students write out messages on banners in big (1 or 2 ft high) bubble letters and then let the first and second graders fill in the letters and paint around them.

Your school can decide whether to send the signs home with kids or collect them and distribute them at staging areas on IW2SD. Children tend to forget to bring them back and do not usually care if they are carrying their own sign. We have found that collecting the signs at the end of the event and using them again at future W2Sdays works very well.

Assessment: Did students know the six simple steps to staying safe? Did they make signs with relevant messages and pictures?

Closing: Thank the students for their hard work and ask them to talk to their friends and families about forming groups for International Walk (and Ride) to School Day!



Sample Safety Signs Script (lower grades)

Find out in advance:

- 1) *did they have Safe Routes last year?*
- 2) *did they have an assembly yet this year?*
- 3) *how much time do you have exactly?*
- 4) *will the teacher and/or aid be present and/or available to help?*

Good morning, my name is _____ and I work with Safe Routes to Schools. Today we're going to talk about walking and biking to school and how to do it safely.

I am going to ask you to raise your hands, not to call out if you have a question or a comment, I will call on people who are being quiet and raising their hands. If everybody pays attention then we will have time to do a special art project but first we need to have a serious talk about safety.

Raise your hand if you walked or rode your bike (or your scooter, your skateboard or rollerblades, *depending on what the school allows*) to school today.

Super!

Raise your hand if you sometimes walk or ride.

Excellent!

Raise your hand if you wish you could walk or ride to school?

All right!

Safe routes to School is all about helping you walk and ride to school safely.

Raise your hand if you ride in a carpool (or take the bus, *if your school has a bus*).

Does everybody know what a carpool is? raise your hands if you know what a carpool is. Can someone explain what a carpool is? **Ask a student.** Clarify that a carpool is two families sharing a ride to school, and that's a good idea because it cuts down on the number of people driving.

Did you have Safe Routes to School last year?

Do you remember/know why it's important to walk and ride sometimes instead of always driving?

Safe Routes to School has Four Fantastic reasons to walk and ride, who can tell me one? **Ask a student.**

Call on kids until they give these answers:

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

OK, you guys know why we want to walk and ride, but do you know how to do it right?

We're going to play a little game to test what you know about street safety.

Have you seen this? It was sent home to every body. (hold up the Six Simple Steps flyer)

If you have read this, or your mom or your dad read it to you, you should know the Six Simple Steps to Staying Safe on the Streets.

The class gets a point for every correct answer and when the class gets to six points we'll do some art!

Question #1: What do you do when you get to the curb or the edge of the street?

A) When walking, stop at every curb or edge.

Question #2: What two things do you do before you cross the street?

A) Always be looking and listening, especially while crossing. Look left, look right, then left again, before stepping past any curb or edge.

Question #3: What do you wear every time you ride a bike?

A) Always wear a helmet when riding a bike.

Question #4: When your riding a bike, do you ride in the same direction as the cars or do you ride facing the cars?

A) Always ride in the same direction as traffic.

Question #5: Stop signs, stop lights, cross walk signals, there's all kind of signs out on the street, why do we have to know what they mean?

A) The signs are there to make things fair. The signs say who's turn it is to go, so we're not all trying to go at once and running into one another. You have to know what signs say. When walking or riding, follow all traffic signs and signals.

Question #6: When you're on your bike and you're pulling out of your driveway, what do you do before you turn into the street?

A) When riding, always stop, look left, look right, then left again before pulling out of a driveway.

#6 is different for grades 1 and 2,

Question: Where are you allowed to ride?

A) Answers will vary. Prompt by asking: Are you allowed to ride to school by yourself? Are you allowed to ride over the Golden Gate Bridge? Are you allowed to ride in your back yard? In your driveway? The point is, know where you are allowed to ride, don't go anywhere you're not supposed to.

(bonus ?: before you go out to play, who do you tell where you are going?
A: Always tell your adult where you are.)