

Fall is approaching, and with it comes shorter days and the start of the school year. Road travel increases and traffic patterns shift, so this busy time of year can also be a dangerous one—especially for children.

Fewer daylight hours can make it harder for motorists to see young students. More school-age pedestrians have been killed between the hours of 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. and between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. than any other times of day.

Whether walking, riding a bicycle, or catching a school bus or public transportation to travel to and from school, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is reminding parents and students of safe transportation practices to ensure that kids arrive to and from school safely.

**School Bus:** School buses are the safest mode of transportation for getting children back and forth to school. Even so, kids need to be especially careful around the school bus "danger zone" - 10 feet in front, 10 feet behind, and on each side of the bus. Kids should:

Wait five giant steps from the road and when the school bus arrives, wait until the driver says to board.

When boarding the school bus, quickly find a seat, sit facing the front and do what the school bus driver says to do.

When exiting the bus, look out for cars. When off of the bus, take five giant steps from the school bus.

Look left-right-left to make sure no cars are coming and wait for the driver to signal it is safe to cross.

**Walking:** Pedestrians 10 years old and younger should be accompanied by an adult or young adult on their way to and from school.

Kids should:

Walk on the sidewalk, and if there is none, walk facing traffic.

Not push or shove others when you walk.

When crossing the street, look left-right-left for cars. Do not cross if a car is coming and use a crosswalk if available.

**Biking:** The two best protections when biking to and from school are a properly fitted bicycle helmet and a good grasp of traffic safety rules. Kids should:

Always wear a helmet and make sure to buckle the chin strap.

Ride along streets with low traffic volume and at lower speeds.

Always ride in the same direction as traffic, and stop at all signs and signals.

Never use headphones or cell phones when driving.

**Car:** Children should always ride in the back seat. Children in the front seat are 40 percent more likely to be injured in crashes.

One last tip: Whether walking, biking or driving, stay completely focused on the road and put your cell phone away.