



How to Start a Walking School Bus or Bicycle Train

What are walking school buses and bicycle trains?

A **walking school bus** or **bicycle train** is a group of children walking or biking to school under the supervision of at least one adult. It's like a carpool- without the car. It can be as basic as a couple of families taking turns walking their children to school or it can be a very organized, structured route with several meeting points and a set timeline.



Why start a walking school bus or bicycle train?

- Fewer children are walking or biking to school than ever before.
- Childhood obesity is becoming an increasingly serious health issue in the United States.
- You can spend more quality time with your children, and model positive behavior while exercising.
- Groups walking or biking together mean safety in numbers.
- You can **save time**, especially when parents in your group take turns walking or biking with the students.
- Studies show that children who walk or bike to school perform better academically and behaviorally.
- You can save money on gas.

How do I start a walking school bus or bicycle train?

Start small and simple! Begin in your neighborhood, invite another family to alternate days or ask around the block for other interested families. Try following these steps:

1. See if your school already has a Safe Routes to School map to consult for a route.
2. Pick a route and take a test walk on a weekend when you can take your time. The route can pick children up at their homes, or can meet at designated "bus stops" along the way.
3. Invite families who live nearby to walk or bike.
4. Decide how often the group will meet and designate days for specific parents to supervise.
5. Have fun!

Growing your walking school bus or bicycle train

- Conduct a walking audit of your neighborhood. If you find an area of particular concern, talk to your school district or city planners to see how to improve the area.
- Involve local law enforcement or the school resource officer. Inform them of your efforts to get more people walking and biking and they may be able to assist.
- Work with your school district's transportation department to establish a bus drop-off program. The bus will drop students at a specific spot near school and met by staff or volunteers so that they can walk to school.

