

**Help kids get an education this year.
Get them to and from school safely.**

(Burnaby, BC) We teach our kids to look both ways before crossing the street, but on the first day of school, kids aren't looking for cars, they are looking for their friends. The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation reminds both drivers and parents to look out for the kids.

School zones can be one of the most dangerous places for children. In 2004, 16.6% of all people killed or injured in vehicle-pedestrian collisions were under the age of 16 (ICBC Traffic Collision Statistics 2004 and most recent data available). Almost half of the children in BC are driven to school and the number is growing every year. The area immediately surrounding a school is where the highest percentage of traffic violations and dangerous driving practices occur - U-turns, stopping in no-stopping zones, backing up into crosswalks, rolling through stop signs, speeding – *and parents are the worst violators.*

Poor driving practices aren't the only health risks to our children in school zones. Although parents are concerned about "stranger danger," increased traffic congestion can create more serious safety, environmental and health concerns for school-aged children. According to a recent Environics survey, 68% of Canadian children have less than a 30 minute walk to school and only 36% walk as a rule (Transport Canada Sept/Oct 2002).

Many schools in BC have implemented traffic reduction programs and other strategies that reduce congestion, pollution, risk of injury, and encourage a more active lifestyle. Schools have established "safe walk" and "bike zones" around the school and discourage parents from driving in the streets closest to the school during the peak school times. Signage, patrolled intersections and 30 km/h school zone speed limits are all part of this strategy.

This school year, look out for the kids. For more information about school safety or the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation visit www.tsf-bcaa.com or call **604-298-5107**.

DRIVE TO SAVE LIVES
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SCHOOL TRAFFIC SAFETY TIPS:

Drivers:

- **Stop and Slow Down** - In or near school and residential areas, and be sure to come to a complete stop at all stop signs.
- **Look for Clues** - Such as BCAA School Safety patrollers, bicycles, and playgrounds, which indicate children could be in the area.
- **Parked Cars** - Scan between parked cars and other objects for signs that children could dart into the road.
- **Weather** - Practice extra caution in adverse weather conditions.
- **Commute Times** - Pay particular attention near schools during the morning and afternoon hours.
- **School Buses** - Always stop for school buses when their red lights are flashing for loading and unloading students.

For Families:

- **Walking** - Walking car pools, school buses and buddies are great ways to get to school. Parents can take shifts and walk along a prescribed route picking up and dropping off children at designated stops along the way. Friends can meet up the same way and walk to school together, and older students take on the responsibility of walking with younger students on their way to or from school.
- **Safe Routes** - It's important that children travel along the safest routes possible as they go to and from school. Find a route along which your child can walk on sidewalks if possible, cross at light-controlled or patrolled crosswalks and avoid wooded areas or places where there is very little activity on the streets. For more information on this, refer to the mapping strategies in the Autoplan Broker's "Way to Go Toolkit" (www.roadsafety.ca/programs/howtogetinvolved.htm).
- **Bike Riding** - If bike riding is an option, ensure that all participants agree to wear a helmet, bright clothing with reflective strips and equip their bikes with front and rear lights. All riders should be properly trained to ride a bicycle and understand the rules of the road. Encourage your school community to set up a Bike Smart Program. Handbooks are available from ICBC http://www.icbc.com/youth/roadsense_kids.asp.
- **Public transportation** - In some areas students have to rely on public transportation to get to and from school. The above strategies can also be modified with students using transit instead of walking or riding to school.
- **Visibility** - Make sure children are visible to other road users - wearing light coloured or reflective clothing if they will be out in low light. Make sure that small children understand that they are sometimes impossible for a driver to see.