

# 10 TIPS FOR Getting Walk to School Event Media Coverage

**SafeRoutes**  
National Center for Safe Routes to School



TIP SHEET

## 1 Use Standard Media Materials

Draft a news release or media advisory for your Walk to School events. Try to keep the length down to one or two pages and offer more detailed information on a Web site or through supplemental materials. It is important to include contact information for someone who will be reachable during the event – so include a cell phone number if possible. Template media materials are available at [www.walktoschool.org/resources](http://www.walktoschool.org/resources).

## 3 Engage the Community

Go beyond the school to include other prominent community members and organizations in Walk to School. Invite your town mayor, congressperson, a local celebrity or the mascot of a sports team to attend and possibly speak at your event.

## 4 Follow Up

After you have distributed your news release, it is important to follow up with a few key contacts. Don't be afraid to pick up the phone and talk to a reporter or editor about your event – just make sure you target someone who covers a beat related to Walk to School. For television, the best time to call is between 10am-2pm and 7pm-10pm so that you are not calling during peak news broadcast hours.



## 2 Think Visually

Incorporate visual elements into your Walk to School event. Kid-made posters provide great visuals for those who see children walking to school, and they make photos of events more appealing. Hosting a high-visibility event brings greater awareness to the event's theme, whether that's increasing physical activity, making it safer for walkers, or the environmental benefits of walking.



## 5 Prepare for the Media

Have copies of the news release available at the event. You may also compile a press kit, including fact sheets, back-grounders and bios. Think ahead of time about people who might speak to the media for an interview – but make sure you discuss this with them beforehand.

# 10 TIPS FOR

## Getting Walk to School Event Media Coverage (cont.)

### 6 Seek Opportunities for Co-Promotion

Approach your local media to discuss opportunities for teaming up on the promotion of your Walk to School events. Contact the community affairs department to discuss potential partnerships. This approach typically has to be planned out months in advance but can have huge potential for increasing the visibility of your program.

### 7 Go Beyond the Event

In talking with the media about your Walk to School event, make sure to emphasize the overarching issues surrounding the day, such as the need for an increase in physical activity among children or the importance of pedestrian safety surrounding schools.

### 8 Convey a Consistent Message

To ensure a consistent message, circulate talking points among your Walk to School contacts. Get a start on this with the template talking points available at [www.walktoschool.org/resources](http://www.walktoschool.org/resources).

### 9 Maintain the Relationship

Obtain contact information from members of the media that show interest in your event. Even if the media does not show up, contact them with a brief phone call or email to see if they are interested in a follow-up story.

### 10 Keep it Fresh

It is important to diversify the media hooks within your Walk to School activities. Simply doing the same event over and over will not appeal to the media.