

# 8 TIPS FOR Promoting your Safe Routes to School Program

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



TIP SHEET

## 1 Hold a Kick-Off Event

Holding a kick-off event is a great way to officially launch your Safe Routes to School program. It is very important to tie this event to a Safe Routes program-related event such as a Walk to School Day or bike event.



## 2 Engage the Media

Media coverage brings visibility to the event's purpose and any changes that need to be made to make it safer for kids to walk and bike to school. The media help spread the word of the great health, safety, environmental and social benefits of more children walking and bicycling to school every day. Make sure you also keep an updated media contact list.

## 3 Don't Forget the Photos

Photos are an essential tool in promoting the excitement and enthusiasm of Safe Routes to School. Photos can liven up a presentation or be used to supplement a feature in your local paper. Please keep in mind that you must obtain permission when photographing children. Friends and neighbors with children can be an easy way to go.

## 4 Spread the Word

It is important to create a mechanism for distributing information about your Safe Routes to School program. Distribute information on your program via a newsletter or email distribution. Use this to send out updates on the program, upcoming events, information on funding and program accomplishments.



## 5 Maintain an Updated Web Site

An updated and accurate Web presence for your program will be a valuable resource for spreading the word about your program. Web sites are an excellent resource for housing information on upcoming events, updates on program progress, news releases and photos. Seek opportunities for linkage with other popular Web sites in your area, such as local newspapers and community forums.

# 8 TIPS FOR

## Promoting your Safe Routes to School Program (cont.)

### 6 Make it Newsworthy

As you begin developing program elements, it is important to identify the “hook” that will be used – the element that will capture the attention and interest of your target audiences and the news media. A couple examples include prominence – including a prominent person such as the town mayor in a press conference – or timeliness – holding a key meeting during the week of Walk to School activities.

### 8 Co-promote with Local Organizations

Join with other individuals and groups that have similar interests in walking and bicycling. Expand your program’s reach by reaching out to other key groups such as law enforcement, public officials and Parent/Teacher Associations. You might also consider partnering with your local media to develop public service announcements.

### 7 Use Community-based Communication

Take advantage of the wonderful community-based resources to spread the word. Encourage principals and schools to make announcements at school and publish articles in the school newsletter. Business sponsors may want to hang signs or provide information in their stores.

