

# Walking and Biking Safely— Curriculum for Elementary Students

Dear Educator,

Thank you for your interest in promoting bicyclist and pedestrian safety! These lessons can be taught by classroom or physical education teachers, teaching assistants, after-school instructors, or anyone who wants to encourage walking and biking. It is important for the instructor to be a good role model, someone who seeks to share a love of walking and bicycling with the next generation.

*Why teach pedestrian and bicycle safety?* All too often, kids are blamed for the traffic crashes in which they are involved. They are labeled careless or lacking in caution. To the contrary, young children act in a manner determined by their age and degree of development. It is essential to understand the developmental characteristics that influence a child's behavior as a bicyclist. Specifically, children:

- Have a narrower field of vision than adults - about one-third less.
- Cannot easily judge a car's speed and distance.
- Assume that if they can see a car, its driver must be able to see them. However, children are easily hidden from view by parked cars and other objects.
- Cannot readily tell the direction a sound is coming from.
- May be impatient and impulsive.
- Concentrate on only one thing at a time.
- Have a limited sense of danger.
- Imitate the (often bad) behavior of others, especially older children and adults.

Children between the ages of 8 and 14 have the highest rate of bicycle and pedestrian fatalities for the 14-and-under age group. Pedestrian injury is the third leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths among children ages 5 to 14. A majority of crashes can be avoided through education. This curriculum is a great way to engage children in learning pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates in America have tripled, and today, nearly one in three children in America are overweight or obese. The numbers are even higher in African-American and Hispanic communities, where nearly 40% of the children are overweight or obese. If we don't address this problem, 1/3 of all children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives. Many others will face chronic obesity-related health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and asthma. Walking and bicycling are excellent ways to meet daily physical activity needs.



## All lessons meet these Tennessee Education Standards:

Tennessee Health Education:  
Grades Pre-K - 5

- Standard 1: Decision Making/Personal Health and Wellness
- Standard 4: Physical Activity/Healthy Living
- Standard 10: Injury Prevention

Tennessee Physical Education:  
Grades Pre-K - 5

- Standard 5: Personal and Social Responsibility
- Standard 6: Values Physical Education

# All lesson plans and materials are online: [www.ncdot.gov/bikeped/safetyeducation/letsgonc](http://www.ncdot.gov/bikeped/safetyeducation/letsgonc)

We suggest this schedule of instruction:

*Kindergarten through 2nd grade*  
All walking lessons

*3rd grade*  
Go By Bike  
Signs, Signals, and Safety  
Bicycling Basics  
Bike Control

*4th and 5th grade*  
“Get Ready to Ride” video  
Bicycling Basics  
Bike Control  
Cooperative Riding (4<sup>th</sup> grade only)  
Basic Traffic Skills (5<sup>th</sup> grade only)

## Preparing for On-Bike Lessons

### Bicycles

Kids Can Bike is a local program managed by the City of Knoxville Parks and Recreation Department. They have a fleet of bicycles which are transported in a trailer. To request use of this fleet for instruction within Knox County, contact Nikki Crutcher, [ncrutcher@knoxvilletn.gov](mailto:ncrutcher@knoxvilletn.gov), 865-215-1723. The school will need to identify a secure place the trailer can be parked, ideally within some sort of fencing.

Kickstand is a non-profit organization that accepts donations of used bicycles and distributes them to people in need. They have an abundance of children’s bicycles and would be willing to let your school borrow bicycles for the activity. You may want to talk to them about establishing your own fleet of bicycles if you have storage space for them. [www.knoxbikecollective.com](http://www.knoxbikecollective.com) or [kickstand-knoxville@gmail.com](mailto:kickstand-knoxville@gmail.com)

A less desirable option is to ask parents to send their children’s bicycles to school for that day’s activity if they are able. The bicycles would need to be stored safely and securely in the gym for the day, and shared during the activity with any students who are not able to bring their bicycles or do not have bicycles.

### Helmets

Contact Safe Kids Greater Knox Area (865-541-8622) or the Epilepsy Foundation of East Tennessee ([info@efeasttn.org](mailto:info@efeasttn.org) or 865-522-4991) and let them know you are looking for bike helmets to use for bike safety in your classes.



### Bicycle check and fit

If kids are bringing bicycles from home, you may want to find a mechanic or two to help check the bikes, make sure they are safe to ride, and are sized correctly for the student. Often, there are mechanical problems with kids’ bikes. Kickstand may be able to help with this, or DreamBikes 865- 474-1752

There are certified bike safety instructors and other volunteers who may be able to help with the on-bike lessons. Contact Kelley Segars at [kelley.segars@knoxtrans.org](mailto:kelley.segars@knoxtrans.org) when you know what dates you will be teaching the bike skills classes and she can request assistance.