

Dear friend,

You might be a school administrator, teacher, law enforcement officer, community volunteer or perhaps a transportation or public health professional. Regardless of your role, you probably see – or are curious to learn more about - the connection between children’s health and walking and biking. At its very core, safe routes to school programs are community-based efforts to increase safe walking and biking for K – 8 students. Depending on the community and where the school is located, it may be possible for some students to walk or bike to school or it might not currently be possible for anyone to get to school except by car or bus. Regardless of these circumstances, some combination of the safe routes to school activities described in this notebook can help foster lifelong safe walking and bicycling skills, health and school-community engagement.

How to use this notebook:

This resource presents a menu of options that are based on what’s been shown to increase the number of students who walk and bicycle and how often they do it. The choice of activities depends on a school’s location and a community’s priorities. There is no need to sit down and read the notebook cover to cover; instead, jump into the chapters that resonate with your school and community’s circumstances and interests. For example, if there are safety concerns that need to be addressed before students are encouraged to walk to school, then those activities should come first. Many communities find that they start with one activity – like Walk to School Day – and quickly learn that enthusiastic parents and students are asking for more.

And in case you need a little more inspiration to get started or to build interest among other key partners, this section includes research-based infographics that others have found compelling in deciding to get involved in promoting walking and biking. If you want a detailed roadmap of how to build a comprehensive safe route to school program, this section also includes seven steps to use.

Hopefully the information provided in this notebook will inspire action where you live. The kind of action that can improve safety, health and choices for how people of all ages travel around your community.