

Promoting walking and biking at school

Some schools are located in areas where access by foot or bike are nearly impossible or simply dangerous. However, there are many great options to support walking and biking at school to promote health and wellness when a school's location inhibits safe walking or bicycling as a commute mode. The following overviews ways to support walking and biking at school once students have arrived for the day. These suggestions are all low-cost, low-risk, and only require a push from a walking or biking champion to implement at a local school. Keep reading to learn the benefits of physical activity, how to start a walk at school program, how to incorporate bike safety education into curriculum, and how to organize a remote drop-off for students who cannot walk from home to school.

Snapshot: Making tracks on the track in Canton

Every Wednesday at 7:30 a.m. students of Meadowbrook Elementary School can be found walking around a track before the 8 a.m. school bell rings. On average, one-third of the school's students participate. The most committed walkers have acquired a large collection of toe tokens, a prize earned by students for every five Wednesdays that they get to school early and walk.

When PE Teacher Beth Swanger, who leads the program, was no longer able to host an after-school running club and learned about the walking club idea, Swanger saw the fit for her students. Now, instead of sitting and waiting for class to begin, students are out and moving. Swanger's words of advice for people wanting to start their own program? "Keep it simple, it doesn't have to be a big, elaborate thing. Just get out and walk and move!"

