



October Walk to School Month

Timeline and Steps for Event Planning

This is a suggested timeline and list of steps for developing a Walk to School event. Your chance of creating a successful event will increase by customizing it to meet the needs of your community and school, so feel free to adapt the timeline as necessary. Underlined items are provided as a downloadable resource on the California Walk to School Day Headquarters website:

www.cawalktoschool.com

March – June

Determine which school(s) to involve

- Schools you or your children attend...of course!
- Schools where children walk regularly, but are exposed daily to serious safety hazards.
- Schools where many children could walk or ride their bikes in 15-20 minutes, but don't because of traffic or other safety hazards.
- Schools where the local Public Works Dept. or School District/School will be applying for a Safe Routes to School grant from Caltrans.
- Schools with a traffic safety committee, teacher, or community leader who will be the event 'champion.'
- Schools in neighborhoods where elected officials live (perhaps those up for election in November).

Find out who wants to participate in event planning

- Get contacts from previous Walk to School event coordinators from your school or schools in your community.
- With permission, recruit school volunteers with the [Get Involved Flyer](#) in staff mailboxes, or in the school newsletter.
- Notify the PTA or SSC (if you have an active parents group). These groups are able to communicate the event to parents and make great volunteer pools.
- Recruit Traffic Safety Officers from the Police Department. They can provide extra traffic protection on the day of the event, and sometimes may be able to provide special attractions like officers on bikes or fire trucks that younger students may find exciting.
- Recruit community leaders with the [Letter to Community Leaders](#). Consider contacting neighborhood groups where people gather (e.g., churches and recreation centers), police, sheriff or California Highway Patrol, the local public health department, high school student groups, bicycle and pedestrian clubs or organizations, environmental organizations, neighborhood associations and your local elected officials.

Get Walk to School Month on the school's calendar

- Set-up a short meeting with the principal before June. Early contact and showing that there is parent and community support behind the idea are important. Ask the principal to put Walk to School Month and Day on the school calendar, and in the school newsletter (if there is one). If October poses a conflict, find another month to schedule activities. Discuss with the principal how they might be able to include students who live too far to walk. Bring a printout of [Including Students Who Live Too Far](#) for a list of ideas.
- If you can't get a meeting with the principal, use the [Letter to Principal](#).
- Once Walk to School Month and Day are on the school calendar, you can register your

school's event on-line at: www.cawalktoschool.com

- Develop a contact at the school who is easy to reach by phone (i.e. admin. or the principal's secretary), and let them know about the Walk to School event planning.

June – August

Develop the specifics of your event/activities

- Hold a meeting to bring together stakeholders and organize volunteers.
- Contact local businesses and service clubs to donate healthy drinks and snacks, or small prizes. Use the [Food donation letter](#)
- Contact local businesses and service clubs to underwrite the printing of the walkability checklists and other flyers, posters, prizes, etc. Use the [Monetary donation letter](#)
- Order give-away incentive items for the event/activities.
- Request a Walk to School Month [Proclamation](#) or resolution from local government and school board officials.

September

Get the word out about the event

- See [Ways to Get the Word Out](#).
- Ask the school for permission to distribute backpack mail. Send home [Getting to and from School Safely](#), [Letter to parents](#) and [Safety Tips for Parents](#).
- Put a notice in the school newsletter. Be sure to double check the deadlines for getting something into the newsletter. This is also a good way to recruit more volunteers. Use this sample announcement in your newsletter:

“(Enter the date) is Walk to school day! On this day we will celebrate healthy and non-polluting ways to get to school. Students will be rewarded with (enter incentive) when they arrive at school and check in at the greeting table. Families should plan to leave early enough to allow enough time to walk or bike with their children to school. This is also a great time for conversation and reinforcement of safety skills on the way to school. For more information, please call or email (name and contact info of event coordinator).”

- With permission, put up flyers or posters at the schools and in the neighborhood and community. If time allows, work with students to create colorful visuals. See [Creating Banners, Posters, and Signs with Students](#).
- With permission, put flyers in every teacher's staff mail box.
- If the principal sends out emails to the entire school community, ask them to include Walk to School Day in an email announcement.
- If the school has an email list-serve, post an announcement about Walk to School Day.
- Ask if the school has a parent phone tree. If they do, ask them to notify parents about Walk to School Day.
- With permission, send the [Walkability Checklist](#) home to parents.
- About two to three weeks prior to the event, distribute a [Media Advisory](#) to local media contacts (television, radio, and newspaper) that might be interested in covering a Walk to School event.

Consider organizing a walking school bus or bike train

- See [Organizing Walking School Buses and Bike Trains](#).

The Week Before

- Contact media to request event coverage. Use the [Press release](#).
- Request to submit an on-air [Public Service Announcement](#) to local radio and television stations.
- If your school does loudspeaker announcements, they are a great way to inform students and get them excited about Walk to School Day. For example:

“Don’t forget tomorrow is Walk to School Day! Stop by the tables located at (list locations) to pick up (list incentives provided) tomorrow morning. Walk with a friend, its always more fun and safer to walk with a buddy!”

- Make sure you have giveaway incentives ready for kids who participate. Some examples include: healthy drinks and snacks, small prizes, [Stickers](#), hold a raffle, or hold friendly classrooms competitions.
- Schedule shifts and/or tasks for Walk to School Day volunteers.

During Walk to School Day

- Set-up a Walk to School Day greeting table. See [Setting up a Greeting Table](#).
- Be a role model...walk and have fun!

After Walk to School Day

- Award the [Certificate of Appreciation](#) to all volunteers who helped plan, organize, and execute the event.
- Award the [Sponsorship Certificate of Appreciation](#) to any sponsors who donated time, money, or resources.
- Dialogue with the school staff about ways to keep walking and rolling to school all year long by implementing a Safe Routes to School program. See [Walk to School All Year Long](#).
- Visit the California Department of Public Health Safe Routes to School Technical Assistance Resource Center for more information: www.casaferoutestoschool.org

CA Walk to School Headquarters
www.cawalktoschool.com
Toll-free: 1-888-393-0353



www.cawalktoschool.com

