Six great reasons for kids to walk to school

1. Active kids are healthy kids
   *Children don’t get enough physical activity because of a lack of incidental activity. Walking sets up good habits for life. Children that walk are better adjusted and better at coping with stress.*

2. Walking kick starts a better day of learning
   *Studies show walking to school can increase concentration levels for 4 hours.*

3. Children learn important life skills by walking to school
   *Children learn to be independent and responsible.*

4. Children who walk to school are more connected with their local community

5. Leaving the car at home reduces your carbon footprint
   *Walking 500m to school each day instead of driving saves about 500kg of greenhouse pollution per year.*

6. Leaving the car at home creates a safer environment around the school gates

Concerned about safety?
*If your child is 10 or under, walk with your child to school and coach them on road safety techniques.
*If your child is over 10, walk with your child until you feel they are ready to walk to school without you.
*Try out different routes until you find the safest route for your child.
*Arrange for your child to walk with others or organise a walking school bus along your walking route.
*Visit www.kidsafensw.org/road-safety/pedestrian-safety/

Safe walking routes to school
The map shows routes you may wish to consider:
*The cycleway provides a walk with a view.
*Cross Brisbane Water Drive at the lights at Aldi or at the pedestrian refuge near Collard Road.
*On the western side of Brishane Water Drive, the footpath starts at Lorraine Ave.
*Nangara Lane starts at Penang St.

So **Walk Safely to School** on **Friday 24th May 2013**

1Extract from yourkidsed.com.au

Next issue: Continuing focus on alternative forms of transport to and from school - Riding

An initiative of the Point Clare Public School Council's Traffic Management & Road Safety Committee
The debate: Will your child walk to school?
by Fiona Baker, 4 February 2013

GOVERNMENT and health organisations are urging parents to ditch the car and make the school run on foot.

As the kids jump into the back seat of the car for the one-kilometre-or-less drive to school or the bus stop, there would be many parents who must occasionally wonder if perhaps their kids - and them - should be making the journey on foot.

Yet a recent study found that less than half of kids who live within a 15-minute walk of their school actually use their feet to walk any further than from the school gate, where they are dropped. The Deakin University study also found that, despite this, a vast majority of kids would prefer to walk.

A couple of generations ago walking was the only way to get to school, or at least to a bus to take to you school. Today parents have become their kids’ chauffeurs for a variety of reasons ranging from time constraints to safety fears.

Deakin University has explored these reasons and found that 45 per cent of parents were concerned about traffic, 22 per cent thought their child was too young or unreliable and a fifth had fears of “stranger danger” or danger from other adults.

Harold Scruby, Pedestrian Council of Australia chairman and organiser of National Walk Safely to School Day each year, urges parents to rethink how to get their precious cargo to and from school, and come up with a plan that includes walking.

“Research recommends that children should not be crossing a road without holding an adult’s hand until about the age of 10. So if your child is younger than 10, walk with them,” Scruby says.

Benefits of walking
“There are so many reasons why walking to school is good for kids. It’s healthy, it’s better for the environment, it sets up good habits and it kick-starts a better day of learning for the kids,” he says. Scruby’s arguments for walking to school can be backed up by research - and quite a lot of it.

Children who walk or cycle to school rather than being driven by their parents have increased powers of concentration, according to a recent Danish study involving 20,000 students. This increased ability to focus was found to last about four hours. Several other studies have also confirmed that even short walks have a positive effect on mood, reducing feelings of anger and anxiety while putting people in contact with their natural environment and local community.

Be a good role model
A UK paper, aptly titled The Backseat Report, had this warning for parents who drive their kids every day: “We believe that getting a lift to school every day limits horizons, leading to isolated, vulnerable children.”

Kids also get exercise from walking to school. According to Federal Government guidelines, kids need an hour of at least moderate exercise a day, yet it is estimated that less than 20 per cent of Australian kids get that.

“My tip to parents is that if you have to be in the car, get out and park it 500 metres to a kilometre away from the school and enjoy a walk with your child,” Scruby says. “While you’re at it you’ll also be instilling in your kids valuable road-sense skills so they will know how to be safe pedestrians. “You can have a good chat while enjoying a walk together and you’ll set up good exercise habits that will last a lifetime.”

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