

Lesson 1: Walking Safely Near Traffic

Time: approximately 20-25 minutes

This curriculum does not cover every possible scenario that a child may encounter as a pedestrian, but instead addresses the basic skills needed to be a safe pedestrian. Teachers should use their discretion as to how to appropriately break material to accommodate their daily schedule. Studies have demonstrated that skill-building activities are the most effective way to promote student retention of pedestrian safety skills. While the "Activity" portion may be postponed to a future class period if needed, it is an essential component to this curriculum and all lessons should be complemented with the reinforcement of safe pedestrian behavior. More time can be spent on practicing the behavior if children are already familiar with the core material.

Lesson Objectives:

The objective of this introductory lesson is to teach students the basic concepts of sharing spaces with cars and other motorized traffic. At this age, it is important to emphasize that students should never walk near traffic without an adult or responsible, older sibling.

The students will be able to

- Explain reasons we walk places and identify common places to walk
- Define and use appropriate walker safety vocabulary
- Recognize and demonstrate safe practices near traffic such as walking with an adult, walking on a sidewalk or side of the street, and wearing bright-colored clothing

Applicable National Standards of Learning:

- Physical Education Standard 1: Demonstrates competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.
- Physical Education Standard 6: Values physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction.
- Health Standard 1: Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
- Health Standard 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

Materials:

Vocabulary Cards (with appropriate pictures)

Walker, Traffic, and Driveway Situational Pictures

Flipchart paper and markers

Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet

After the review, it is highly recommended that teachers take students to a safe environment outdoors to reinforce the learned behaviors. Parent and other adult volunteers may be necessary to make this first-hand experience more valuable and safe for the children.

Lesson Outline

Discussion & Demonstration: (10-15 minutes)

The teacher will

- Identify locations to which we walk
- Define “walker” and “traffic”
- Discuss traffic safety rules and simultaneously show traffic pictures to demonstrate procedures for walking near traffic

1. Use a Sidewalk

Sample Script

Today, we are going to begin a new unit of study. For the next several days, we are going to talk about walking safely near traffic.

Raise your hand if you have...

- Walked to school, a friend’s house, the store, library, park, etc.

Great! It looks like everyone in this class has walked somewhere before. That means that we are all **walkers**. A walker is a person who walks. **[Teacher displays “walker” vocabulary card with word and appropriate picture.]**

It is important to walk to get places for many reasons.

- First, it is good for you (exercise).
- It’s good for the environment (no air pollution).
- It’s good for your neighborhood (less traffic).
- And last, but not least, it’s fun!

Walking is good for many reasons, but as we walk, we need to be sure we are safe. Usually, we are not the only people trying to get around. Cars, buses, trucks, and other vehicles also have to get places like we do. These vehicles are called **traffic**. **[Teacher displays “traffic” vocabulary card with word and appropriate picture.]**

Raise your hand if you live on a street where there is a sidewalk. Give me thumbs up if we have sidewalks near our school.

Sidewalks are special places where we walk that are away from the traffic in the street. Who can tell me why sidewalks are important?

- They keep us away from traffic

Let’s take a look at these two pictures of streets in a community.

[Teacher displays Materials 1. Use a Sidewalk Situation A (a picture of streets, one with sidewalk and one without).]

Who can point to the sidewalk in this picture?

Correct! Is there a sidewalk in the next picture? **NO!**

When there is a sidewalk, like in the first picture, we should always use it.

If there is not a sidewalk, like in the second picture, we should always walk on the side of the street, closest to the grass or buildings.

[Teacher displays Materials 1. Use a Sidewalk Situation B (a picture of child safely walking on sidewalk and child safely walking on side of road).]

Lesson Outline

Sample Script

2. Face the Traffic

That's not all! You will notice that the children walking in these pictures are also walking on the left side of the street, facing traffic.

Everyone hold up your left hand. *[Teacher models and guides students to correct answer, if appropriate]*

That's the side of the street where we always want to walk!

Let's close our eyes and imagine we are walking on the left side of the road. You may notice in your imagination that you can clearly see cars coming toward us. This is why we always walk on the left side facing traffic. *[Teacher displays Materials 2. Face the Traffic Situation (a picture of child walking on left side of road facing a car with large smiley face over it and picture of child on right side of road facing away from traffic with large red X over it).]*

3. Walk Safely

Let's close our eyes again and imagine we are walking on the sidewalk. We can hear traffic zooming past us. Think about how you should be moving on the sidewalk.

Let's brainstorm some rules together for safe behavior when walking near traffic. I'm going to write the rules we create on this chart paper.

[Teacher writes as students brainstorm ideas. For this level, it may be appropriate to draw a small picture beside each rule so that students can see clearly what each rule means without having to read it. Depending on student ability levels, the teacher may have to guide students toward the example rules listed below. If there are time constraints or other concerns, the teacher can display the chart below rather than brainstorm together.]

Safe Behavior When Walking Near Traffic

1. Walk, don't run.
2. Don't play around with friends or push.
3. Stay close to a parent, adult, or older sibling.
4. Stay away from cars and busy roads.
5. Be aware of what's around you. Don't let toys, phones, or anything else distract you.

Let's look at some pictures of walkers near traffic.

Raise your hand if you notice any problems with the pictures.

- **[Display Materials 3. Walking Safely Situation A (a picture of student running on sidewalk)]**—*Never run near traffic.*
- **[Display Materials 3. Walking Safely Situation B (a picture of students acting silly near traffic)]**—*Never play around traffic because someone could get hurt.*
- **[Display Materials 3. Walking Safely Situation C (a picture of student walking far ahead of father)]**—*Never walk without a parent or adult. Walk closely to them at all times.*

Lesson Outline

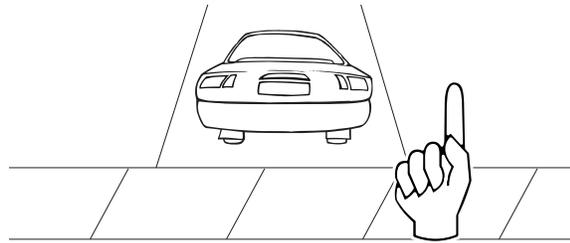
4. Beware of Driveways

5. Dress to Be Seen

Sample Script

As you are walking on the sidewalk, you may come to a driveway. Driveways are the path that a car takes to enter or exit a street. Even though we are on the sidewalk and off the street, this is one area where walkers and cars share space together.

[Display Materials 4. Beware of Driveways Situation (a picture of sidewalk and adjoining driveway with rear of car facing the sidewalk).]



Pretend that my pointer finger is a walker. Watch as I demonstrate what you should do if you approach a driveway. **[Teacher demonstrates steps listed below, acting as if his/her pointer finger is the walker.]**

- 1) Stop at least one big step before you get to the driveway.
- 2) Look and listen for cars that may be parked in the driveway. If there is a person inside the car, if the back white lights are on, or if you hear cars in the driveway running, DON'T MOVE! Stop and wait until you know the car is not moving.
- 3) Look left, right, and left again to make sure cars aren't entering the driveway from the street, or moving in the driveway. Drivers are often looking for other traffic and might not see you so be cautious!
- 4) If there is no one in the car, the lights are not on, and all directions are clear, it is safe to cross. Walk with your head up, looking for traffic as you cross.

Finally, it is really important for you to always consider what you are wearing when you are a walker. Sometimes when you get up early in the morning or if you leave a friend's house in the evening, it is dark outside. When it is dark, it can be very hard for drivers to see you.

The best way to be seen when it is dark outside is to wear bright-colored clothing or reflective materials and carry a flashlight. Reflective materials are shiny and become brighter when light hits them. You should put reflective materials on your clothing when it is dark outside so drivers can see you. **[Teacher displays an example of reflective materials, such as a backpack with reflective strip, or "reflective materials" vocabulary card with word and appropriate picture.]**

Lesson Outline

Activity Options:

The students could...

- a. Dramatize safe and unsafe scenarios while reviewing safety rules (5-10 minutes, see sample script)
- b. Practice safe walking around school grounds to reinforce appropriate behavior (10-20 minutes)
- c. Take a supervised walk through a nearby neighborhood with parent volunteers to practice and reinforce proper walking behavior (20-30 minutes)

Closure (if time): (5 minutes)

The teacher will

- Review safety rules for walking near traffic or driveways

Sample Script

ACTIVITY OPTION A:

Now, it's your turn! You are going to act out some different scenarios of what you might encounter when you are a walker walking near traffic.

Everyone stand up. You are going to pretend you are a walker. While staying in your place and not walking or moving around the room, I want you to copy me and show me with your body how you would be safe when I call out a question. ***[Teacher calls out question and mimes the action a walker would take. Students or teacher may call out appropriate answer. Teacher may have to model all body movements with the students first.]***

Examples:

- Where do you walk on a street? (Sidewalk—hold arms out straight in front of you)
- Which way do you face when you walk on the sidewalk? (Left—hold up left hands)
- How do you move on the sidewalk? (Walk in place with head held high)
- How do you walk with an adult? (Hold his/her hand—clasp both hands together)
- What do you do when you approach a driveway? (Stop—put hand flat out in front of you)
- What do you do before you step into the driveway? (Look left-right-left)
- What do you do if you see white car lights or a person in the car? (Stop—put hand out flat in front of you)
- How do you move across the driveway? (Walk in place with head held high)
- What clothes do you wear? (Bright!—flick fingers in front of body)

Let's review all that we have learned today.

First, we learned some important new words. A walker is a person who walks. Reflective gear is shiny material that walkers put on their clothing to be seen.

Finally, we learned how to be safe when walking near traffic.

- 1) Use a sidewalk.
- 2) Face the traffic when you walk.
- 3) Walk Safely.
- 4) Beware of driveways. Stop, look left - right - left and walk when no cars are coming.
- 5) Dress to be seen. Carry a flashlight at night.

Suggested Cross-Curricular Connections:

These optional activities are included to extend the lesson into other areas of learning. Most activities presented may be completed within a 20-minute time period.

Art

- Students can make model, child-sized cars from cardboard boxes. They can also create roads using long and short pieces of construction paper. These can be used for the students to practice safe behavior in a dramatic play center throughout the unit. They can also be used as props for a culminating unit dramatization of all walker safety topics.

Writing

- Create a Rebus Story (a story in which specific vocabulary words are replaced or coincide with a picture representation of that word).
 - Teacher and students can write a story together about being safe while walking near traffic.
 - Teacher should keep language appropriate to grade level (use high-frequency words) and model using time order words (i.e., first, next, after that, etc.) to begin sentences.
 - Teacher can replace certain words within the story with appropriate pictures to create the Rebus-style story.
 - After the story is completed, students can read aloud the Rebus story using the picture representations and knowledge of high-frequency words.

Science/Dramatic Play

- Have students examine their own clothing to differentiate if it is “dark” or “bright.”
- Allow children to demonstrate the visibility of bright versus dark colored clothing and reflective materials.
 - The teacher should provide several types of bright, dark, and reflective material clothing for the children to wear. Students can choose the color clothing material they feel is appropriate for a walker, and then the teacher can simulate day and night situations within the classroom. (To simulate night experiences, the teacher can turn off all lights and cover any windows in the room.) Students should justify why they chose certain colors and analyze their choices after the simulations take place.

Materials

Vocabulary Cards

Walker, Traffic, and Driveway Situational Pictures

Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet