

Lesson 3: Crossing Intersections Safely

Time: approximately 40 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 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 lesson is to teach students simple skills for crossing intersections safely and to teach them several iconic traffic signals to aid in their understanding. At this age, it is important to emphasize that intersections are tricky places for children to cross because there is traffic approaching in several different directions and students cannot easily interpret driver behavior.

The students will be able to

- Demonstrate safe behavior while approaching and crossing an intersection

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 5: Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.
- Health Standard 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.
- Health Standard 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.

Materials:

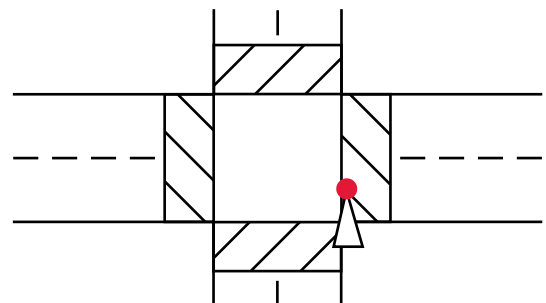
Cones, tape, yard stick, paper (red, yellow, green), & other materials to create intersection

Pictures of intersections, crosswalks, and traffic signals (with appropriate vocabulary)

Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet

Preparation: Using the materials listed above, create a model intersection.

Use masking tape to create a 4-way stop. Eight long strips of tape are needed for the streets, and short strips are needed for the lane divides in the middle of the streets. Create street signs and traffic signals using paper, yard sticks, and cones. It may also be helpful to create crosswalks to emphasize safe crossing areas, but they are not mandatory and may be time consuming.



Lesson Outline

Introduction: (5 minutes)

The teacher will

- Review steps to crossing the street
- Emphasize the importance of crossing the street with an adult or responsible older sibling who has permission from a parent or caregiver
- Define and discuss “intersections”

Discussion & Teacher Modeling: (10 minutes)

The teacher will

- Discuss and simultaneously model the steps to crossing intersections safely

1. Identifying a Safe Place to Cross and Taking an Adult’s Hand

2. Stop at the Edge

Sample Script

We have talked before about crossing roads and streets. Let’s review the rules for crossing the street by singing the “Crossing the Street” song.

[Teacher displays song, and together, teacher and students sing the song to review.]

One of the most important parts of this song is to always take an adult’s hand when crossing the street. Remember adults or older siblings are taller, and they can help keep us safe as we cross the road. This will be very important to remember as we learn more about crossing streets today.

When we crossed streets before, it was only one road. Today, we are going to learn to cross an intersection. An intersection is where two or more streets meet each other. ***[Display “Intersections” vocabulary card.]***

Let’s pretend that this is an intersection. You can see the two roads as they cross each other. You will also notice some street signs and a traffic light, or stop light, in the intersection. They help direct traffic. There are also crosswalks at the end of each road. These are special, painted areas on the road that show where you should walk once you are sure the road is clear to cross.—***if it is not possible to create crosswalks on the model street, display the “Crosswalks” vocabulary card.***

Cars are going to be moving from the left, right, in front, and behind you. We will pretend that there are cars moving along our intersection, so we will be extra cautious when crossing.

If I am walking on a sidewalk and come to an intersection, I usually have already found a safe place to cross. The safest place to cross an intersection is at the crosswalk, or the end of the sidewalk before it opens into the street.

Watch as I walk toward the intersection. I am on the sidewalk and I stop before I get to the intersection. I am also going to make sure that I hold an adult’s or responsible, older sibling’s hand to cross the intersection.

Before I cross the intersection, remember that I need to stop at the edge/curb. This is the place where the sidewalk ends and the street begins.

Lesson Outline

3. Look and Listen for Traffic

4. Look for Traffic Signals

Sample Script

When I reach the edge, I am going to look and listen for traffic. I will do my “shoulder check” and look left-right-left. Who remembers why I need to do this?

- *To see if cars are coming from both directions*

Let’s pretend that I look left. It is clear. Then, I look right. It is clear. Last, I look left again. Uh oh! A car is coming! What should I do?

- *Stop and wait!*
- *Start over and look left-right-left until all directions are clear*
- *Once it is clear, look left one more time then walk slowly into the intersection.*

I just modeled what I should do if I am crossing only one street, but I am crossing an intersection. Cars can be coming from four or more directions.

In an intersection, I not only need to look left and right, but I also have to look in front and behind me. It is important to make sure all four directions are clear before crossing the street. This can be tricky because sometimes cars are changing their directions, too. Before I step into the intersection, I look left one more time to make sure it is clear.

It is important to be patient, keep your head up, and keep watching in all directions for cars to make sure it is safe to cross.

That’s not all that I need to look for though.

Intersections usually have signals that the drivers look at to know when it is their turn to drive their car across the intersection. They also have signals that walkers should look at to know when it is their turn to cross.

Let’s look at some of these signs and signals so we will know when it is our turn to cross. **[Teacher displays Materials 4. Stop Sign, Stoplight, Walk/Don’t Walk Signals pictures of signs for students to analyze.]**

- Stop signs tell cars that they need to first stop and see if it is clear to continue. Once the car has come to a stop and checked all directions for other cars, they may cross the intersection.
- Stoplight colors tell cars when they need to slow down, stop, and go.
- “Walk/Don’t Walk” signals tell us, the people who are walking, when it is our turn to cross.
 - Sometimes, you will see a red hand on the “Walk/Don’t Walk” signal. This is the “Don’t Walk” part of the signal. It means that it is not safe to start crossing the street. You should stop at the edge of the sidewalk and wait until you see the “Walk” part of the “Walk/Don’t Walk” signal.

(continued)

Lesson Outline

4. Look for Traffic Signals (continued)

Sample Script

- Sometimes, you will see a signal that is white and looks like a person walking on the “Walk/Don’t Walk” signal. This is the “Walk” part of the signal. This means that it is our turn to cross. This does not always mean that traffic has stopped and that it is safe, though. We need to be sure we are still looking in all directions and listening for traffic when we cross with the white “Walk” signal.
- If the “Walk/Don’t Walk” signal has numbers, they are counting down to zero, telling us how many seconds we have to cross the street. Don’t worry though. If the “Walk” signal is showing, there is time to cross safely, so never run across the intersection just to beat the clock.
- If you start crossing while the white “Walk” signal is showing and it turns into a flashing red hand or a red hand with numbers, keep walking. You will have enough time to cross. Do not turn around and go back.
- If the “Don’t Walk” red hand signal is flashing, but there are still countdown numbers, DO NOT begin to cross. There is not enough time to make it across the street safely.

Remember that even if all the signals say it is our turn to cross, only the adult you are walking with can decide if it is really safe. You need to keep your head up, looking and listening for traffic at all times to make sure you are safe.

If the signals change before we’ve decided that it is safe to cross, don’t worry. Just wait until it is our turn to cross with the white “Walk” signal again. It won’t be long, and it is better to be safe.

Watch as I look at the street signs and decide when it is best to cross the street. ***[Teacher has student/assistant helper display Materials 4. Look for Traffic Signals “Red Hand Walk/Don’t Walk Signal with Numbers” signal, and if appropriate count backwards, as she demonstrates crossing the model intersection.]***

I see the “Walk/Don’t Walk” red hand signal. I am stopped and waiting at the edge. Now, I see that the “Walk/Don’t Walk” signal has turned white and looks like a person walking. This is the “Walk” part of the signal. I will first check left-right-left and in front, behind, in front.

I listen for cars also. If it is clear and I do not hear traffic, I can cross the intersection.

Lesson Outline

5. Cross Quickly and Safely

Activity Options:

The students could...

- a. Practice safely crossing an intersection and demonstrate understanding by playing “Red Hand, Walking Man” game (20 minutes, *see sample script*)
- b. Practice crossing intersections on a neighborhood road near school grounds to reinforce appropriate behavior (10-20 minutes)
- c. Take a supervised walk in a nearby neighborhood with parent volunteers to practice and reinforce proper behaviors when crossing intersections (20-30 minutes)

Closure: (5 minutes)

The teacher will

- Reiterate the steps for being safe while crossing an intersection

Sample Script

As I cross, I am going to keep my head high, make eye contact with drivers so I know they see me, and watch for cars in all directions.

I will also move straight across the street. Notice how I am not walking at a diagonal. This will help me get across in a short amount of time.

Did I make it safely across the street? **YES!!!**

ACTIVITY OPTION A:

Now, it’s your turn! A few of you are going to get the chance to show me how to cross this intersection.

[Teacher will allow several students to demonstrate crossing an intersection using the steps above. The teacher should call out what is happening on the road and give the students verbal cues to help them cross the street safely.]

Great work! Let’s practice all together by playing one of my favorite games, “Red Light, Green Light.” Since we have learned a new traffic signal though, we are going to call my game “Red Hand, Walking Man.”

- 1) Allow all students to line up across a large field or auditorium opposite the teacher.
- 2) The teacher will call out “Red Hand” for students to freeze at the “edge” of the street.
- 3) He/she will then call out “Walking Man” for the children to begin walking—For this age level, the teacher should emphasize moving in a straight line and walking at all times (not running). If they do not do these things, they are out!
- 4) The first student or students to reach the teacher at the “other side of the intersection” is declared the “Crossing the Intersection Champ”!

Let’s review all that we have learned today.

First, we need to stop when we come to an intersection. We always take an adult’s hand before we even think about crossing!

Next, we look and listen for traffic, and we pay attention to traffic signals. When the “Walk/Don’t Walk” signal turns white and looks like a person walking, we look left-right-left and in front-behind-in front for traffic before beginning to cross.

Finally, we walk across the street with our head held high. We keep looking for traffic as we move across the intersection in a straight line.

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.

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 street signs and traffic signals from construction paper. These can be used for the students to practice safe behavior in a dramatic play center throughout the unit. They will also be used as props for a culminating unit dramatization of all pedestrian safety topics.

Writing

- Safety Words and Sentences
 - Teacher and students can brainstorm pedestrian safety words together (look, listen, stop, etc.) on a large chart paper.
 - Individually, students can orally develop complete sentences using a pattern (“It is important to...”). (Example: “It is important to always look for cars.”)
 - Depending on student needs and individual levels, students can independently write a sentence using the pattern and pedestrian safety words, or students can dictate these sentences to the teacher who acts as a scribe.

Dramatic Play

- Using the plastic table cloth created in Lesson 2’s Cross-Curricular Activities, add several intersections, roads, and community places to develop a large community map. Allow the children to use small figurines of people, cars, trucks, trees, street signals, street signs, etc., to dramatize crossing an intersection in a safe manner.

Materials

Vocabulary Cards

Pictures of Intersections, Crosswalks, and Traffic Signals

Parent/Caregiver Tip Sheet