



SAFE KIDS

The Walkability Check

National
**SAFE
KIDS**

Campaign®



Partnership for a
Walkable America

HOW WALKABLE IS YOUR COMMUNITY?

Everyone benefits from walking. But walking needs to be safe and easy. Take a walk with your child and use this checklist to decide if your neighborhood is a friendly place to walk. If you find problems, there are ways you can make things better.

Getting started: Pick a place to walk, such as the route to school, a friend's house, or just somewhere fun to go. Read over the checklist before you go, and as you walk, note the locations of the things you would like to change. At the end of your walk, fill in an overall rating for each question. Then add up the numbers to see how you rated your walk.

RATING SCALE

- 1 = awful
- 2 = many problems
- 3 = some problems
- 4 = good
- 5 = very good
- 6 = excellent

After you have collected valuable information about walking in your neighborhood, take the next step. Inside are some ideas for making it easier to walk in your community.

Your local SAFE KIDS coalition may already have formed a task force to make many of these changes. Contact them to see what resources they have for pedestrian safety, and how you can help. To find your nearest SAFE KIDS coalition:

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign
1301 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-1707
Tel: 202-662-0600

www.safekids.org

MAKING YOUR COMMUNITY MORE WALK -ABLE

What you and your child can do IMMEDIATELY

What you and your community can do with more time

1. Did you have room to walk safely?

Sidewalks or paths started and stopped
Sidewalks broken/cracked
Sidewalks blocked
No sidewalks, paths or shoulder
Too much traffic

- ◆ Pick another route for now
- ◆ Tell local transportation engineers or public works department about specific problems

- ◆ Write or petition the city for walkways
- ◆ Gather neighborhood signatures
- ◆ Make media aware of the problem

2. Was it easy to cross streets?

Road too wide
Traffic signals made us wait too long or did not give us enough time to cross
Crosswalks/traffic signals needed
View of traffic blocked by parked cars, trees, or plants
Needed curb ramps; ramps needed repair

- ◆ Pick another route for now
- ◆ Share problems with local transportation engineers or public works department
- ◆ Trim your trees and bushes that block the street, and ask neighbors to do the same
- ◆ Leave nice notes on problem cars, asking owners not to park there

- ◆ Push for crosswalks, signals, or parking changes at city meetings
- ◆ Give a report identifying parked cars that are safety hazards to your local transportation engineer
- ◆ Report illegally parked cars to the police
- ◆ Request that public works department trims trees and plants
- ◆ Make media aware of the problem

3. Did drivers behave well?

Backed without looking
Did not yield
Turned into walkers
Drove too fast
Sped up to make traffic lights or drove through red lights

- ◆ Pick another route for now
- ◆ Set an example: slow down and be considerate of walkers
- ◆ Encourage your neighbors to do the same
- ◆ Report unsafe driving to police

- ◆ Organize neighborhood speed-watch program
- ◆ Petition for more enforcement
- ◆ Ask city planners and traffic engineers for ideas
- ◆ Request protected turn signals
- ◆ Ask schools about getting crossing guards at key locations

4. Could you follow safety rules?

Cross at crosswalks or where you could see and be seen
Stop and look left, right, left before crossing
Walk on sidewalks or shoulders facing traffic (if no sidewalks)
Cross with the light

- ◆ Educate yourself about safe walking and teach your child
- ◆ For safe walking tips, request a pedestrian safety brochure from your local SAFE KIDS coalition or the National SAFE KIDS Campaign
- ◆ Organize parents in your neighborhood to walk children to school

- ◆ Encourage schools to teach pedestrian safety
- ◆ Help schools start Safe Routes to School programs
- ◆ Encourage corporate support for flex schedules so parents can walk children to school

5. Was your walk pleasant?

Needs grass, flowers, trees
Scary dogs
Suspicious activity
Not well lit
Dirty, littered

- ◆ Pick another route for now
- ◆ Ask neighbors to keep dogs leashed or fenced
- ◆ Report scary dogs to the animal control department
- ◆ Report suspicious activity to police
- ◆ Report lighting needs to the city
- ◆ Take a walk with a trash bag
- ◆ Plant trees, flowers and bushes in your yard

- ◆ Request increased police enforcement
- ◆ Start a crime-watch program in your neighborhood
- ◆ Organize a community clean up day
- ◆ Sponsor a tree planting day
- ◆ Sponsor a neighborhood beautification day

Quick health check

Could not go as far or as fast as you wanted
Were tired, short of breath, or had sore feet or muscles

- ◆ Start with short walks and work up to 30 minutes of walking most days
- ◆ Invite a friend or child along
- ◆ Replace some driving trips with walking trips

- ◆ Get media to do a story about health benefits of walking
- ◆ Call parks and recreation department about community walks
- ◆ Encourage corporate support for employee walking programs