

What is Safe Routes to School?

Safe Routes to School programs are created to increase the number of students walking and biking to school safely. Though different in every community, SRTS programs typically incorporate safety, health, community-building, fitness, traffic relief, and environmental awareness components. These program activities encourage schools, communities, and local government officials to model a healthy lifestyle for children and work towards the creation of a safer, cleaner environment for everyone.

Safe Routes to School programs also work to reduce the number of children being driven to school. This number has increased so drastically over the last thirty years that according to recent research, twenty-five percent of morning commuter traffic is the result of parents driving their children to school. The more parents drive their children to school, the more unsafe it becomes for those children walking and the fewer parents allow their children to walk. In this way, the area around the school becomes progressively more unsafe for pedestrians.

Today, only 13% of North American children walk or bike to school. Just thirty years ago, that number was at 65% nationwide. This reduction has taken a tremendous toll on our communities. School drop-off and pick-up habits have created parking problems and traffic hazards. A lack of daily activity has contributed to a nationwide obesity epidemic among both children and adults. Safe Routes to School works to combat these trends and respond to parents safety concerns.

How is Feet First involved in Safe Routes to School?

Feet First is involved in building and nurturing Safe Routes to School programs across Seattle and the state of Washington. Along with implementing our own grants, we also facilitate networking and resource-sharing among individuals, schools, and the community.

We have worked closely with the Seattle School District and created a set of walking maps that show the safest routes to school. These maps also connect students living close to one another along the same paths in the hopes that they will walk together and thereby create safety in numbers. Follow the link to find the walking map for your school!

Seattle School District Walking Maps



Feet First currently works in four southeast Seattle Elementary Schools through a combined grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation & Group Health Community Fund.

Entitled Start Strong, the program combines breakfast nutrition and Safe Routes to School by encouraging students to eat a healthy breakfast and walk to school.

Our Start Strong schools are:

Dearborn Park Elementary

Emerson Elementary

Maple Elementary

Wing Luke Elementary

Other Seattle schools with organized grassroots walking activity are:

Laurelhurst Elementary

Westwoodland Elementary

Sanislo Elementary

High Point Elementary

Fairmount Park Elementary

Sacajawea Elementary

Bailey Gatzert Elementary

Seattle Waldorf School

Does your school have Walking School Bus activity? To start a Safe Routes to School program at your school contact Jen Cole, SRTS Coordinator at: jen@feetfirst.info

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