

# PARENT GUIDE:

## CHILD TRAVEL SAFETY



Does your child walk, bike, or take public transportation by themselves to and from school or other activities?

### BASIC TRAVEL SAFETY TIPS

- 1. Instruct your child to travel with a friend or group when possible.**
- 2. Ask your child if there is anything on their route that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.** Do they get scared by traffic on a certain road, or are they worried about a peer who bullies them at school and who also walks home on a similar route?
- 3. Talk to your children about boundaries and personal safety.** Tell them they have the right to say no when they feel uncomfortable. Remind children to respect others' boundaries as well.
- 4. Talk with your child about anyone who makes them feel uncomfortable, whether it is someone they know or a stranger.** Let them know that not everyone they meet has good intentions, and assure them that nothing is wrong with saying no to an interaction. Explore possible ways that your child can react if anyone confronts them, including ignoring, walking away, drawing attention, distracting, or calling for help. Gauge your child's comfort level with each option.
- 5. If your child has a phone, make sure they have it charged before traveling.**
- 6. It is important to stay aware of traffic, other people, and the surrounding environment while walking or biking.** Instruct your child to avoid distractions such as having headphones in or looking at their phone while traveling.
- 7. Whether or not your child has a phone, make sure they know contact information for parents/caregivers, school, and any other emergency contacts.** It is helpful to have this written down on something that the child can carry with them, such as on a notecard kept in their backpack.
- 8. Let your children know they can call you or another emergency contact** if they want to be picked up, accompanied, or just want someone to talk with on the phone while they walk so they feel safer. Remind children to still be mindful of their surroundings if talking on the phone.
- 9. Let your child know they are never to hitchhike, accept a ride from someone or go into someone's house when it is not arranged by you, even if someone insists they have your permission.** Let your child know that you will notify them if someone else is to transport/otherwise help them and who that person is.
- 10. Make sure your child's school or activity center has a system to check children in when they arrive and out when they leave.** If your child normally travels home on their own, but you plan to pick them up, make sure both your child and their school know in advance.



## ASSURE CHILDREN THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO TELL YOU IF AN ISSUE ARISES.

Although these safety tips are important to keep in mind, let children know that even if they forget one of these tips, it is never their fault if someone causes them harm. Show support for their feelings. Talk with children about what you can do together to help them feel safer.



### When deciding if your child is ready to walk to and from school and other activities without an adult, consider these important factors:

- » Your child's maturity and knowledge of basic traffic safety. For example, they look all ways before crossing a street and understand traffic signs and signals.
- » Your child's comfort and confidence with traveling alone and your child's ability to identify and respond to a dangerous situation.
- » Consider asking your child questions like *"What would you do if...?"* and discussing possible situations your child may face when traveling alone.

### Identify safe routes and walk or ride them with your child.

Discuss back-up routes your child can take if their normal route is unusable due to construction, ice or snow, a traffic block, or any danger. Identify safe spaces along your child's route that they can go to for help or shelter if they feel unsafe. Possibilities may include a library, community center, open store, or restaurant. Tell your child to let you know if they change their route.

#### Child Identification (ID) Kit

A child identification (ID) kit is a helpful tool for parents to maintain basic information about their child that becomes vital to search efforts if a child goes missing. The child ID kit should be kept in a safe, memorable place. To provide emergency responders with an accurate record and image, update the kit regularly.

## RESOURCES

For a child ID kit form and other resources, please visit: [BeauBidenFoundation.org/Resources](https://BeauBidenFoundation.org/Resources).

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