



SAFE ROUTE NEWS

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Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

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Where are We Now? Opening Round 3!!!

Angela Olson SRTS Coordinator

Planning on applying? Don't wait until the last minute to do so; now is the time to start the process.

Why start now when the closing date is March 25, 2010? Take a close look at the application and you will understand why.

The application process requires a commitment of time from the city and school to create a detailed comprehensive plan. This plan must include educational programs about safety and health, encouragement activities to make the program fun, enforcement to change behaviors and an evaluation commitment to show your program works.

If engineering is part of your funding request, you must justify what changes are needed to improve walking and biking conditions.

Email
angela.olson@state.sd.us
 for application requests
 and to schedule a
 meeting with the Safe
 Routes to School
 Coordinator

The required parent and student surveys are best done at the beginning of the application process – now, before winter sets in. One successful method for conducting parent surveys is to have the parent fill

out the surveys during the first parent teacher conference of the year. Student surveys are taken in the classroom during role call.

The data collected from these surveys goes to National Safe Routes to School and is needed to help you develop your comprehensive plan.

Interested communities must schedule a meeting with the Safe Routes to School Coordinator. This meeting will include an informative presentation and question and answer time.

Request an application starting September 14 and get the process rolling!

Dates to Remember:

September 14, 2009 Round 3 applications available

October 7, 2009 SD Schools Walk and iWalk International Kick-Off



Putting the Brakes on Childhood Obesity

Kids Walk

Parents and teachers agree: new "lifestyle" approaches to physical education – especially activities children can continue to do after they graduate – offer the best solution to childhood obesity. Polls conducted recently on behalf of

the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) in partnership with the National Education Association showed that nine out of 10 parents and teachers want schools to provide more opportunities for physical activity, especially

activities that all children can enjoy and continue for the rest of their lives. "We're encouraged that parents and teachers see eye to eye on the opportunities schools have to help reverse the childhood obesity epidemic" said RWJF

Putting the Brakes on Childhood Obesity cont. from page 1

President Risa Lavizzo-Mourey. She noted that teachers and parents also connect physical activity with improved academic performance and behavior.

Increasingly sedentary lifestyles have contributed to the childhood obesity epidemic. During the past two decades, the percentage of children ages 6-11 who are overweight has doubled; the percentage of overweight teens has tripled. Meanwhile, children's walking trips to school have declined by 60 percent. The average American child spends more than an hour a day

inside a car! "Schools can become part of the solution by offering healthier choices and opportunities for kids to be more physically active," said former Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona.

South Dakota Coordinated School Health is the sponsor for "South Dakota Schools Walk". Their goal is to fight childhood obesity through walking activities through out the school year. South Dakota Schools walk provides free incentives for classes and schools that participate in this program. For more information or to reg-

ister go to: <http://doe.sd.gov/oess/schoolhealth/sdwalks/index.asp>

October is "International Walk to School Month" with the kick off activity on October 7, 2009. Register for this event and you will receive access to downloadable materials, including templates for printing stickers, certificates and puzzles, the chance to win prizes for your school and a weekly e-newsletter leading up to Walk to School Day with tips for holding a great event. More information is found at: <http://www.walktoschool-usa.org/>

Economic Consequences of Weight Issues Angela Olson SD SRTS Coordinator

Recently I attended a meeting where a gentleman challenged me on the cost to tax payers for the SRTS program. His concern was valid, we as tax payers foot the bill for government programs. Each of us should be concerned about where our tax dollars go.

This article is in response to the gentleman's concerns.

One reason the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program was created was because of the increase in childhood obesity trends across the Nation. SRTS goals include: "make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age".

What does this have to do with taxpayers money?

There are economic consequences to our nations increase in obesity trends. Simply stated, if our children go in to adulthood with healthier habits, it is not only good for their quality of life but it also reduces the nations health care costs; it's good for the nations

pocket book.

"Overweight and obesity and their associated health problems have a significant economic impact on the U.S health care system. Studies taken in 1998 estimate that \$78.5 billion was spend across the nation on medical expenses related to overweight and obesity conditions. Approximately half of these costs were paid by Medicaid and Medicare. In the state of South Dakota it was estimated that \$195 million was spent on weight related medical expenses, with \$81 million coming from Medicaid and Medicare." (CDC http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/economic_consequences.htm)

"For obese children between 5 and 10 years of age, 50 percent already have at least one heart disease risk factor, such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure. Obese children also have an increased risk of Type II diabetes, aggravated existing asthma, sleep apnea, decreased physical functioning and other negative physical effects.

Studies show that overweight children and adolescents are more likely to become obese adults."



See <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/index.html>

The SRTS program is designed to use educational and encouragement activities to change the trends of inactivity among our youth while using law enforcement efforts and engineering improvements to increase safety.

The initial cost of a SRST Comprehensive Program can be expensive but the end result has the potential to decrease heath care costs in the future.

With obesity issues costing the South Dakota tax payers millions each year it only makes sense to promote proactive programs that change trends rather than pouring money in to the end results of our unhealthy lifestyle.

Pick-Up and Drop-Off Issues Angela Olson SD SRTS

Last spring I had the misfortune to be driving by our local Middle School just as the kids were being dismissed from class.

I was driving in the eastbound lane and was in the process of slowing down for a stop light ahead, when a mother traveling in the west bound lane stopped in the middle of traffic and waved at her child to get in the car. This child without looking ran mid-block through two lanes of traffic and did not even seem to notice that I had to slam on my breaks to keep from hitting him with my car. I was too busy calming my racing heart to see what the mothers reaction to this

near miss was or to see if she even notice the catastrophe her moment of carelessness had almost created.

The school had a safe pick-up and drop-off zone, signal lights and a cross walk yet all of these safety measures where disregarded to make it more convenient for her as a driver.

Some parents are reluctant to allow their children to walk or bicycle to school due to the traffic congestion and safety problems at the school site, creating an increasing cycle of more traffic problems and less walking.

SRTS funds can not be used to make drop-off and pick-up zones more con-

venient for drivers, but SRTS funds can be used for driver safety campaigns, law enforcement and child education to encourage safer behaviors.

The National Safe Routes to School Web site includes the toolkit “Student Drop-off and Pick-up”. This toolkit helps readers identify problems associated with the drop off and pick up of students at school, and identify engineering , enforcement, education and encouragement solutions to these problems.

This toolkit is found at: http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/dropoff_pickup/index.cfm

Back Packs Stacy Fowler, M.S., C.P.T

As we encourage walking to school for a healthier lifestyle, we need to be aware that improperly carried backpacks can lead to back pain and poor posture. Some 7,000 backpack injuries are reported every year.

As a general rule of thumb a child's backpack should not weigh more than 10 percent of their body weight. For example, if the child weighs 65 pounds the back pack should never weigh more than 6 1/2 pounds.

Here are a few points when purchasing, packing and carrying backpacks:

- Pack heavier items first so that they are closest to the body.
- Kids should pack only what they need and plan to use. The rest should be left in their desk or locker.
- The backpack should not hang more than four inches below the waistline—always try the backpack on first before you buy it
- When lifting the pack, bend at both knees and lift with the legs.
- Always wear both straps so that the weight is distributed evenly.
- If heavy loads are routine and it's feasible, you might try going with a wheeled backpack.
- Look for functional features like pockets and compartments to help spread the weight out.
- Attach a luggage tag to the pack with an adult's contact information so that if it's misplaced, it might find it's way back to you

Site's of Interest

SD SRTS

<http://www.sddot.com/srts/>

International Walk to School

<http://www.walktoschool-usa.org/>

South Dakota School's Walk

<http://doe.sd.gov/oess/schoolhealth/sdwalks/index.asp>

Pick-Up and Drop-Off Toolkit

http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/dropoff_pickup/index.cfm

What's Happening in SRTS

School Year 2009/2010: South Dakota Schools Walk Program

September 14, 2009: SRTS Applications Round 3 Available

September 21, 2009—February 5, 2010 Community Presentations Available

October 7, 2009: International Walk to School Day

October 2009: International Walk to School Month

March 24, 2010: Applications Due



Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

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We are on the Web
www.sddot.com/srts/

Where it's safe, get kids
walking and biking.
Where it's not safe,
make it safe.



November/December Newsletter Will Include:

How Cold is too Cold?

Encouragement, Constructive Rewards

Child Pedestrians

Please send pictures and news articles of your Safe Routes to School activities to: angela.olson@state.sd.us

Article ideas, comments and questions are also welcomed



Family Bike Rides Buzz Feldman, High Gear Cyclery, Inc

If you're a parent who wants to get your kids into biking, start with an examination of your attitudes and expectations. If you ride for exercise, you won't get much on your family rides (unless you pull a trailer). And, if you ride for escape and freedom, scratch that as well.

What you will get is the great satisfaction of doing something fun and healthy (and that you love) with your family. Plus, kids who bike when they're growing up are a lot more likely to keep riding as adults.

Do's and Don'ts

- Do make sure your kids have well-functioning bicycles, well-inflated tires and well fitted helmets before you start.
- Do feed and hydrate your kids well before, during and after a ride. Frequent short breaks keep kids happy.

- Do practice your "patient voice." In a 10-mile ride, you may need to say, "stay to the right, please" 100 times. Try to sound just as patient the hundredth time as the first.
- Do ride a little behind (6-8 feet) and a little "outside" (1-2 feet to the left) of your child. This allows you to keep an eye on their every move and "shelter" them from overtaking traffic.
- Don't push your luck on distance. When you plan a route, always go shorter than you think the kids can handle. Let them talk you into going farther rather than begging you to quit.
- Don't mix kids who can ride with ones that can't. Do your "how-to-ride" training one on one or stick to the trailer or trail-a-bike until the child can ride well on her own.

- Don't mix kids of widely divergent age groups. Teenagers and six-year olds don't ride well together. You may have the patience to help your kindergartener along at 5 mph; your teen probably doesn't.

Different Ages, Different Plans

Ages one to five: The pre-biking years-A trailer for under age three or a trail a bike for ages four and up.

Ages six to 10: The Learning -how years. Once they can pedal and balance, you need to teach them how to interact with other trail and road users. This means they need to pay attention, ride a straight line and stay right.

Ages 10 to teen: Now they're ready for anything: off road riding, longer distances. For more information on family bike rides go to: <http://highgearbike.com/page.cfm?pageID=155>