

Walk & Bike to School in Peel



It is everyone's responsibility

Peel School Safety Committee



A photograph of three children riding bicycles on a paved path that curves through a wooded area. The child in the foreground is wearing a helmet and a dark jacket. The path is surrounded by trees and tall grass. The image has a blue tint.

We all want...

- A safe community for encouraging our children to walk and bike to school
- Healthy children with lifelong habits for learning and positive behaviour

Safe School Community



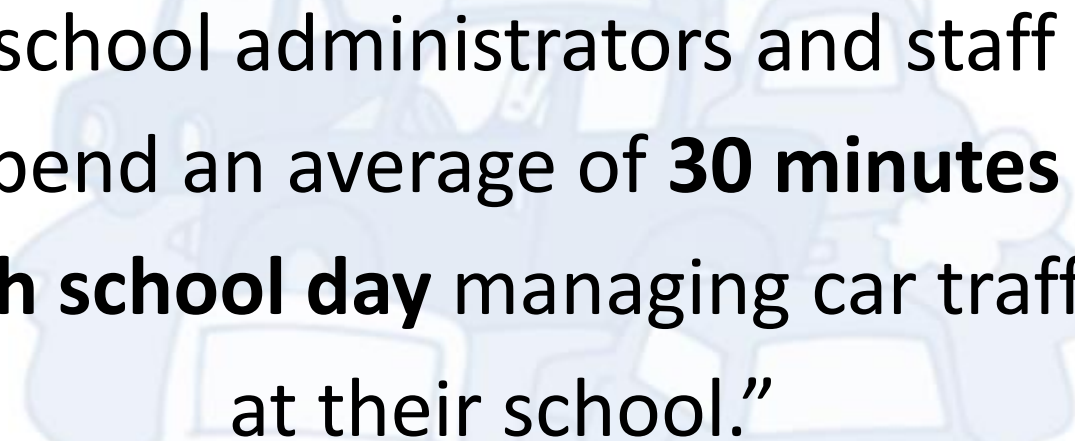
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Congestion

“Communities in the GTA must begin encouraging a significant shift from cars to transit and active transportation. Otherwise, by 2031, road capacity, including currently built and new infrastructure, will handle less than 40% of the projected vehicle demand.”

School Drop off Congestion



“school administrators and staff
spend an average of **30 minutes**
each school day managing car traffic
at their school.”

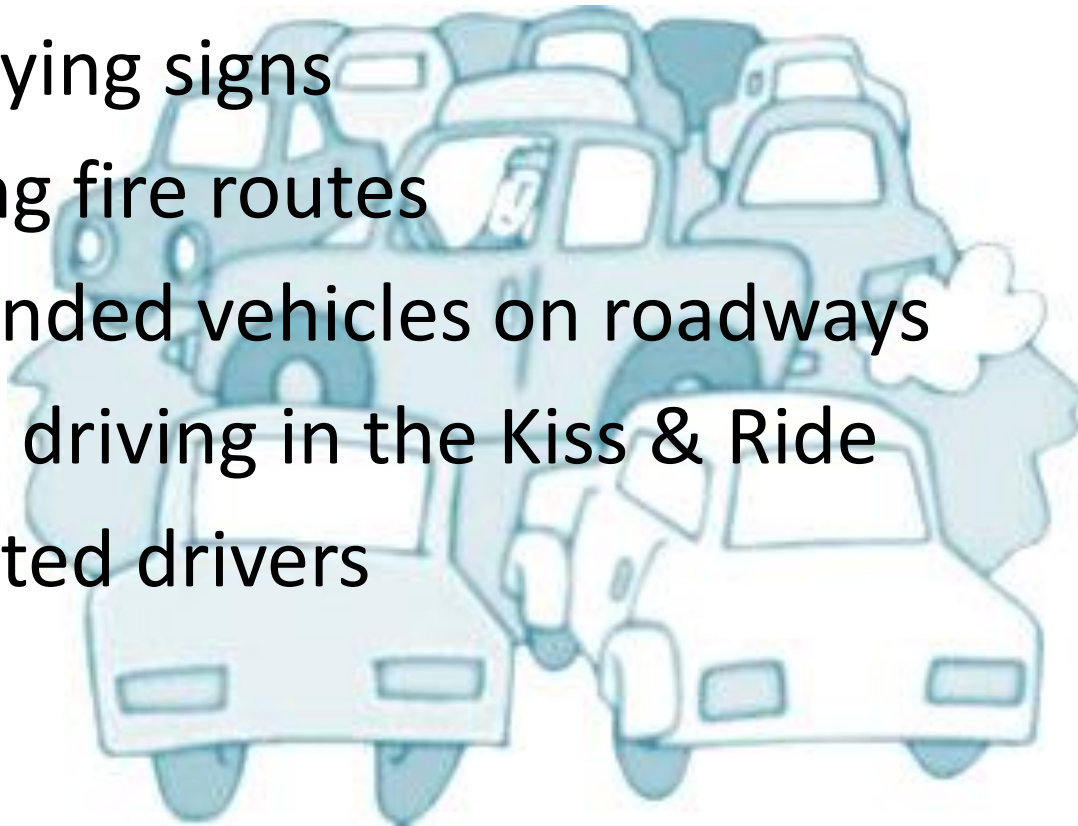
Work & School Daily Trips



- 53% were shorter than 7 km
- 18% were less than 2 km
- 81% were taken by car!

Traffic Safety Concerns Around Schools

- Excess speeds in school zones
- Disobeying signs
- Blocking fire routes
- Unattended vehicles on roadways
- Unsafe driving in the Kiss & Ride
- Distracted drivers



Be Aware of your Surroundings

- Reduce your speed
- Obey all traffic signs



A yellow school bus is stopped on a road. The words "SCHOOL BUS" are visible on the top front. Below the windshield, a sign reads "DO NOT PASS WHEN RED LIGHTS FLASH". The bus number "33" is on the right side. Red flashing lights are visible on the roof and front. A red octagonal stop sign is positioned in front of the bus. Two children are crossing the street in front of the bus. A white car is behind the bus, and a dark car is to the left. The background shows trees and a utility pole.

Stop for School Buses with Overhead Lights Flashing

- Protect our children
- Avoid a \$ 400 fine for Failure to Stop!

Stop for your Crossing Guard

- You must remain stopped until the children and Crossing Guard have safely cleared the roadway



Keep NO PARKING Zones Clear

- Be mindful not to stop in designated NO PARKING zones
- Stopped vehicles could obstruct the visibility of drivers and pedestrians



Keep Fire Routes Clear

- Be sure not to block fire routes
- Blocking fire routes can delay emergency response times



When Using the Kiss & Ride...

- Obey posted signs
- Be mindful of marked traffic lanes
- Be respectful
- Don't be distracted by texting or talking on your cell phone while driving
- Ensure your children are buckled in when approaching a Kiss & Ride



Walking & Cycling Safety

- Make eye contact to ensure drivers see you!



Costs to All of Us

- Productivity – our time!
- Road maintenance
- Construction
- Enforcement
- Healthcare
- Environmental
- Insurance



How Do We Improve Cycling Safety?

- Small increases in perception of safety encourage more people to cycle
- The more bikes on the road, the safer it is for all!
- Better marked bike lanes reduce accident risk by 50%
- Education & consistent enforcement

School Health Benefits – *Get Fit!*



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Current Physical Activity Levels

84% of kids 3-4

7% of kids 5-11

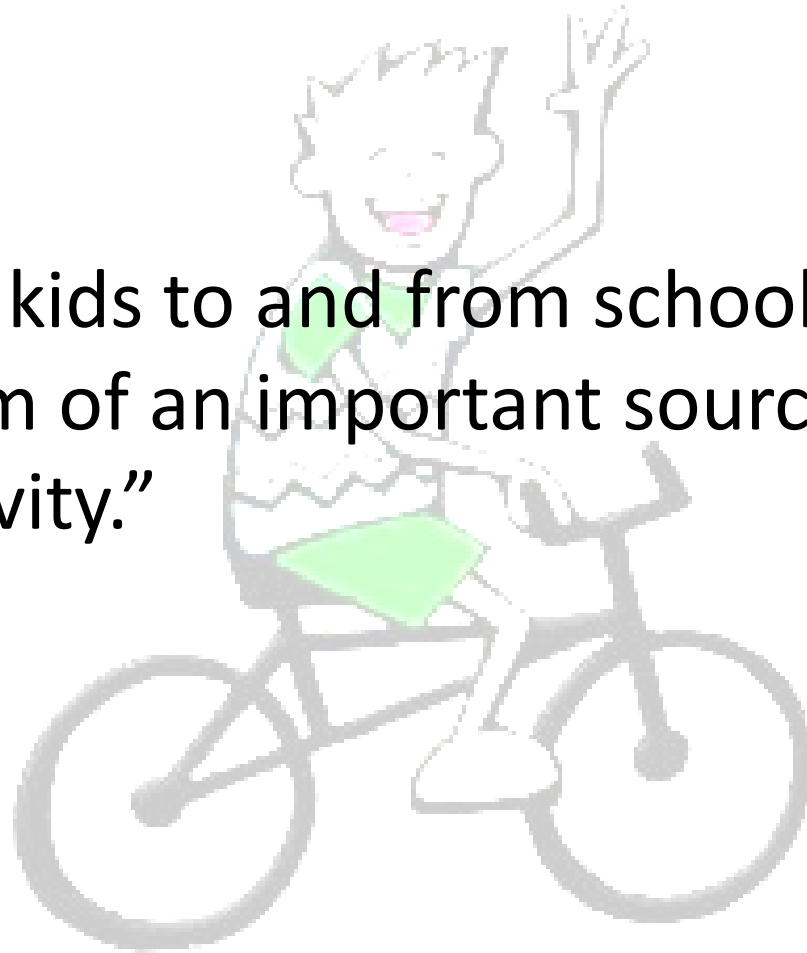
4% of kids 12-17

get 60 minutes / day

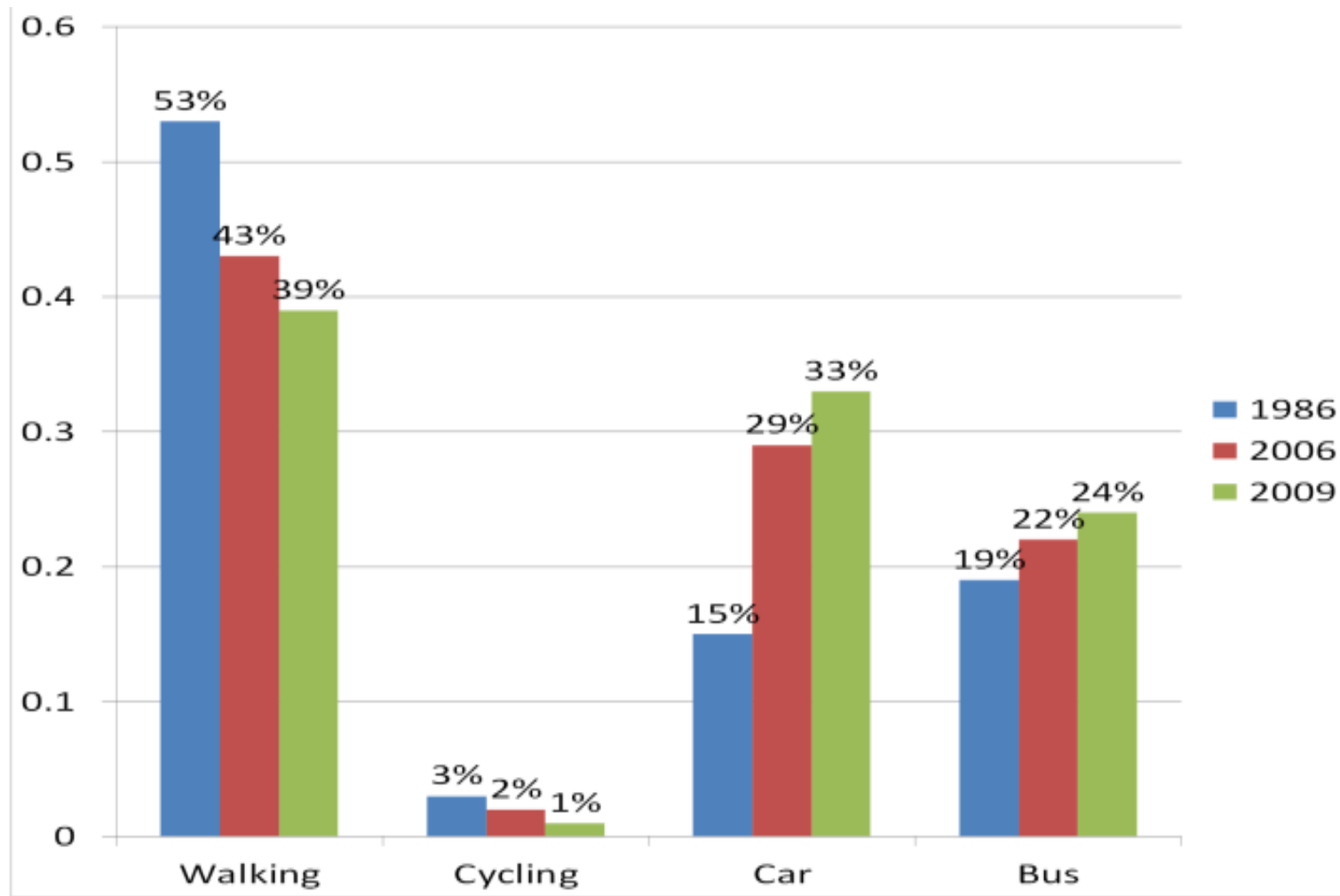
moderate to vigorous physical activity

Active Transportation for Physical Activity Goals

“Driving our kids to and from school may be robbing them of an important source of daily physical activity.”



School Transportation Trends



1986 & 2006 data: Metrolinx. Stepping It Up – Final Report. (2012)

2009 data: Metrolinx. GTHA School Travel Household Attitudinal Study Report. (2010)

“We have engineered physical activity out of our daily lives. Until we engineer it back in, we will continue to have a health problem as a consequence”



Dr. David Mowat,
Former Peel Medical Officer
of Health. (2014)

Overweight / Obese Peel grade 7-12 Students

- 37% of boys
- 27% of girls

Link to Disease

- Heart & Lung Disease
 - 7,006 new cases of heart disease / year in GTHA₁
 - 1/3 boys & almost ½ girls Peel Gr 9 students **failed** their cardiorespiratory fitness scores₂
- Type II Diabetes -- “an economic tsunami”₁
 - 57,000 new cases of diabetes / year₁

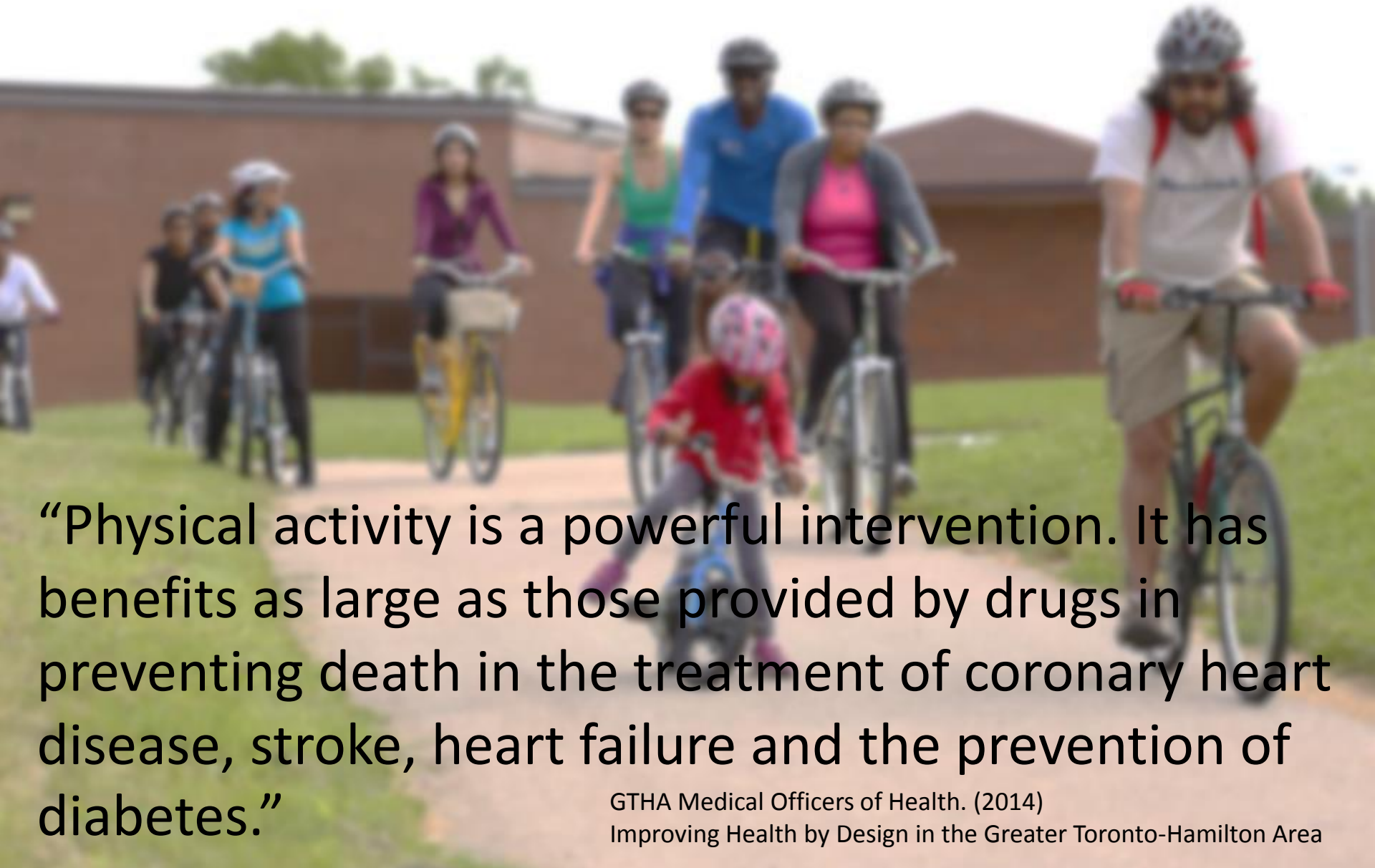
Vehicle Air Pollution

- “Group 1 carcinogenic to humans”¹
- Particularly susceptible: young kids, elderly, pregnant women, & those with heart disease, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, obesity & diabetes²

1. International Agency for Research on Cancer. (2014)

2. GTHA Medical Officers of Health. Improving Health by Design in the Greater Toronto-Hamilton Area. (2014)

Active Transportation Solution



“Physical activity is a powerful intervention. It has benefits as large as those provided by drugs in preventing death in the treatment of coronary heart disease, stroke, heart failure and the prevention of diabetes.”

GTHA Medical Officers of Health. (2014)
Improving Health by Design in the Greater Toronto-Hamilton Area

Stranger-Danger risk is very, very low

- A child is vastly more likely to have a heart attack than be abducted by a stranger and child heart attacks are so rare that most parents (correctly) never consider the risk

Cultural Norm Shift

*“A few parents that had encouraged their children to walk to school noted **disapproval from other parents**; they were seen to be acting in an **irresponsible manner.**”*

Greenest City, Informa Market Research. Small Steps Large Rewards, Active & Safe Routes to School Resource Manual, June 2001, p.13

**“Good parents allow
Active Transportation”**

Active Transportation

A green-tinted image of a balance scale, tilted to the left, symbolizing that benefits outweigh risks. The scale has two pans hanging from a central beam. The left pan is lower than the right pan, indicating it is heavier. The entire image is rendered in a monochromatic green color.

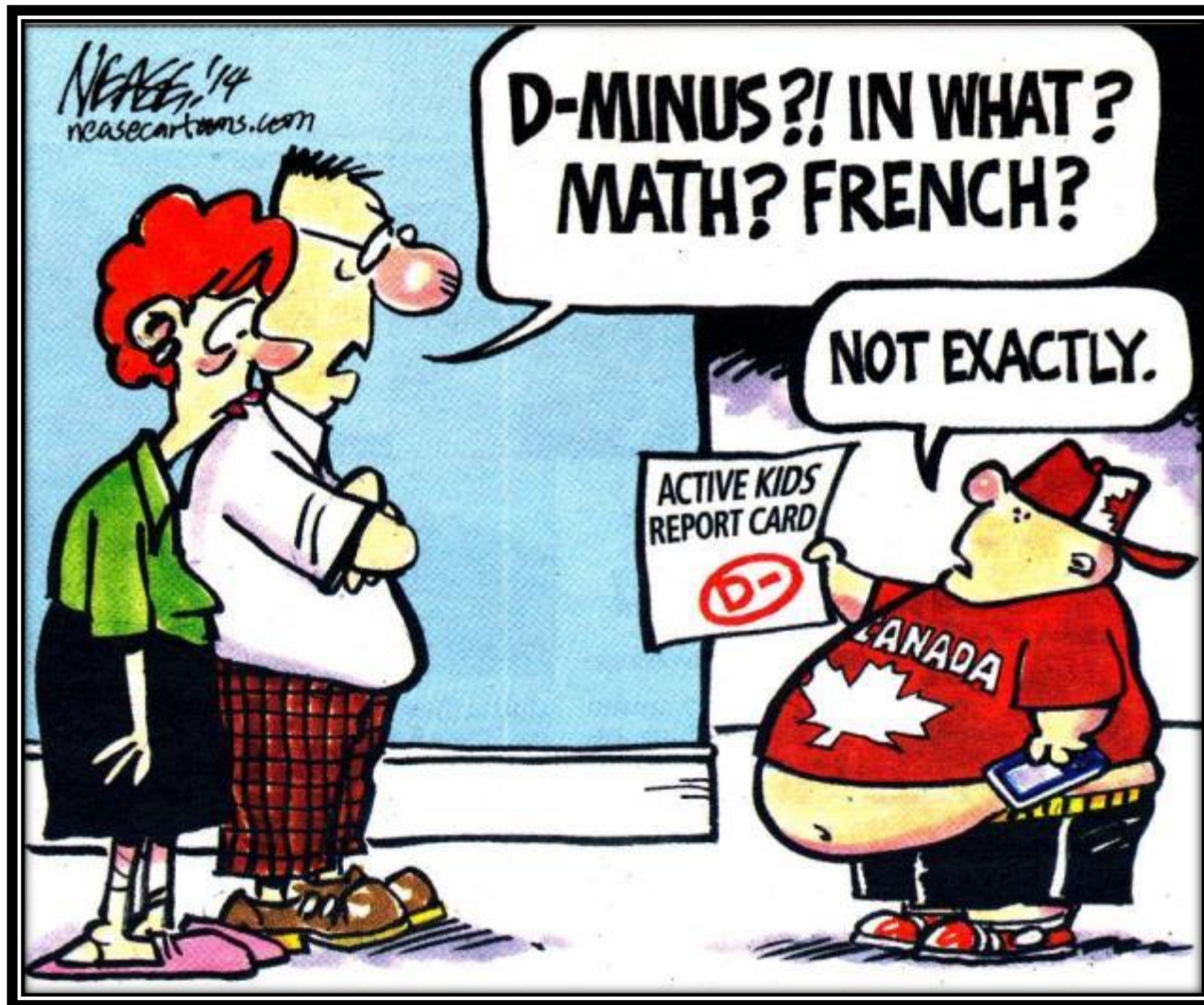
Benefits outweigh Risks
9:1 to 96:1

School Academic Benefits



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Academic Performance

- Grade 3 kids who exercised and biked to school improved their ability to concentrate equivalent to being half a year ahead in school

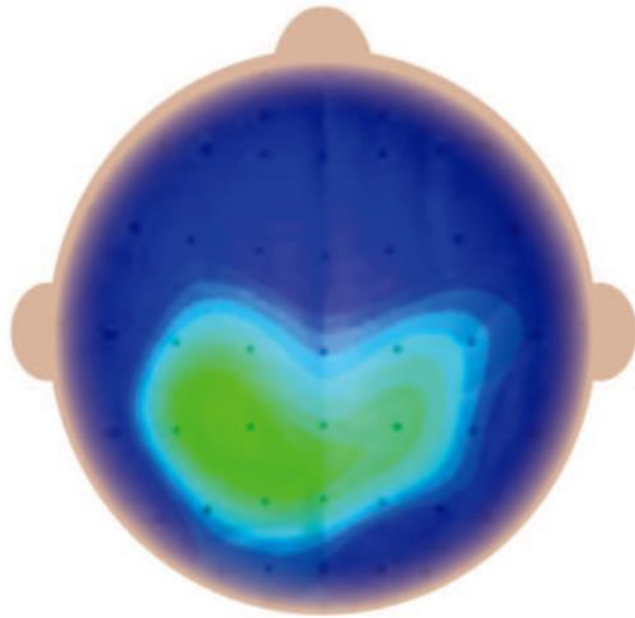


Academic Performance

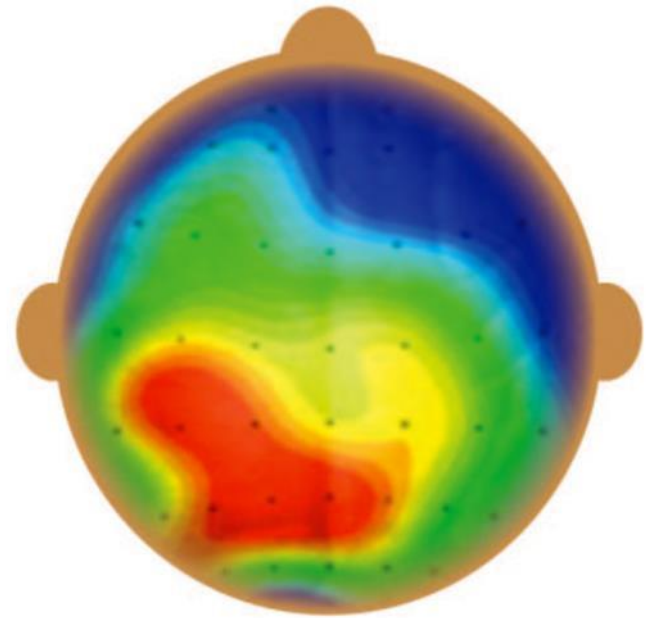
- Exercise from travelling to school by walking or cycling improves ability to concentrate for about **four hours** into the school day

Neuroscience - Physically Active Kids have more Active Brains

- Brain scans of students taking a test



- After 20 minutes of sitting quietly



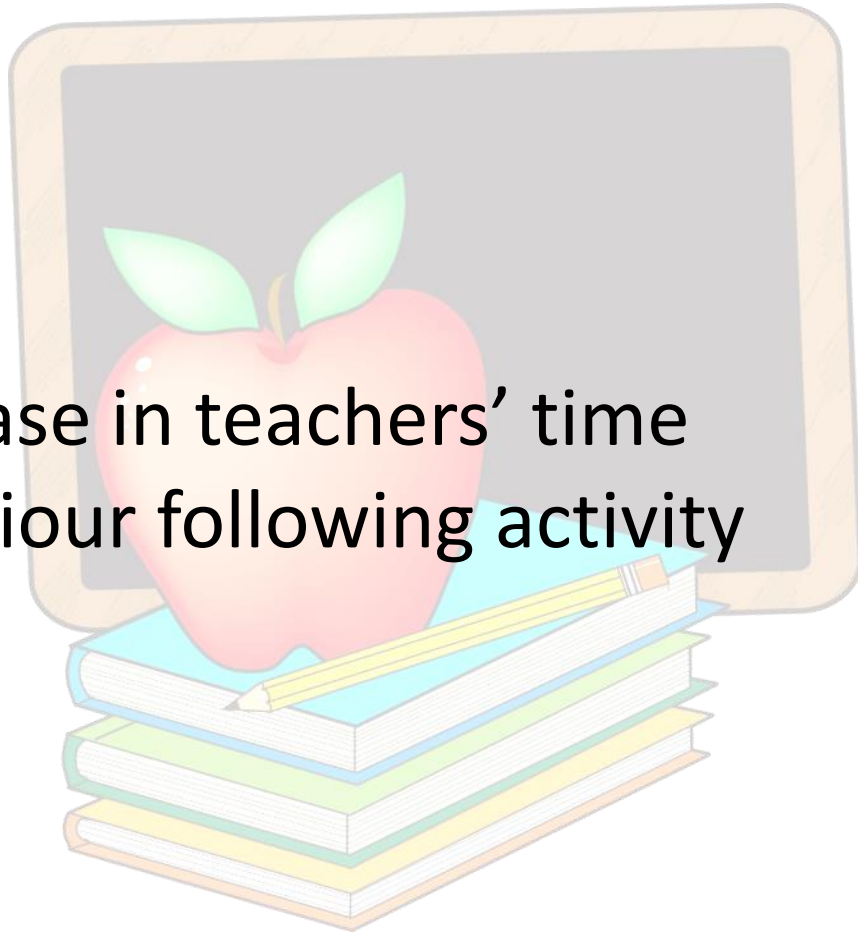
- After 20 minutes of walking

Active Kids Learn Better

- Standardized test scores increased by 6% over 3 years

Better Classroom Behaviour

- Over 20% decrease in teachers' time managing behaviour following activity



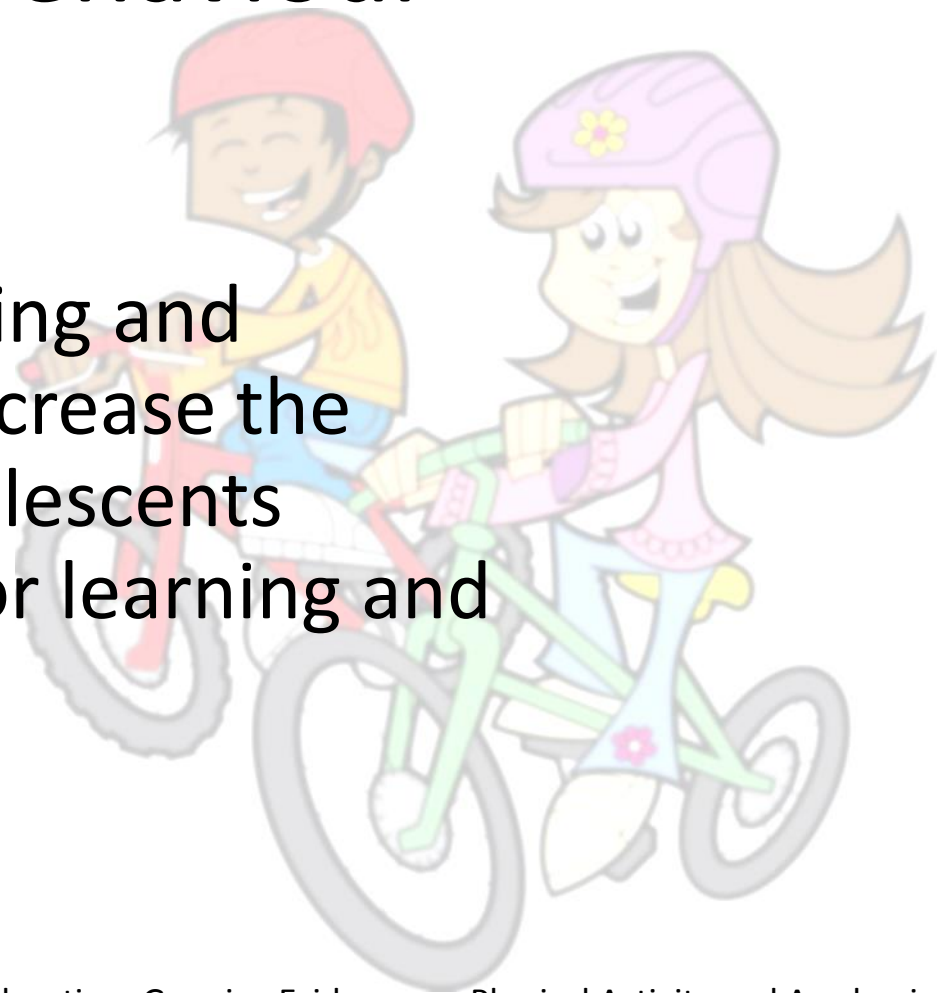
Academic Performance

- Increased physical activity is evidence-based strategy to improve academic performance



Lifelong Habits for Learning & Positive Behaviour

“Experiences such as biking and walking to school may increase the odds of children and adolescents forming lifelong habits for learning and for positive behaviors.”



School Travel Planning

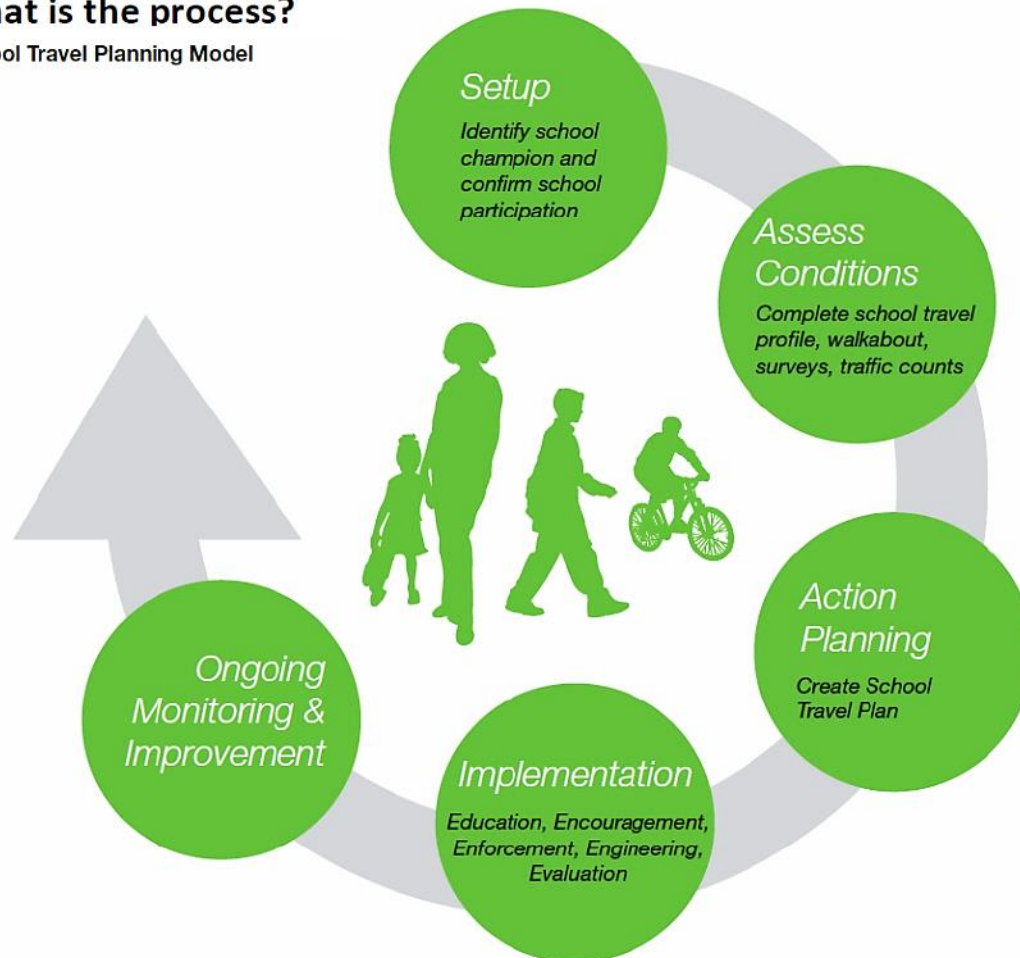
- “an effective tool to positively impact school travel choices”

School Travel Planning in Action in Ontario: Successes and Lessons in Active and Sustainable School Transportation, Metrolinx. (2013); Photo courtesy of: Green Communities Canada, Active & Safe Routes to School, <http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/>

School Travel Planning

What is the process?

School Travel Planning Model



What You Can Do Now!

- Drive your kids to school only when necessary
- Obey traffic signs and Crossing Guards to keep children safe
- Dress your children so they can walk or cycle to school in all weather
- Work with School Administrators to set up School Travel Planning for safe active routes to school in your neighbourhood