



SCHOOL'S BACK IN - DRIVE SAFE!

Tips for safe driving during school season

It's back to school time and our roads will be busy again with school buses, a higher volume of children walking on the road and parents pick-

ing up and dropping off in school zones. Drivers need to be cautious and take extra care on the road. As drivers, we can affect pedestrian safety by how

we act and react behind the wheel.

Each year in Canada more than 4,000 children are hit by motor vehicles while playing outdoors or walking to school, to friends' homes, to sports activities or to a neighbourhood shop. "Younger children especially often lack the skills to make safe decisions. In Canada, children ages five to nine years old remain at high risk for pedestrian injury² and as drivers, we can predict and prevent these collisions by driving defensively," said Young Drivers of Canada President Peter Christianson.

Drivers should be aware of conditions and take pre-

cautions such as:

- Being aware of school zone signage
- Reducing speed in school zones
- Waiting for children to complete their crossing before proceeding - (they often change their minds)
- Stopping at least 20 meters behind a school bus when the upper red lights begin to flash and wait until the flashing stops. Motorists traveling in both directions must stop for a school bus except if the road is divided by a median
- Being prepared!: School buses stop at all railway crossings and are required to open their door, but are not required to use the upper flashing red lights

so there is not the usual warning.

- Changing lanes early for bicycles (they should be treated as another vehicle by giving them ample space). Be vigilant, many kids ride skateboards,

scooters or roller blades on the road so be prepared for a possible fall by providing extra space.

- Leaving plenty of time to get to your destination - running late

can cause aggressive driving behaviors

- Avoiding driver distractions such as cell phones, eating or drinking, and personal grooming which take your focus off the road.



SLEEPERS AWAKE: 8-year-old Andrew Rudisi demonstrates the early morning hustle and bustle can be the hardest part for some kids as they adjust to school times. - Marie Shadbolt photo

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Please remember to drive safe

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Early evening hours dangerous

Late summer or fall may bring cooler temperatures, but will never stop kids from playing outdoors, whether it is riding bikes, jumping in the leaves or tossing a baseball.

These early evening hours are a dangerous

time for children. Nearly half of traffic-related child pedestrian deaths occurred after school from 4pm to 6pm in 2001, according to the National Safe Kids Campaign.

These statistics are attributed to the fact that kids

can't always judge speed, space and distance. Such capacities are beyond their control - these senses don't develop fully until age 10. That's why children under 10 years old should never cross the street by themselves.

Make it a point to teach kids the rules of the road. Teach them how to obey traffic signals. Tell them to stop and cross the street at corners and crosswalks, and not to enter the street from between parked cars or from behind bushes or shrubs.

Tell children to look in both directions twice before crossing the street.

They should make eye contact with drivers before crossing the street - just because they can see a driver doesn't mean he/she can see them.

Prohibit play in driveways, streets, parking lots and unfenced yards adjacent to streets. A high number of children from birth to age 2 suffer non-traffic-related pedestrian injuries in places like driveways, parking lots and sidewalks.

Teaching your children these tips can help reduce unnecessary accidents and keep them doing what kids love to do - playing outside.

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