



Back to school basics: road safety education



With some 5 million students across Canada heading back to school this year, getting to and from school safely is top of mind for parents, educators and kids.¹

In 2017 alone, more than 300 pedestrians and cyclists were killed in a collision with a motor vehicle, while another 1,800 were seriously injured.²



Issue #1

Dangerous and distracted driving

Dangerous driving around schools, such as speeding, texting while driving or not obeying traffic signs, puts kids at higher risk of getting seriously injured.



Background



According to a study by the Hospital for Sick Children and York University, 88% of schools surveyed said unsafe parking and child drop-offs, such as dropping children off on the opposite side of a street from a school, are some of the most common dangerous driving behaviours.³

Tips



Better infrastructure means better drivers.⁴

- Lowering motor vehicle speeds can be an effective way to improve road safety, as higher speeds increase the severity of crashes, and pedestrian and cyclist fatalities increase as motor vehicle speeds go up.
- Traffic-calming measures, such as speed bumps or narrowing lanes, have been proven to slow traffic and reduce collisions by as much as 45%.
- Improving the safety of crossings by installing crosswalks or traffic lights can help reduce motor vehicle speeds, separate pedestrians from traffic and increase pedestrian visibility.



Issue #2

Pedestrian and cyclist behaviour

The problem isn't just with drivers. There is a serious lack of education around safe practices (e.g., while crossing the road) and road signage among cyclists and pedestrians too, which contributes to higher rates of road incidents.



Background



According to RSA Insurance, half (50%) of pedestrians aren't sure when cyclists have the right of way, and a third (33%) of cyclists have seen unfamiliar road signs recently.⁵

Tips



Educate yourself on best practices when driving in school zones.⁶

- Don't double park in a school zone—this blocks visibility for other children and vehicles.
- Try to make eye contact with children who are waiting to cross the road.
- Follow speed limits.
- Do not leave your car idling if you are exiting the vehicle.



Issue #3

Lack of education

It's clear that more education is needed, and all road users agree.



Background



57% of cyclists and 44% of pedestrians want their cities to invest in driver education.⁷

Tips



Model safe road usages for your children.⁸

- If cycling with your child, always indicate your intentions by using hand signals or by ringing your bell.
- To identify possible hazards, practise riding or walking the route ahead of the first day back.
- If riding or walking, know your abilities and limits—make sure to watch for drivers and passengers getting in and out of parked cars, and be aware of the risk of car doors opening.
- Put away items that can distract you, such as mobile phones.
- Limit your speed in school zones.



Doing your part

Whether you walk, cycle or drive, we all have roles and responsibilities in keeping our roads safe and our children out of harm's way.

Improved infrastructure, greater education and little more empathy are some of the ways we can improve road safety in Canada.



Background

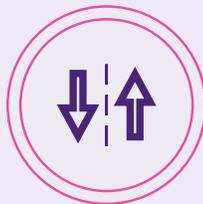
According to RSA Insurance, cyclists (77%), drivers (88%) and pedestrians (73%) agree that they collectively play a role in improving road safety.

Benefits⁹

Healthier children



Decongestion of traffic



Safer school zones



Better academic performance



Talk to your broker for more safety resources like this from RSA.



¹ Statistics Canada ² Transport Canada ³ Dangerous student car drop-off behaviours and child pedestrian-motor vehicle collisions: an observational study, Traffic Injury Prevention and Sick Kids ⁴ Walking is an easy, inexpensive, and healthy way for kids to get to school, Tcat.ca ⁵ According to a survey of 1,560 Canadians conducted between December 15 and 22, 2017, by Maru/Matchbox, with a margin of error of +/- 2.6%, 19 times out of 20 ⁶ Back to School: Safety Tips for Drivers, sernis.com ⁷ Ibid. ⁸ 10 tips for Safe-to-School Cycling, bicyclingtrade.com.au ⁹ Ontario Active School Travel