



North Central Wisconsin Safe Routes to School

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
210 McClellan St., Suite 210
Wausau, WI 54403

SUBJECT: Walking/Biking Club

Dear Safe Routes to School Partners,

Thank you for participating in the Safe Routes to School Walking/Biking Club! As a school, you are in a unique position to make this program successful. Walking and biking clubs are beneficial in many ways and have been proven to increase academic performance, improve classroom behavior, and decrease childhood obesity. In addition, they lead to environmental benefits including a decrease in traffic congestion and improved air quality.

In the Walking/Biking Club Handout you will find a variety of resources, including what a walking/biking club is, how to get started, and how to select the best materials for your school.

Additional resources are available on the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission SRTS website:

<http://www.ncwrpc.org/srts/index.html> Then click on: "Keep Going!" in the header.

For more information or assistance, please contact Fred Heider at 715-849-5510 Ext 310.

Best Regards,

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WALKING/BIKING CLUB HANDOUT

What is a walking/biking club program?

Walking/biking clubs encourage children to walk or bike to and from school by making it fun and rewarding. Programs can reward students for walking from home to school and back or for walking a pre-determined amount of time during the school day. Walking can take place on a school track, path, or in a field on the school playground. Mileage can be tracked on frequent walker punch cards or with electronic scanning software programs. Prizes that are consistent with various mileage goals can be given to incent students and recognize their achievements.



Why should my school have one?

Children need to be active! The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that children and adolescents get a minimum of 60 minutes of exercise per day. Active children are more likely to have higher fitness levels, lower body fat, and stronger bones and muscles. Active school-aged children demonstrate improved cognition (e.g. academic performance and memory) and reduced symptoms of depression. Walking one mile each way to and from school translates to 2/3 of the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity.

Common questions and concerns

Who organizes walking/biking club?

It varies by school, but usually a teacher, principal, or volunteer will organize the program. The Safe Routes to School task force can also be a resource for your school.

What age groups are best suited for walking/biking club?

Elementary and middle school students.

I want to start a walking/biking club, where do I start?

While walking/biking clubs are not expensive to maintain, some funding is needed. Potential funders include your school PTA/PTO, health department, and other local businesses and non-profits. Some common costs to consider:

- **EZ Scan or EZ Tally Software.** Fitness Finders (www.fitnessfinders.net) offers an app to electronically track miles walked by students. The EZ scan software is \$150 and the EZ Tally Software is \$50.
- **Prizes and Incentives.** Popular prizes include toe tokens, water bottles, drawstring bags, and restaurant gifts cards. Larger prizes are generally given for larger mileage goals. Toe tokens are \$65 for 1000 and can be strung on shoelace necklaces.
- **Printing.** If a paper method is chosen, there are printing costs for punch cards and mileage reports as needed.



How to start a walking/biking club

1. **Outline program specifics.** Determine when and how students can accumulate mileage (e.g., for walking and biking? to and from school or also during school?) Try starting the club on a specific day, such as National Walk to School Day, Earth Day, or after a school assembly. A walking school bus could automatically be enrolled in such a club.
2. **Obtain Volunteers.** Volunteers may be needed to supervise, punch cards, or run the EZ scan application before, after, or during school. Older students may be able to assist with volunteer efforts.
3. **Select a tracking method.** Determine whether paper punch cards, or an electronic option such as EZ Scan/EZ Tally will be used.
4. **Develop a reporting system.** Creating periodic reports to share with administration, school board members, teachers, and parents will help to create awareness and generate excitement. The reports could include number of participants, number of miles walked or biked, and pictures. EZ software generates the summary reports automatically.
5. **Advertise the program.** The club can be advertised through:
 - Parent letters
 - School posters
 - Daily announcements
 - School newsletters
 - School website
 - Notes home
6. **Generate enthusiasm.** Walking and biking clubs are a great way to get students excited about being physically active and healthy. There are many ways to increase participation:
 - School assembly emphasizing the importance of physical activity specifically integrating the walking/biking club
 - Students input on punch card design
 - Create a walking wall to showcase the club and cumulative mileage walked
 - Challenge students to walk around the United States
 - Offer incentives



Walking/biking club program selection

The tracking system that is best suited to your walking/biking club depends on the needs of your particular school. Some suggested tracking methods include:

- Punch cards
- Fitness Finders EZ Tally
- Fitness Finders EZ Scan

Punch Cards

Provide each student with a punch card each time they walk or bike to school and/or each time they complete a specified distance (e.g., 1 mile) during the school day. You can also hand out tally sticks to track laps or miles. At the end of each day you count the total number of tally sticks. Create an excel spreadsheet listing all participating students in alphabetical order and the number of home to school trips and/or laps completed. When each student reaches specified milestones, you can reward them accordingly.



Fitness Finders EZ tally

EZ tally is an online database that helps to log and organize walking/biking club data. It can be used to record laps, track awards, print certificates, and keep track of walking statistics. All data is entered manually for this program. First, designate distance or trip objectives for each category. Next, create a list for the teacher. Select the class that is walking and enter the number of miles for each student. The website will automatically update which award each student has earned based on the number of miles they have walked. You can re-view each student and which awards they have received by clicking on the awards sheet button. You can also review all of your walking/biking data by clicking on the stats button.



Fitness Finders EZ scan

EZ scan uses the same computer software as EZ tally, but additionally has an electronic barcode scanner that electronically uploads student walking data. Using an iPad or Android tablet, EZ scan reads the students barcodes using the built in camera and record the lap information. Set up your EZ tally account online, download the EZ scan app to your tablet, press the sync button and all of the information you uploaded in the EZ tally is synced into your tablet.





WALKING/BIKING CLUB

Punch your card each time you walk and bike to school!

Student Name: _____

School Name: _____

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



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