



BACKGROUND FACTS

ABOUT CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

CHILD PEDESTRIAN INJURIES AND DEATHS:

- Pedestrian injuries and deaths are the second leading cause of death for 5-12 year olds in California, following auto-occupant fatalities.¹
- Young Latinos and African Americans are disproportionately represented in pedestrian injuries and deaths, in California and other states.²
- The survival rate for pedestrians hit by a car:
 - At 20 mph, only 5% will die;
 - At 30 mph, about 40% of pedestrians will die and most others hit will be seriously injured;
 - At 40 mph, 80% of pedestrians will die, and nearly 100% will die when hit by vehicles travelling over 50 mph.³
- Of the children in California who reported problems walking to school, the top three problems they identified are:
 - Drivers do not yield to people crossing the street;
 - Drivers drove too fast; and
 - Sidewalks or paths start and stop.⁴

PUBLIC SUPPORT:

- 70% of the public supports local, state and federal funds “to ensure the safety of children to walk or ride bicycles to school,” according to a national survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Environmental Protection Agency.⁵
- “I urge teachers, parents and students across the Golden State to recognize the importance of physical fitness by walking to school. Community members can help by identifying pedestrian safety issues and advocating environmental and policy changes to create more walk-friendly neighborhoods. Together, we can ensure that children are able to lead healthy, active lifestyles.”⁶

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS:

- Auto emissions are the largest cause of air pollution in California.⁷
- More than 90% of all Californians live in areas with unhealthy levels of air pollution. Children's respiratory systems are especially at risk.⁸
- Long-term breathing in cities raises the risk of dying from lung cancer and is about as dangerous as living with a smoker.⁹

CHILDRENS' SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE:

- In California, one in three children and one in five teens is at risk of becoming overweight or already overweight.¹⁰
- In California, less than one in five children walk to school and approximately one in four walk home from school.¹¹
- Only 31% of children who live within 1 mile of school make the trip on foot. Only 2% of school children who live within 2 miles of school are by bicycle.¹²
- Fewer than half of California children, ages 9-11, got the recommended one hour or more of moderate and/or vigorous physical activity per day.¹³

Footnotes:

- 1) California Department of Health Services. Calculations from SWTRS dataset, 1999.
- 2) Surface Transportation Policy Project. *Mean Streets 2000* report.
- 3) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration literature review. DOT HS 809 02 October 1999.
- 4) California Department of Health Services. Unpublished Walk to School Day checklist data, 1999.
- 5) Centers for Disease Control. Unpublished data 2002, calculations from HealthStyles survey, 2000.
- 6) California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. September 30, 2005
- 7) The California 2000 Project.
- 8) The California 2000 Project.
- 9) American Medical Association. 2002.
- 10) California Department of Health Services. CalCHEEPS survey, 1999; CalTEENS survey, 1998.
- 11) California Department of Health Services. CalCHEEPS survey, 1999.
- 12) Centers for Disease Control. Calculations from the 1995 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey.
- 13) California Department of Health Services. CalCHEEPS survey, 1999.

Information about International Walk to School is available at: www.iwalktoschool.com
Visit the CA Walk to School Headquarters web site for complete citations for these facts at www.caphysicalactivity.org

