

# Pedestrian Safety Lesson Plan

## Subject

Navigating Traffic Environments Safely

## Age level

Recommended for children ages 10-14 years old

## Background

Children see, hear, and process information differently than adults and do not have the developmental skills to adequately deal with traffic. This puts kids under age 14 at a greater risk for pedestrian injuries than adults. After age 10 and during the preteen years, kids are exploring the world more independently and are learning to navigate traffic without the supervision of an adult. This safety activity will give children an opportunity to learn about the traffic environment, driver behavior, as well as the signs and signals that are present when they walk.

## Goal

The purpose of this activity is to prepare kids to walk safely around traffic, to be aware of their surroundings, and to learn about the safety resources that are present while they are walking. After participating in this activity students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of road safety/ traffic signs and safe crossing techniques.

## Discussion Topics

- Ask the students what the word “pedestrian” means. (Allow students time to try and describe the word.)
  - *A pedestrian is a person traveling on foot, whether it be walking or running. It comes from the Latin word “ped” which means “foot”.*
- Ask the students what the word “yield” means.
  - *Yield or give way traffic sign indicates that a driver of a vehicle must slow down and prepare to stop if necessary (usually while merging into traffic on another road) but does not need to stop if there is no reason to.*
- Ask the students what phrase “Right – of – Way” means.
  - *The legal right of a person, or vehicle to pass in front of another.*
- Ask the students who taught them how to walk in traffic and cross streets.
- Ask the students what they learned and what do they know already about pedestrian safety and have them make a list of their responses. \*
- Discuss why signs, signals, and laws are needed to keep pedestrians safe while they are walking
  - *Signs indicate to drivers and road users the legal, recommended way to behave on the road.*

- *Signals are used so that vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic are managed on the roads.*
- Discuss each road safety sign and why is each sign important or necessary? Ask the student the meanings and responses to common traffic signs they need to know for walking/crossing the street.
  - Show each sign and ask what message each sign gives to drivers and pedestrians
  - Traffic Light
  - Yield to Pedestrians
  - Don't Walk
  - Walk
- Ask the students if they have ever observed any of the signs during their walk to school or any other time they walk.
- Ask the children what should they do if the "Walk" signal starts flashing "Don't Walk" while they are still crossing the street?
- Ask the children if they have seen any other children do dangerous or safe things while walking.
- Ask the children if they have seen drivers do dangerous or safe things while they are walking or in their cars? Have they ever felt unsafe while walking? Why?
- Ask the children to make a list of all the things that they can do, wear or use to make them more visible when walking on or near the road.
- Ask the children if some roads and streets may be harder to cross than others. Why?
- Talk with the children about different sized vehicles and how some are easier to see and some are more difficult.

### **Activity: Safe Crossing Demonstration**

Using the signs and mock cars that were provided, have students roll play different situations they may experience as a pedestrian. Have students take on the role of a driver or a pedestrian and simulate the scenarios using the signs, cars, and create a crosswalk using masking tape (if indoors) or sidewalk chalk (if outside). Students should have an opportunity to hold the signs, be a driver, or be a pedestrian.

#### **Sample scenarios:**

- Use one of the *traffic light* signs (Red, yellow or green) and the **Walk or Don't Walk** sign. Have students demonstrate crossing the street with these signals present. Try with and without a crosswalk.
- Use the **Stop** sign and/or the **Yield to Pedestrian** sign and simulate a car and pedestrians. Try with and without a crosswalk.
- Use all of the signs (*stop sign, traffic lights, yield to pedestrian, don't walk and walk*) and have the students come up with 3 possible scenarios of what they have seen or might see while walking. Incorporate the cars and try with and without a crosswalk.

- Have students demonstrate looking Left, Right, Left at a crosswalk when cars are approaching.
- Demonstrate behaviors of a driver that follows rules (stopping at a crosswalk or the *stop sign*) and one that doesn't (*not stopping at a stop sign* or *not obeying the yield to pedestrian sign*)

## **Materials Provided for Lesson & Activity - 9 Signs**

**(1) Stop Sign-** Tells drivers to stop.

**(3) Traffic Lights-** Signaling device used at intersections to direct vehicles by using different colors.

*One lit red - Stop*

*One lit yellow- Prepare to stop*

*One lit green - Go*

**(1) Walk Sign-** Informs pedestrians that it is time to cross the street.

**(1) Don't Walk Sign-** Informs pedestrians that it is not time to cross the street.

**(1) Yield to Pedestrian Sign-** Signal to drivers that pedestrians have the right of way

**(2) Cars (blue/red) – To represent cars used for demonstrations**

## **Additional Materials Needed**

**Crosswalk-** Tells pedestrians where to cross and informs drivers where they can expect pedestrians to cross. Create a mock crosswalk using masking tape (if indoors) or sidewalk chalk (if outside) or utilize a crosswalk mat.

### **\*Be sure the following topics/rules are covered as you go over the students responses:**

- Cross the street at the corner or at a crosswalk if there is one, and obey all traffic signals.
- Walk on a sidewalk; if there is no sidewalk; walk on the left side of the street, facing oncoming traffic.
- Walk with an adult until you are at least 10 years old.
- Only cross in front of a school bus when the driver says it is safe. Do not cross behind the bus or where the driver can't see you.
- Hold an adult's hand when you cross the street. Look left, right and left again before you cross and keep looking both ways until you reach the other side.
- If you walk when it is dark, wear light-colored clothing or clothing with reflective material so drivers can see you. A flashlight is also a good idea.
- If a toy or pet goes out into the street, ask an adult for help getting it back.
- When you are outside playing, play in a backyard or playground away from the street or parking lots.

**If working with children under 10 years old, consider addressing these additional topics as this lesson plan is geared towards older kids walking alone:**

- Discuss with the students why they should not walk alone until they are at least 10 years old.
- Discuss why younger children may need to walk with an adult and/or to hold a grown-up's hand while they cross the streets.
- Ask the children who can help them to cross the street safely and have them make a list or say it out loud.
  - parent, guardian, older sibling, crossing guard, police officer etc.
- Explain to the children why drivers will not be able to see them
  - due to their smaller stature/size.
- Introduce the basic traffic signs to gauge the students level of knowledge and to explain the meaning of each sign.
- Explain to the children that it is difficult to judge the speed of cars, how far away they, are and which direction traffic sounds are coming from.