In the Eye of the Beholder:

Parent and child perceptions of active school travel 20 June 2019







Welcome



Wallace Beaton

Manager - Community Engagement & Capacity











With funding from the Government of Ontario





Pop Up Poll

• Tell us where you're from





Agenda

- Housekeeping
- Presentation 1: child perceptions (20 mins)
- Presentation 2: parent perceptions (20 mins)
- Question & Answers (10 mins +)



Today's webinar

In The Eye of the Beholder: Parent & child perceptions of active school travel





Presentation 1: child perceptions

- Presenters:
 - Dr. Jason Gilliland (I) & Dr. Andrew Clark (r) Human Environment Analysis Laboratory Western University, London (Ontario)









Understanding Perceptions of Barriers & Enablers to Active School Travel



Perspectives of Children

Dr. Jason Gilliland, PhD

Dr. Andrew Clark, PhD







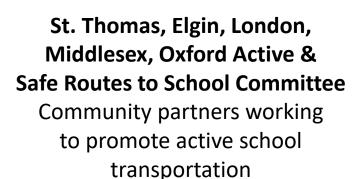
Acknowledgements



Lead Author &
Active Transportation
Coordinator
for Essex County











School Board Partners

Thank you for your support of our AST projects!

Human Environments Analysis Lab

Our Mission: The HEAL develops and connects highly-skilled researchers to create, disseminate, and mobilize knowledge for making healthy, thriving communities.

Team (2018-2019)

- 20 staff & faculty associates
- >20 graduate student RAs
- >120 undergrad RAs
- 4 high school interns
- > 100 community collaborators
- ~18 member LEAP
- 12-member YAC











AST in the HEAL: Built Environment

The Influence of the Physical Environment and Sociodemographic Characteristics on Children's Mode of Travel to and From School

Kristian Larsen, MA, Jason Gilliland, PhD, Paul Hess, PhD, Patricia Tucker, PhD, Jennifer Irwin, PhD, and Meizi He, PhD American Journal of Public Health | March 2009, Vol 99, No. 3

Route-Based Analysis to Capture the Environmental Influences on a Child's Mode of Travel between Home and School Annals of the Association of American Geographers

Kristian Larsen, Jason Gilliland & Paul M. Hess

2012, Vol 102, Issue 6



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Spatial and Spatio-temporal Epidemiology

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/sste



Original Research

(2019) 51-57

Is active travel a breath of fresh air? Examining children's exposure to air pollution during the school commute

Jason Gilliland a,b,c,d,e,f,g,*, Matthew Maltby a, Xiaohong Xu h, Isaac Luginaah a, Janet Loebach a,b,i, Tayyab Shah a,b

AST in the HEAL: Interventions

American Journal of Preventive Medicine

REVIEW ARTICLE

Active School Travel Intervention Methodologies in North America: A Systematic Review

Adrian N. Buttazzoni, BA, ^{1,2} Emily S. Van Kesteren, RN, MA, Tayyab I. Shah, PhD, ^{1,4} Jason A. Gilliland, PhD, ^{1,2,4,5,6,7}



Social Science & Medicine
Volume 212, September 2018, Pages 181-190



Supporting active school travel: A qualitative analysis of implementing a regional safe routes to school program

Adrian N. Buttazzoni a, b, f, Stephanie E. Coen a, c, f, Jason A. Gilliland a, b, c, d, e, f, g 🗴 🖾

Journal of Transport & Health 12 (2019) 206-219



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Transport & Health

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jth



Promoting active school travel in elementary schools: A regional case study of the school travel planning intervention



Adrian N. Buttazzoni^{a,b}, Andrew F. Clark^{a,f,g}, Jamie A. Seabrook^{a,c,d,e,g,h}, Jason A. Gilliland^{a,b,d,e,f,g,h,*}

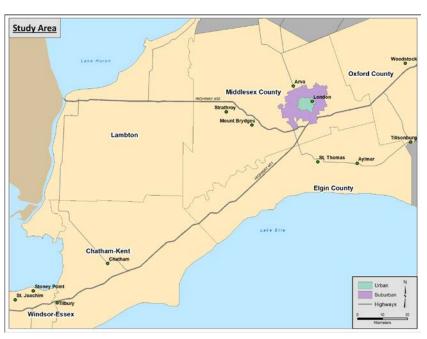
Understanding Child and Parent Perceptions of Barriers Influencing Children's Active School Travel

Katherine Wilson, Andrew F. Clark, Jason A. Gilliland

DOI: 10.1186/s12889-018-5874-y

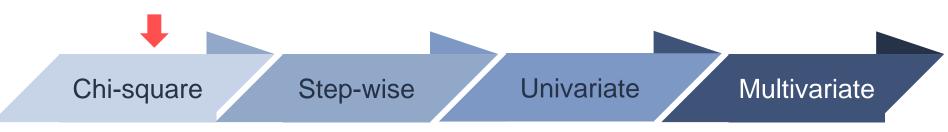


Methods



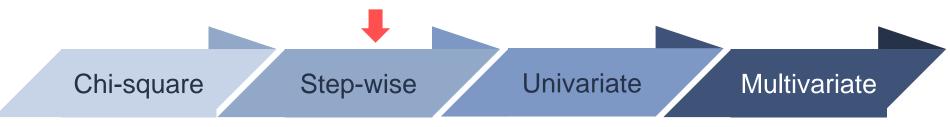
- **48** SWO elementary schools
- Grades 4-8
- **1,296** children within 1.6km of school
- Parent and Youth surveys
- AST to and from School





- Differences between parent and child perceptions of barriers
- Parents percieve more physical environment and safety barriers
- Children percieve more individual preference barriers





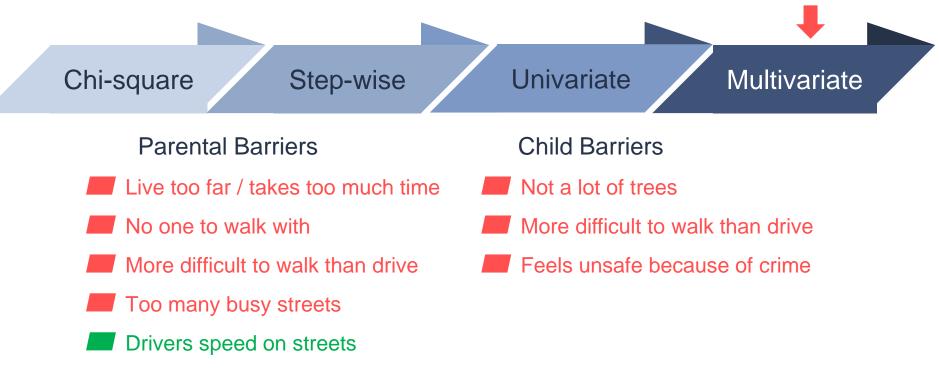
- Intrapersonal: Age
- Interpersonal: Siblings, Number of Vehicles, Mother Employed
- Environmental: Distance





- Both parent and children percieve safety barriers as having the most impact on AST both to and from school
- Parents percieve more barriers to impact AST to school
- Children percieve more barriers to impact AST from school







CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES ON NEIGHBOURHOOD BARRIERS AND ENABLERS TO ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL

Katherine Wilson, Stephanie Coen, Angela Piaskoski, Jason A. Gilliland

The Canadian Geographer Le Géographe canadien



DOI: 10.1111/cag.12488

(2019)



Methods

2 local elementary schools

25 participatory mapping exercises

■ 123 students

Ages 10-12

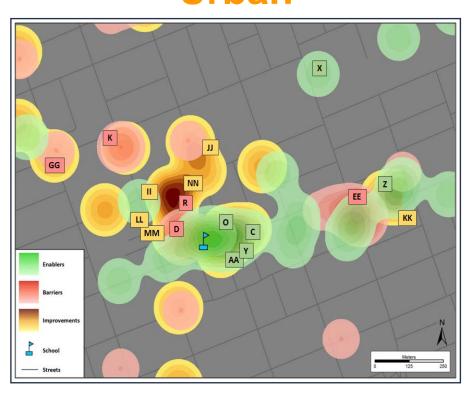
Community partners



Suburban

Q НН 1 A DD S

Urban





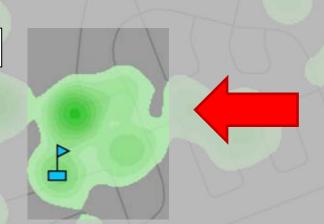
"I walk through like a scenic area when I walk to school and it's really nice"

"Sometimes we stop by the forest on our way to school"

"Well we usually just like going in the woods because it's nice and there's lots of animals and stuff"

"This spot that I like, it's fun to go up the hill"

"I like this part also this is like a hill we race. My sister, we race together here like on the way [to school]"

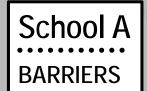


"I like how there is a side walk there"

"There's a sidewalk so we just stay on this side and don't have to cross the street"



250 500

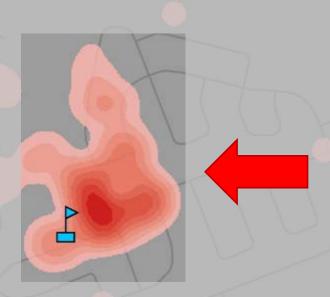


"Well like our streets don't really have any sidewalks and a lot of people walk to get to school on our street and like the cars don't slow"

"There should be a sidewalk here. There's no protection"

"It's hazardous right here because there are tons of cars and a lot of kids walking"

"Very dangerous. It should be a one way but it's not"



"There is traffic in the parking lot"

"I don't like it here because there is usually a lot of cars"

Meters

50



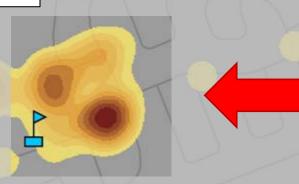
"Well like the walk way right there there's a sign that says 'this path will not be maintained in the winter,' so it gets like really icy and the snow gets really heavy and frozen"

"I don't like how there is not a sidewalk on my side so then I have to cross the street and at the corner I don't feel safe because you can see the cars coming, so sometimes they just zip around"

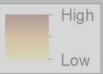
"Parking lot and drop off area is chaos in the morning"

"Sometimes there's like there big line ups here"

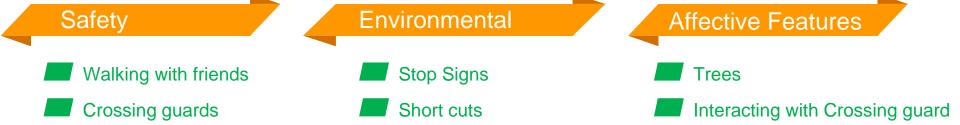
"We need a bigger parking lot"



"I don't feel like I'm safe, like it [walkway] can get pretty crammed and sometimes if there's strollers you have to walk around them"













Safety

- Walking with friends
- Crossing guards
- **Traffic**
- Unfamiliar People
- Parental Influence

Environmental

- Stop Signs
- Short cuts
- **Trains**
- Weather
- Distance
- Sidewalks
- Drop off zone
- Street Signs

Affective Features

- Trees
- Interacting with Crossing guard
- Dogs
- Garbage
- Unfamilar areas
- Perceptions of houses

Mobilizing Research...

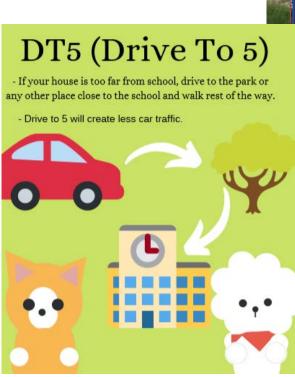


Policy & Practice: Long Distances

Next time...

Park at Foxfield Park and walk!









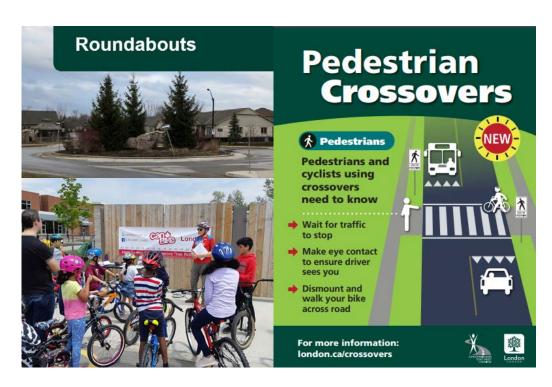
Policy & Practice: Convenience







Policy & Practice: **Changing Perceptions**

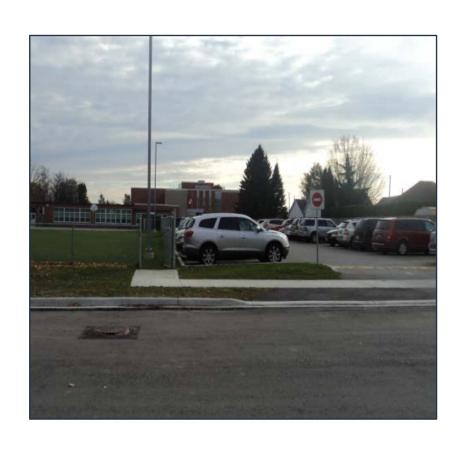


Wayfinding Signs

Safety Training



Policy & Practice: Safety Concerns

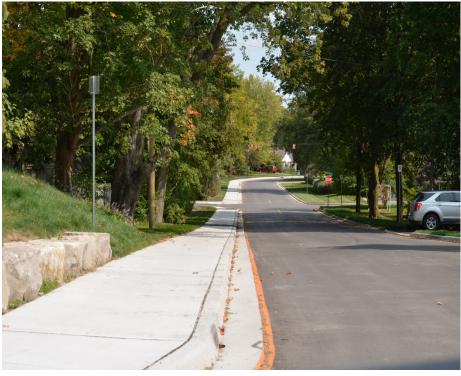






Policy & Practice: Lack of Sidewalks







Policy & Practice: Parking Lot Issues



Go Green! Travel Clean!

Measuring Air Quality Around the School

We are also measuring the air quality around the school to see if the grade 5 students can create a healthier school neighbourhood with less pollution.



Results from our measurements in May show that there is 3 times as much pollution during pick up time (3:30 pm) than at noon (12:00pm).

We will continue measuring pollution around the school throughout the month of May to see if we can decrease pollution during drop off and pick up times!



Andrew Clark @afclark82 · May 8

Thank you @SACTVDSB grade 5 students for all your hard work on the **#GoGreenTravelClean** Challenge. You were all rock stars at the assembly today! Whata great way to encourage everyone to increase active travel and decrease cars around school! @DeniseTylerr @mrsblair_5 @OntarioAST

Parents: Increase Parking Lot Safety by Decreasing Parking Lot Traffic!

You can help by:

- · Walking or wheeling to / from school.
- Pick up / drop off children at Foxfield
 Park & let them walk 170-m to school.
 - If eligible, your child can walk to / from the bus stop and take the bus.











Policy & Practice: **Student Engagement**





J'aime dansé premont jattend. Iristan.P





Policy & Practice: Student Engagement



Did you know that when your car runs for an hour, it wastes approximately \$7 in gas? Listen to Mikul and Colby from @SACTVDSB tell us all about this problem around schools! youtu.be/xTMpCUZ4G8Y #GoGreenTravelClean @TVDSB @elmoASRTS @OntarioAST @commuteontario @LDCSB



Anti-Idling Comic Book Video

Students at Sir Arthur Currie Public School in London, Ontario, Canada have created a video to highlight the need to turn off your car if you drop off your k... \mathscr{S} youtube.com

ta The Heal Retweeted



Andrew Clark @afclark82 · Jun 1

Do you take the bus to @LDCSB @TVDSB schools with @mybigyellowbus? You can still get a physical activity by walking to/from the bus stop! Listen to @SACTVDSB students talk about why it is important. #gogreentravelclean #elmoasrts @EcoSchoolsCAN @erinmutch



Walk to the Bus Stop

Students at Sir Arthur Currie Public School in London, Ontario, Canada have created a video to highlight the need to walk to the bus stop and \dots $\mathscr S$ youtube.com









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Policy & Practice: Encouragement



Journal of Transport & Health 12 (2019) 206-219



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Promoting active school travel in elementary schools: A regional case study of the school travel planning intervention



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For more info: walkability.ca





Presentation 2: parent perceptions

• Presenter:

Timothy Woolstencroft
 Managing Partner, The Strategic Counsel
 Toronto









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∠METROLINX

A PRESENTATION —
IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH:
ACTIVE AND PASSIVE
TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS

June 2019

Methodology



To address these objectives, 13 focus groups were conducted among parents/guardians of students in Kindergarten-Grade 8 from across the GTHA. Participants from Bowmanville to Milton attended these groups.

Groups were held in a variety of locations to ensure that a broad representation of parents could attend the group.

- 5 groups in Toronto (Yonge and Davisville) (Dec 11, 2018 and Feb 6, 2019)
- 2 groups in Mississauga (Jan 22, 2019)
- 6 groups in North York. (near North York Centre) (Jan 29 and Jan 31, 2019)

The specifications of the groups were as follows:

DRIVE

Parents/guardians of a child in JK-grade 5 who drive their child to school. Walk is considered 'safe'.

Parents/guardians of a child in grade 6-8 who drive their child to school. Walk has 'not safe' elements.

Parents/guardians of a child in JK-grade 5 who drive their child to a school that is <800m from home. Walk has 'not safe' elements.

Parents/guardians of a child in JK-grade 5 who drive their child to a school that is 800m+ from home. Mix of walks deemed 'safe' and 'not safe' by the parents.

Parents/guardians of a child in grade 6-8 who drive their child to a school that is <800m from home. Mix of walks deemed 'safe' and 'not safe' by the parents.

Parents/guardians of a child in grade 6-8 who drive their child to a school that is 800m+ from home. Walk has 'not safe' elements.

DRIVE LESS OFTEN THAN IN THE PAST

Parents/guardians of a child in grade 6-8 who often walks to school, and who drive less often than in the past. Mix of walks with 'safe' and 'not safe' elements.

Parents/guardians of a child in JK-grade 5 who often walks to school, and who drive less often than in the past. Mix of walks with 'safe' and 'not safe' elements.

Parents/guardians of a child in JK-grade 5 who have cycled to school at least 5 times this school year, and have access to a car.

Parents/guardians of a child in JK-grade 5 who often take their child to school by public transportation, and who drive their child to school less often than in the past.

EXCEPTIONALITIES

Parents/guardians of a child in JK-grade 5 with an exceptionality who drive but would be able to take their child by active or sustainable methods to school.

Parents/guardians of a child in grade 6-8 with an exceptionality who drive but would be able to take their child by active or sustainable methods to school.

Parents/guardians of a child with an exceptionality who drive but would be able to take their child by active or sustainable methods to school.

As part of this project, Metrolinx consulted with:

- Dr. Ron Buliung, University of Toronto
- Dr. Raktim Mitra, Ryerson University
- Dr. Linda Rothman, Sick Kids Hospital

Metrolinx also consulted members of the GTHA Active and Sustainable School Travel Hub, which includes representatives from public health, school boards, transportation services, planning, bylaw enforcement, universities and parental groups across the region.

Executive Summary

PRE-SCHOOL ROUTINES

Parents/feel they're under considerable pressure to get a lot done before they leave home for the day. They feel rushed and stressed to get out the door.

DRIVING TO SCHOOL

Drivers believe it is easier, more time efficient, and more convenient to drive than walk, bike or public transit/school bus for the morning drop off.

WALKING/CYCLING TO SCHOOL

Virtually everyone recognizes the advantages of walking/cycling to school. However, the disadvantages of walking to school, according to drivers, are much more specific, tangible, and compelling compared to the advantages of walking or cycling. These perceived disadvantages 'overpower' the advantages for most parents.

SCHOOL ARRIVAL

Parents concede that the scene around the school is chaotic, mayhem and dangerous for 15 to 20 minutes before children need to enter the school. Many just 'grin and bear' the school traffic problem, and parents recognize the chaotic traffic during school drop off as an 'issue' they need to face daily. However, drivers do not see themselves as causing the problem.

Executive Summary

USING PUBLIC TRANSIT

There was little interest and comfort in allowing children, particularly younger ones, to use public transit unless it was the only viable option. For many parents, the public transit option created some anxiety due to safety and commuting times. Public transit was also seen by some as a better option for returning home from school.

USING SCHOOL BUSES

The school bus has some appeal for some parents, but there are complaints about the experience – extended commuting times, being at specific spot for pick-up, drop-off process, worries about bullying, quality of school buses, etc.

There were some who wanted to access the school bus option, but they live too close to the school.

SCHOOL PICK-UP

Many parents also talked about "craziness" at pick-up at the end of the school day. Some would even arrive early in order to get a 'prime' spot.

For the afternoon pick-up, some parents feel they have more options.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS TO MANAGE TRAFFIC

Current school tactics to manage traffic congestion are, in the end, 'enabling' parents to drive kids to school, by making the drop-off/pick-up more of a tolerable experience.

Executive Summary

WALKING WEDNESDAYS

Many parents were aware of school programs such as 'Walking Wednesdays' and, to some extent, bike weeks. However, it does not seem to be an effective tool to change behaviour on a sustained basis because the perceived benefits of driving still continue to outweigh the perceived benefits of walking or cycling.

PARENTS' IDEAS TO DEAL WITH TRAFFIC

Parents identified ideas about how to manage the school traffic issue. However, these suggestions will be ineffective if there is no compelling rationale to change behaviour.

These ideas included incentives/contests to motivate more walking, buddy system, extending drop-off/pick-up times, more school busses, more before/after school programs, more crossing guards, better urban planning, increased enforcement, etc.

WALKING SCHOOL BUSES IDEA

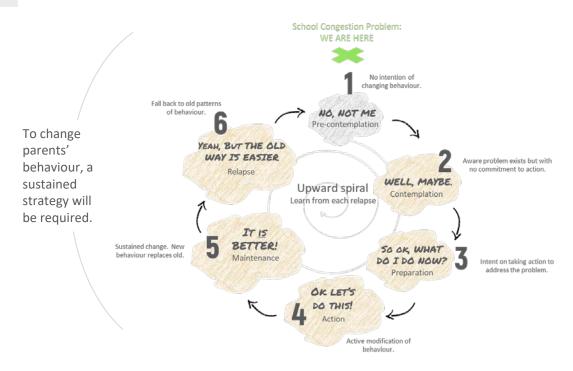
There was a lot of interest in 'walking school buses', but questions and doubts exist such as organizational challenges, liability issues, volunteer competences and perceived risk of the unknown.

TRIGGERING BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

To trigger a parental 'rethink' about school traffic congestion, strong and emotionally driven messaging needs to be targeted at parents. Rational messaging will not work.

Key Findings

The school traffic congestion problem is in the early stages of its life-cycle. Parents see it as an issue, but they are not motivated to change their behaviour. Plus, parents do not see themselves as the ones causing the problems. It is everyone else's problem, even including the school bus drivers.



To use an analogy, school traffic congestion is like cigarette smoking in the 1960s – parents felt it had negative health consequences, but did not feel compelled to change their behaviour.

As we know from the cigarette smoking behaviour change case study, parents made steps forward in adopting new behaviour, but they often slipped back to old habits. Intense pressure and law enforcement will likely be needed to support sustainable change.

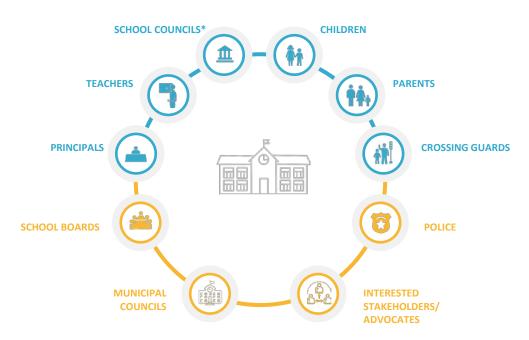
Key Findings

A possible multi-pronged, staged strategy to change behaviour will need to focus on one key channel – schools.

There are no 'quick fixes' to remedy the school traffic issue.

A strategy needs a multi-pronged focus on **principals**, **teachers**, **school councils**, **children** and, of course, **parents** embracing the challenge and motivating them to solve the problem in the school.

There will need to be multiple stages involving multiple stakeholders in order to motivate and sustain new behaviour adoption.



^{*}School Council is the proper legal name but some call them Home and School Association and/or Parents Councils. It is important to note that not all School Councils will be effective agents of change.

What about walking to school?



Virtually everyone recognizes the advantages of walking to school. To drivers, the disadvantages of walking to school are much more specific, tangible, and emotional compared to the advantages. These perceived disadvantages 'overpower' the advantages for most parents.

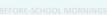
Advantages of Walking

- Good exercise before or after school
- An occasion to have a conversation and bond with their children
- There is an opportunity to explore their neighbourhood and nature
- Motivation to get ready for school and provide sufficient time to get to school by the bell
- Avoidance of congestion around the school
- If children walk themselves, parents have more time to get to work or to do things around the house
- Sometimes it is faster to walk than drive
- Facilitates socialization with other children
- Children prefer to walk to school.

Disadvantages of Walking

- Distance from the school, too far to walk
- Walking creates delays in getting to work
- Makes it harder not to be late for school
- Children walk too slowly
- Personal safety
- Bullying to and from school by other children
- Heavy traffic and busy roads
- Drivers/cyclists not abiding by traffic laws
- Backpacks are very heavy
- The vicinity around the school is highly congested with vehicles and buses
- Lack of crossing guards
- Infrastructure barriers
 - No sidewalks
 - Insufficient traffic lights
 - Poor street lighting







GETTING TO SCHOOL



ARRIVING AT SCHOOL



GETTING HOME FROM SCHOOL

What about cycling to school?



Cyclists identified a number of advantages to cycling. However, similar to walking, the disadvantages of cycling 'outdo' the advantages of cycling.

Advantages of Cycling

- · Faster and more convenient than walking
- Good exercise
- Learning rules of the road
- Help to put in a better mindset to go to school
- Gets rid of any stress
- Children prefer to bike to school.

Disadvantages of Cycling

- Heavy traffic and busy roads
- It is too dangerous to cycle
- Distracted and impatient drivers
- · Bike lanes don't really exist
- Garbage days narrowing sidewalks
- Strollers/parents walking on sidewalks
- Road construction
- There are not enough bike lanes
- There are not enough bike racks
- If there are bike racks, there is need for more security

To facilitate more cycling to school, it was suggested to institute more bike lanes and provide more bike racks at the school, provide better bike protection, and bike riding safety programs.







GETTING TO SCHOOL





Programs dealing with traffic around schools

Most acknowledge that motivating the children through prizes and contests might be the more effective manner to shift behaviour.

Parents had numerous suggestions to help manage the traffic around schools.

Providing Motivations

- Initiate incentives and contests to motivate children to walk to school – it was felt that children are persuasive advocates in the household
- Establish meeting places where children meet and walk together
- Create a buddy system
- Organize parent led walking groups

Make Changes at the School

- Offer before and after school programs
- Extend school drop off time for an additional 30 minutes or so
- More extensive use of school buses to pick up children
- Remedy the congestion created by the school buses

Create Walking Monitors and Increase Number of Crossing Guards

- Have route monitors
- Increase the number of crossing guards and pay them more money

Initiate Urban Planning Changes

- Alter the traffic flows (ie. change two way roads to one way) around schools
- More 4-way stop signs, more speed bumps, and more sidewalks
- Create safe walking routes

Increase enforcement

- Enforcement of speeding and no-parking zones around schools
- Improve street lighting around the school

Parents switched from vehicles to 'walking/cycling' due to idiosyncratic reasons relating more to the preferences of parents wanting to do things they already like to do – cycle or walk to school. There were no explicit triggers for changing their behaviour.









An example of strong and emotionally driven messaging

As outlined in the key findings, to trigger a parental 'rethink' about school traffic congestion, strong and emotionally driven messaging needs to be targeted at parents.

The messaging needs to 'disrupt' the current parental mindset and motivate them to take 'ownership' of the issue. Providing statistics will not be a catalyst for change because they are driven by stronger emotional imperatives.

If you want more information, Google:

Art of Distraction City of Toronto

A great example of the type of emotionally driven messaging is the City of Toronto's recent 'Art of Distraction' campaign which conveys strong and compelling real life stories.

The purpose of using 'jarring' and 'disturbing' messaging to capture parents' attention and motivate parents to rethink their contributions to the problem.

Thank you.

We are open for questions.



TORONTO | OTTAWA | CALGARY | HOUSTON

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woolstencroft@thestrategiccounsel.com

A&D

 Remember to type your question in the chat box addressed to everyone





Thank you!

- Stay in touch
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 - e-newsletter
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