What makes a safe pedestrian environment in the City of Toronto for children?

- Built environment
- Speed humps
- Changes to the built environment
- Fewer road crossings
- Drivers following the rules of the road
- Designated car drop-off areas

Our studies have found:

- Presence of school crossing guards was related to 14% more walking to school.
- Collision rates within elementary school attendance boundaries varied greatly.
- Most child pedestrian collisions occurred outside of school travel times (62%). Most collisions that occurred during school travel times occurred in locations without crossing guards (86%).
- The installation of speed humps was associated with a 45% decrease in collision rates in children.
- Each dangerous driving behaviour during school drop-off period were associated with 45% times greater risk of collisions.
- Poor driving behaviours are observed less at schools with:
  - less traffic congestion
  - designated car drop off areas
  - school crossing guards
- Schools with greater social disadvantage had higher collision rates.
- 67% of children were observed walking to school but this varied greatly between schools (28-98%).
- Parents are concerned with traffic environment safety throughout the route to school and not just at the school site.

Implications:

- Researchers, school boards and cities need to continue to work together to ensure a safe environment around schools and beyond so that children can walk safely to school.

Key messages:

Walking to school is not related to child pedestrian collisions if the built environment is safe.

Pedestrian injury must be considered when implementing programs to increase walking to school.

Built environment modifications may reduce unsafe driver & pedestrian behaviours leading to a reduction in collisions.

We are interested in:

Evidence-based interventions related to both reducing pedestrian collisions AND increasing active school transportation.

High quality evaluation of interventions.
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