



The Safe Routes Partnership

# Riding Your Way to a Successful Bike & Roll to School Day

*March 2025*





The wind blowing through your hair, birds chirping, the smell of fresh baking bread, a friendly smile, and a wave from a passerby. What do these all have in common? They are all things you might experience when you bike or roll your way to school.

Bike & Roll to School Day is an opportunity to encourage children of all ages to hop on a bike, scooter, skateboard, or mobility device and ride to and from school. It can be a great time to try out a new skill that can lead to a lifetime of biking and rolling fun! Bike & Roll to School Day is one of many Safe Routes to School encouragement strategies.

Safe Routes to School initiatives work to make walking, biking, and rolling to and from schools safer, more convenient, and more enjoyable for children, youth, and families. Comprehensive Safe Routes to School programs that focus on the **“Six E’s” (engagement, education, engineering, encouragement, equity, and evaluation)** seek to make biking, walking, and rolling to school the safe and accessible choice for students, caregivers,

staff, and the community. These programs not only get more children walking and biking to school, they also improve safety, and increase health and physical activity. In addition, these programs build community, engage stakeholders, inform decision makers, and are part of community celebrations.

This toolkit provides a structured framework for planning and implementing a Bike & Roll to School Day (or week!). The step-by-step guide will help you organize your first event while also offering strategies for growing and improving an existing one.

Hosting a Bike & Roll to School Day not only allows students and families to try biking and rolling to school, but it can also lay the foundation for long-term Safe Routes to School initiatives.

# Why Biking and Rolling to School is Important

Biking and rolling to school, and in daily life, offers numerous benefits for kids, caregivers, and the community.

## → Healthier students

- Kids need at least 60 minutes of daily activity, and biking and rolling to school helps make it happen
- Better health and stronger bones, muscles, and joints through more physical activity
- Reduced risk of chronic illnesses
- Increased independence and lifelong healthy habits

## → Better academic performance

- Improved focus, concentration, and reduced distraction for students who are active before school
- Fewer absences and reduced tardiness when students walk, bike, or roll in groups

## → School transportation fixes

- Safer and more efficient school transportation addresses challenges related to reduced or non-existent bus service
- Reduces traffic congestion at pick-up and drop-off times

## → Stronger community connections

- Builds friendships among students who walk, bike, and roll together
- Fosters positive social connections with friends, families, neighbors, and community members

## → Cost savings

- Household savings from reduced gas & car use
- Education budget savings through reduced student busing costs



Want to explore more benefits? [Check out this infographic from the Safe Routes Partnership](#)

## Step 1: Establish Goals and Objectives

When we take the time to set goals, we're better positioned to reach meaningful outcomes.

### Start with a vision

What do you want Bike & Roll to School Day to look like at your school?

- First time hosting? Start small to ensure success
- Hosted multiple events? Build on your momentum by exploring new ideas from other successful programs, engaging new partners, and expanding your efforts beyond a single day

### Set your goals

- Teach kids safe biking and rolling skills
- Engage every student in biking and rolling activities
- Encourage students, caregivers, and staff to view biking as a viable transportation option
- Highlight suggested routes to school and engage decision makers to support policies and infrastructure improvements
- Celebrate biking and rolling as a fun and social activity that builds the school community
- Use the event as a foundation for regular Bike & Roll to School days, frequent bike trains or bike buses, and fostering a culture of bicycling at the school
- All of the above?!

## Steps to Planning a Successful Bike & Roll to School Day Quick Links

[Step 1: Establish Goals and Objectives](#)

[Step 2: Connect and Collaborate](#)

[Step 3: Organize the Day](#)

[Step 4: Create an Outreach Plan](#)

[Step 5: Engage and Train Partners](#)

[Step 6: Promote, Promote, Promote](#)

[Step 7: Host the Event and Celebrate](#)

[Step 8: Follow-up](#)

Planning a successful Bike & Roll to School Day is like reading a choose your own adventure novel. No matter how many goals you and your team set, you can create a plan that works for you. The following steps will help you lay out tangible action items to get you on track to setting up the best Bike & Roll to School Day possible.

**Again, if it's your first time, start small!  
You are rolling in the right direction!**



## Step 2: Connect and Collaborate

Events thrive on partnerships! The best Bike & Roll events bring together a team from the school, community, and local businesses or organizations.

### Establish key partnerships

If you already have strong partnerships in the school, let them know what is happening, and see if you can create more. Possible partners and what they bring to your Bike & Roll to School Day include:

Category	Examples of Who	Why?
School-based champions	A supportive principal, teachers, school staff members, student-led organizations, student safety patrol leads, student council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having support and buy-in from the school leads to both short and long-term success!</li> <li>• Key for day to day interactions and integration</li> </ul>
Disability advocates	School staff or community partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This ensures that your event and any future Safe Routes to School work will be as inclusive as possible</li> </ul>
School district communications team	District communications staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They will help with crafting and sending out timely messaging for the event and can often connect with larger community media</li> </ul>
School district staff	Superintendent, assistant superintendent, transportation director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can help encourage district wide support of events and future programming</li> <li>• They have an understanding of current and future transportation needs and can help with bus drop and pick up for remote walk-in events</li> </ul>
Parent-teacher associations	Caregivers and other representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can help with outreach and engage, and can help to find volunteers or volunteer themselves</li> </ul>
City staff	City planner, transportation engineer, public works staff, city communications staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They can help with route planning and safety as well as help to spread the word in the community</li> <li>• They may also be future partners for Safe Routes Projects</li> </ul>
Local leaders	Mayor, town councilors, county commissioners, city manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They can provide political support for events and future projects</li> <li>• It can be an opportunity to engage with youth on the ground</li> </ul>
Community-based organizations	Public health professionals, nonprofits, local bike shops/clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They can help coordinate free helmets, bring stickers, or other prizes</li> <li>• They are great at collaboration and coordination; they can provide bike maintenance or can act as ride leaders</li> </ul>

## Building connections

If you don't already have connections, it is important to reach out early to start building support for the event. Do this throughout:

- email
- social media
- phone calls
- face-to-face or a coffee meeting
- [a concise fact sheet or infographic can explain the event and its benefits](#)



## Recruit volunteers

Successful events rely on dedicated volunteers to help plan and run things smoothly. The following table is a good starting point for possible volunteer roles, and, depending on the event, you may need more volunteers for things to roll smoothly.

Role	Who Can Help?	Recommended # of Volunteers
Bike train/bus leader	Caregivers, older students, school staff	2 per bike train
Prize sticker distributor	Caregivers, school staff, bike groups, local bike shops, high school, or other mascots	1 per school entrance
Accessibility lead	Caregivers, teachers, or staff	1 per event
Bike repair station	Local bike shop, caregiver, or community member with tools and knowledge	1+ (can be busy)
Helmet and safety gear fitting	Local health departments, SafeKids, or hospital staff, police	1–3 volunteers
Crossing guards/student safety patrol	School staff, caregiver volunteers, students	1+ per key intersection
Event photographer/videographer	Students, community members, school staff	1 per event
Student engagement leads	Older students, teachers, caregiver volunteers	2–3 per school
Communications volunteer	PTA members, school staff, students, media partners	1–2 for social media and outreach
On-call volunteer	Parent, school staff, community member	1–2 just in case

## Step 3: Organize the Day

A well-planned and well-structured event runs smoothly for everyone that is involved.

### Key planning factors

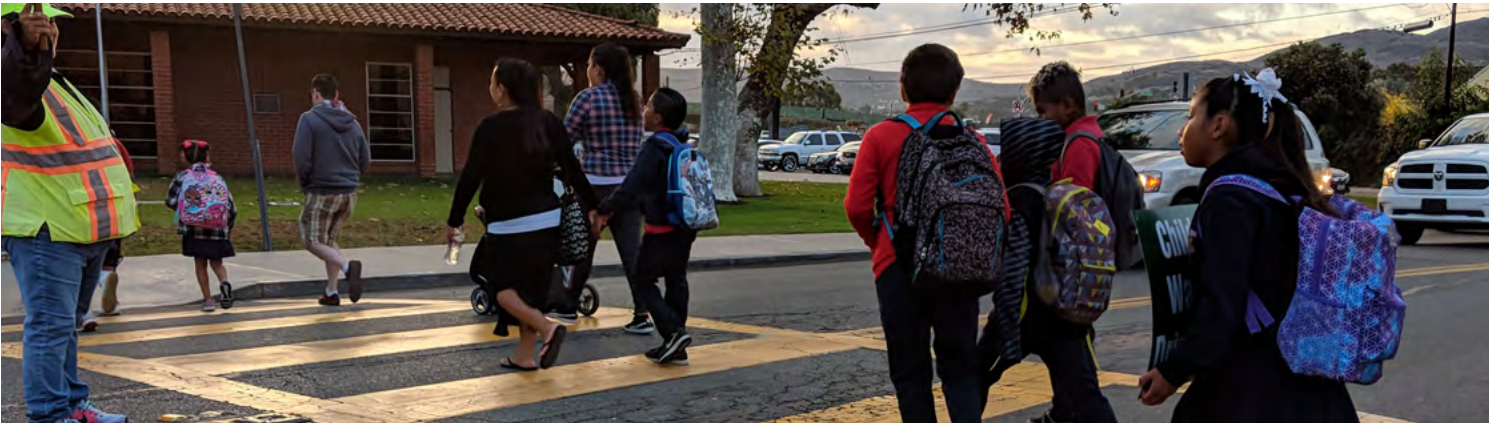
Use the goal you identified in **Step 1** to help decide how to organize the activity or activities for your day. This will help you plan exactly what needs to happen and when.

- Lay out the activities you want to be a part of your Bike & Roll to School Day. Each component could be run alone or as a part of a larger event
- Start small and know that you can always grow
- Organize and create any materials and supplies that might be needed
- Make sure to engage all students by including options other than just a bike train/ bus
  - Remote drop-off and walk-in: "[Minnesota Safe Routes to School – Bus Stop and Walk](#)"
  - Walk around the gym or an outdoor track
- Route planning is an important factor in any successful bike train, walking school bus option, or bike bus
  - Use the [Safe Routes Partnership Route Planning Guide](#)
  - Make sure that routes and activity spaces are accessible to students using mobility devices or adaptive equipment



## Activity Ideas for the Day

- Schoolwide promotion and encouragement in the morning or throughout the day
  - Celebrations for students who ride
  - Sticker/prize handout stations at school and by the bike rack
  - Having one station at each entrance and bike rack is recommended
  - A schoolwide assembly to celebrate the day
- Plan for how many prize and celebration stations you will need
  - One station at each entrance and bike rack is recommended
- Bike helmet giveaways for kids who need safety equipment
- Classroom bicycle and pedestrian safety education: [Bicycle and Pedestrian Curricula Guide from Safe Routes Partnership](#)
- Do classroom bike/pedestrian counts to start tracking how many students are biking and walking to school
- [Organize a Bike Train: a How-to Guide from the Safe Routes Partnership](#)
  - Drop-off point for students who live further away, but still want to do a bike train
- [Organize a Bike Bus: more details from BikeBus World](#)
- Add a walk-to-school option for kids who aren't able to bike or ride the bus
- Set up a remote drop-off location where students can be dropped off and then walk into the school, which could include:
  - Parks
  - Library
  - Parking lots of local businesses or places of worship



## Additional outreach opportunities

Here are some more ideas to grow and expand your Bike & Roll to School Day throughout the day or the week leading up to it:

- Bike decoration events
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety education in the classroom or assemblies to help set students up for success
- Bike rodeos that allow for opportunities to practice skills
- Invite a local bike shop or bike club to provide bike maintenance
- Family night to educate about the event, answer questions or concerns that might come up, and recruit more volunteers



## What about liability?

Liability issues can be complicated, and sometimes it can scare people away from volunteering. The good news? The risk of liability for volunteers is small. Federal law provides considerable protection for volunteers in almost every state.

Although there is some risk of liability in everything we do, if you anticipate potential dangers and hazards in your bike train program and put reasonable precautions in place to avoid them, you will minimize risks. Your school's administration or risk management department may have recommendations, as well. The resources listed below provide additional information and suggestions.

Additional Resources:

- [Change Lab Solutions: Safe Routes to School: Minimizing Your Liability Risk](#)
- [Change Lab Solutions: Volunteers and Liability](#)



## Step 4: Create an Outreach Plan

Developing an outreach plan helps to ensure student enthusiasm and participation. Start early and use multiple communication methods to spread the word.

### Key outreach strategies

- Develop promotional materials using the Safe Routes Partnership's template or create your own
- Create clear messaging that encourages every student to participate and highlights options for students who are unable to bike
- Build out a webpage or a website that can be a landing spot for all things
  - Check out the [Minnesota Safe Routes to School Bike & Roll to School Day webpage](#)
- Plan media and decision-maker engagement
- Don't let your momentum go to waste! Contact local news outlets, write a press release, and invite journalists and decision makers to attend the event
- Engage the school communication team and any student groups that cover events
  - School newspaper, photo club, school podcasts
- Use tried and true communication tips, tricks, and strategies for messaging Bike and Roll to School Day ([here's a guide from the Oregon Safe Routes to School program](#))
- Photo Releases: if you plan to use the event photos for future outreach and engagement, make sure you have releases. Oftentimes, school leadership can help you with the process

### Who to engage

- In-School: school administration, students, staff, and caregivers
- Out-of-school: community partners, local businesses, organizations, news media

### Material and Supplies

- [Bike & Roll to School Day posters](#)
- [Bike & Roll to School Day social posts](#)
- [Bingo Cards](#)
- [Stickers, puzzles, and other downloadable resources](#)



### Download the 2025 Bike & Roll to School playlists from Spotify

Scan code with your phone

## Timeline for outreach

Laying out a plan with specific outreach tasks and assigning those responsibilities helps to streamline communication and engagement. Below is a suggested timeline to help guide your outreach efforts:





## Step 5: Engage and Train Partners

Preparing your partners and volunteers so everyone knows and understands their role will make event day easier and ensure they have a good experience.

### Ways to engage and train

- Host an in-person or virtual training
  - Review event goals, logistics, outreach strategies, and celebrations
- Bike Train Training: host trainings specific to organizing and running a safe and effective bike-train or bus
  - Pre-ride the route: encourage volunteers to test ride the route ahead of time
  - Safety and Emergency Preparedness: ensure bike train leaders have repair and first aid kits and know the plan for any unexpected issues
- Use training as an outreach tool
  - Encourage caregivers and community members to get involved
  - Engage student leaders: train older students to be ambassadors for younger participants
  - Consider connecting with a local high school for even older students
  - Create a resource hub: Offer online videos, PDFs, and tip sheets that volunteers can access anytime
- Accessibility: connect with school staff and local experts for tips and strategies to build an accessible bike train



## Step 6: Promote, Promote, Promote

Start outreach and promotion early, use multiple communication channels in all relevant languages, and engage the community to maximize participation.

### Key promotion strategies

- Register your event on the [Walk, Bike & Roll to School day webpage](#)
- Start early! Begin outreach 3–4 weeks before the event to generate excitement
- Leverage local media: share press releases, contact reporters, and invite media to cover the event: [Telling Your Story: a resource guide](#)
- Send information home: distribute flyers, emails, and use parent groups on social media, connecting with parents and caregivers 2–3 weeks before the event
- Build excitement leading up to the day of the event
  - Inside school: Use announcements, posters, flyers, an assembly, or in class discussions
  - Take home: send posters, flyers, and other outreach materials home to caregivers
  - Outside of school: Connect with the local news media, partner with local leaders
- Invite local leaders, decision makers, and city staff to participate to participate and use that to move Safe Routes to School programming forward. Riding or walking with youth is an effective engagement tool, and it allows decision-makers to see the challenges youth face when getting around their community.
- Encourage teacher involvement: work with staff to spread the word in the classroom, through safety lessons, event hype, or even forming and leading their own bike train or bus
- Partner with other school-related activities to table and talk with caregivers about the event and how the can support Bike & Roll to School Day
- Invite and remind local leaders and decision makers to attend and experience Bike & Roll to School Day in-person
- Plan pre-event activities that help students and families get ready and excited for the big day

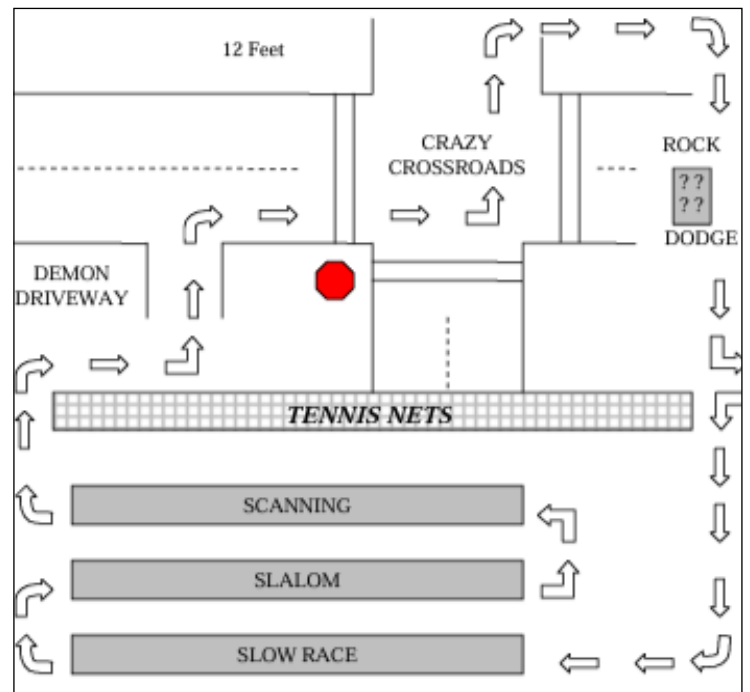


## Pre-Event Activity Ideas

- Run a bike rodeo or bicycle skills clinic to give students the chance to practice how to safely ride their bike
  - [Roll up to a Bicycle Skills Event - the Safe Routes Partnership](#)
  - [The Iowa Bicycle Coalition - Bike Rodeo Toolkit](#)
- Teach bicycle and pedestrian safety skills in the classroom to help prepare students for the days to come
- Bike decoration event: host it as a part of a bike rodeo or a stand-alone event. It's a great opportunity to bring some fun creative energy to riding bikes!
- Bike give away event: partner with organizations like Free Bikes 4 Kids, or Wish for Wheels, to provide bicycles and helmets to students who don't have the gear they need to participate
- Learn to Ride: work with students and caregivers at the school who don't know how to ride, but want to, by teaching Learn to Ride classes
  - [League of American Bicyclists: Youth Learn to Ride Program](#)
- Bike tune-up stations: students won't be able to participate if their bikes aren't working, partner with a local bike shop to check and repair student bikes while also teaching them basic maintenance skills
- Conduct a walk audit with students along one of the routes to learn about the condition of the road and teach safe walking and rolling skills, invite community leaders to build support and excitement for your Bike & Roll to School Day
- Bike field trips allow for the opportunity to practice riding skills in the real world setting while also previewing the route



Bike Rodeo Layout



## Step 7: Host the Event

The big day has arrived! Make sure your plans are in place and well communicated to staff, volunteers, and families so everything runs smoothly and everyone has a fun, safe experience.

- Confirm a point of contact and communicate contingency plans
  - Ensure all volunteers and participants know who to turn to for assistance
  - Have a plan for inclement weather or other emergencies
- Make it fun! Play music, hand out high flyers, and celebrate participation
- Capture the event! Take photos and videos, document stories and quotes from students, caregivers, teachers, and staff to highlight the impact of the event. This is a tool for sustainability in the future
- Take a school bike rack photo to show what is possible
- Engage students with on-site activities
- Host a bike decoration station: if you didn't do it as a pre-event, now is the time!
- Hand out stickers, high fives, and congratulations as kids arrive
- [Send out a Bike & Roll to School Day bingo sheet the day before so that kids can fill it out when they get to school](#)
- Track participation
  - Count the number of riders, rollers, and walkers
  - Compare participation to previous years to measure progress
  - Host competitions where the classroom with the most participants wins the Golden Sneaker or another fun award



## Step 8: Follow-up

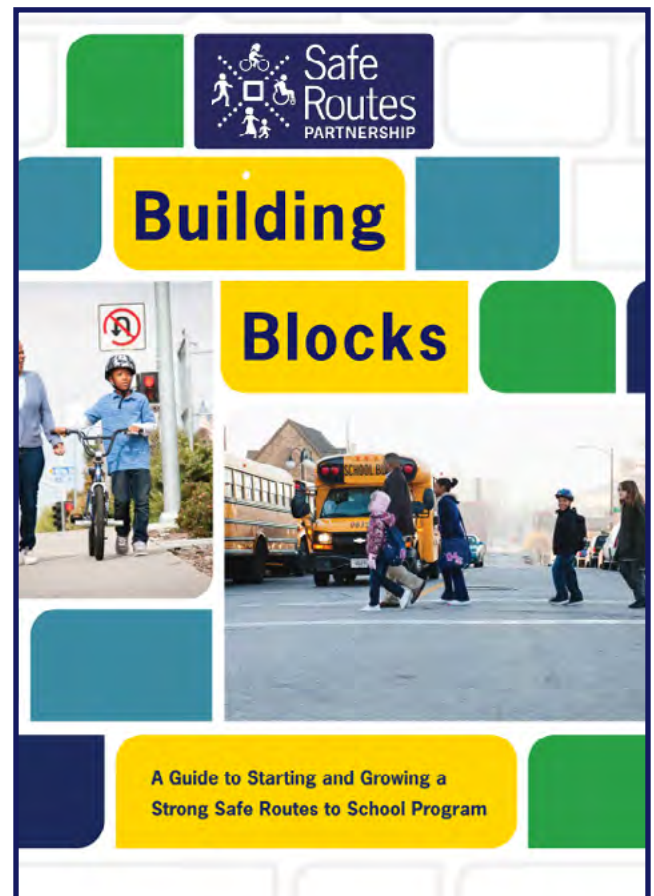
Your post-event follow-up is equally as important as the planning and execution; use this time to collect data and stories, and communicate back with everyone.

### Celebrate and reflect:

- Share success stories in newsletters and local media
- Highlight student experiences with photos and testimonials
- Gather feedback from volunteers, students, and caregivers to refine next year's planning

### Sustain the energy:

- Start a monthly, weekly, or daily Bike & Roll to School Day activity. Now is the time to suggest those bike trains, bike buses, and groups of students traveling together become a regular thing
- Use the photos and stories as outreach and engagement for future work, share them on PTA social media, with school staff, and with caregivers
- Form a Safe Routes to School working group to advocate for safety and infrastructure improvements
- Set up a monthly Bike/Walk/Roll to School Day event
- Begin discussions with school and city leadership
- Host a walk-and-roll audit to assess barriers to biking and walking
  - Utilize the [Let's go for a Walk – walk audit toolkit for the Safe Routes Partnership](#)
  - Invite local decision makers to the walk audit as well
- Develop a school-wide incentive program



### Plan for Next Year

It's never too early to start planning for next year

- Update your planning documents with lessons learned
- Continue to recruit new partners and engage old ones
- Set the stage for an even bigger and better event next time!

# Crowdsourced Tips and Tricks

What we heard from folks out there doing the work



## Start planning early!



## Teach

Teach the skills necessary so kids are comfortable and that it is a success



## Engage partners

Engage partners both inside and outside the school



## Buddy System

Have older students be bike buddies with younger students – a great engagement/community-building tool



## Find a champion

It can be a principal, teacher, or staff member who is interested and passionate about walking/biking to school



## Incentivize

Have incentives, prizes, and snacks; it helps to increase participation



## Communicate

Be broad with your communication and use every channel, but don't start too early



## Make it Fun

Make it fun, celebrate, and spread the word



# Resources

## Activities and Events

- [Start a Safe Routes to School program](#)
- [Host a bus, stop, and walk event](#)
- [Bike give away events](#)
- [Host a bike rodeo](#)
- [Host a community bike ride](#)
- [Engage students with disabilities into safe routes programs](#)
- [Start a bike bus](#)
- [Build bike stoke by putting together a temporary, mobile bike park](#)
- [Start a bike train](#)
- [Start a walking school bus](#)
- [Host a Walk to School Day in four easy steps](#)

## Communication

- [Write a good news story](#)
- [Safe Routes to School messaging for pros toolkit](#)



Bike & Roll to School Day is your chance to celebrate all things biking, rolling, and walking to school. It can be something as small as one bike train to start your celebration. You are rolling your way towards increasing biking, rolling, and walking for your community.

This toolkit was created to be shared with your school, district, and community. Use this toolkit and all the resources inside as your guide to help you grow your own Bike & Roll to School Day. And don't forget to share your journey! #bikeandrolltoschoolday

# Timeline

Working back from your Start Date, put all your dates in order from the worksheet, either on a calendar or on the spreadsheet below.

Action	Month: March				Month: April				Month: May			
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Example												
Establish goals and objectives												
Connect and collaborate												
Plan the event												
Create an outreach plan												
Engage and train partners												
Promote, promote, promote												
Host the event and celebrate												
Follow-up												



The Safe Routes Partnership is a national nonprofit organization working to advance safe walking and rolling to and from schools and in everyday life, improving the health and well-being of people of all races, income levels, and abilities, and building healthy, thriving communities for everyone.

