

Changing the Habits of an
Entire Generation through

Bicycling and Walking



**SAFE ROUTES
to School**

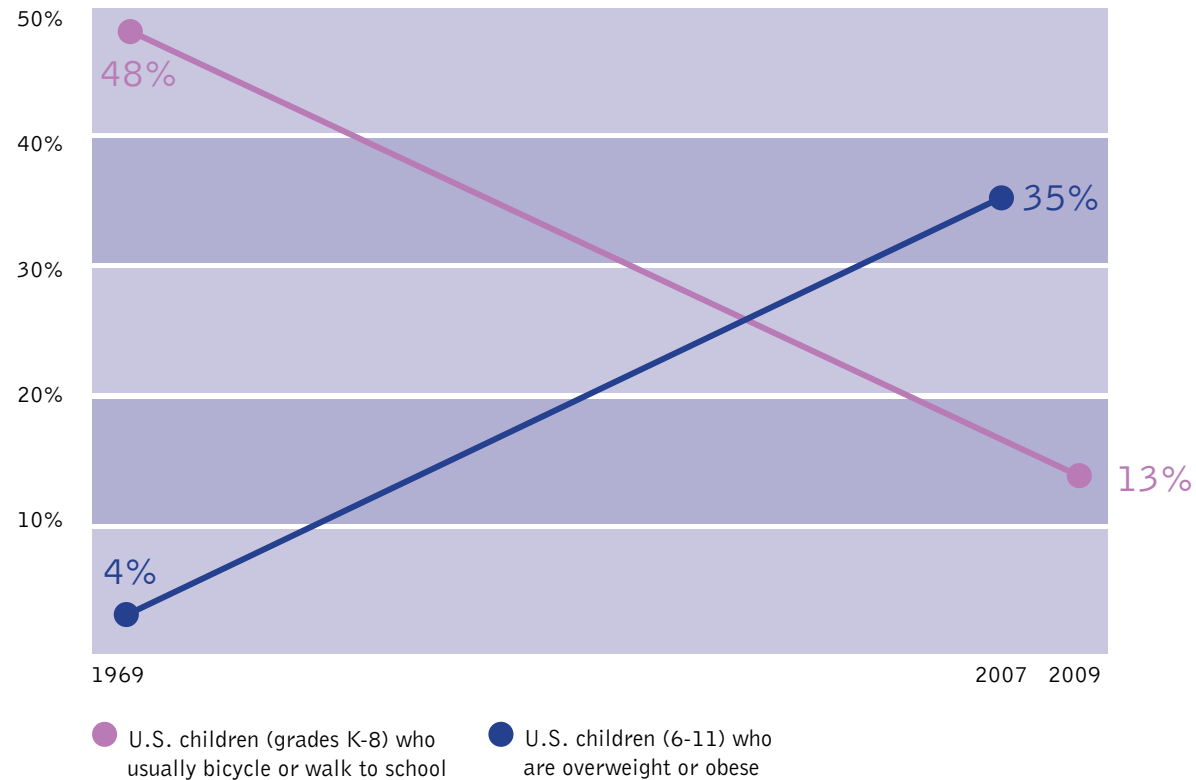
NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP



The Problem

The number of children who bicycle or walk to and from school in the United States has plummeted. Meanwhile, childhood obesity has skyrocketed and school-related road traffic has dramatically worsened.

Decreased activity leads to more overweight and obese children



Traffic

Decisions about the trip to school impact all drivers. In many communities, 20 to 30 percent of morning rush hour traffic is generated by parents driving children to school.

Health

Today, one-third of children in the U.S. are overweight or obese, more than triple the number 40 years ago.

Safety

30 percent of traffic deaths for children ages 0-14 happen when children are walking and bicycling.

Environment

Nearly one-third of all greenhouse gas emissions result from transportation.



The prevalence of obesity today is so great that the current generation of children could very well have a shorter lifespan than their parents.

Safe Routes to School can address all of these problems by making it safer for more kids to walk and bicycle to and from schools. The Safe Routes to School National Partnership emphasizes that the most successful Safe Routes to School programs incorporate the Five E's:

- ✓ Education
- ✓ Encouragement
- ✓ Engineering
- ✓ Enforcement
- ✓ Evaluation

Local Safe Routes to School efforts can start small with one individual or a small group of concerned parents who simply want to ensure that their children have healthy transportation alternatives.

In Austin, Texas, the prevalence of drug and gang-related crime and violence in the neighborhood prompted Zavala Elementary to implement Safe Routes to School education and encouragement efforts to get more adults out on the street and help children feel safe on the trip to and from school; parents and students now meet in a central location and walk to and from school together. Another positive outcome has been students now arrive on time for the school breakfast program and class.

"I have been doing Safe Routes to School for years. It is very important to me because it is good for the air, it saves oil and it stops pollution. Whenever I walk to school in the morning I feel refreshed. I love walking. And I love riding on a bike to school!"

– Guy, third grader, Las Cruces, NM

The Solution

Safe Routes to School is a national movement designed to make bicycling and walking to school safe, convenient and fun for children. The founders of the National Partnership and other leaders in the field drew the link between the decline in walking and bicycling and the long-term consequences for children's health and traffic congestion. In response to this advocacy, Congress created the federal Safe Routes to School program in 2005 as part of the transportation bill. Through 2010, \$800 million has been allocated for state departments of transportation to award Safe Routes to School grants to communities and schools.

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership is a fast-growing network of more than 500 organizations, government agencies, schools and professional groups. Our mission is to advocate for safe walking and bicycling to and from schools, and in daily life, to improve the health and well-being of America's children and to foster the creation of livable, sustainable communities. The National Partnership is working to extend and increase funding for Safe Routes to School programs at local, state and federal levels.

The National Partnership is making a difference in changing policies within states and supports local communities too. Statewide policy efforts are maximizing Safe Routes to School funding, creating Complete Streets (making roads safe for all users), developing local school siting (how school locations affect opportunities to bicycle and walk) policies and more.

Our California, Hawaii and Wisconsin Safe Routes to School networks were invited to join their state Complete Streets advisory committees in 2010 to write state guidance on how to implement recently passed Complete Streets laws. This guidance is used by local and state transportation engineers and planners to change roadway infrastructure design and construction practices so that facilities are accessible for all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists.



Because of Safe Routes to School and the National Partnership, new bike lanes, pathways, sidewalks and street crossings are being built throughout the nation. More than 10,000 schools have been affected by the federal Safe Routes to School program. As a result, children are safer and more active.

It is already evident that Safe Routes to School is making a difference: one study revealed that schools receiving infrastructure improvements through Safe Routes to School funding saw walking and bicycling increases by as much as 200 percent.

Safe Routes to School is positively changing lives – in addition to bettering children's health, one principal of a Columbia, Missouri elementary school said, "Safe Routes to School promotes a greater sense of community among our students, and I believe it has contributed to our school's tremendous turnaround in both academics and behaviors."



At least 70 percent of federal Safe Routes to School funding is dedicated to infrastructure improvements such as pathways, sidewalks, bike lanes and street crossings. This can have dramatic effects on improving safety.



Walking one mile to and from school each day accounts for two-thirds of the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity a day. Children who walk to school are more physically active and have higher levels of cardiovascular fitness; studies also show active students perform better academically.

Our Leadership

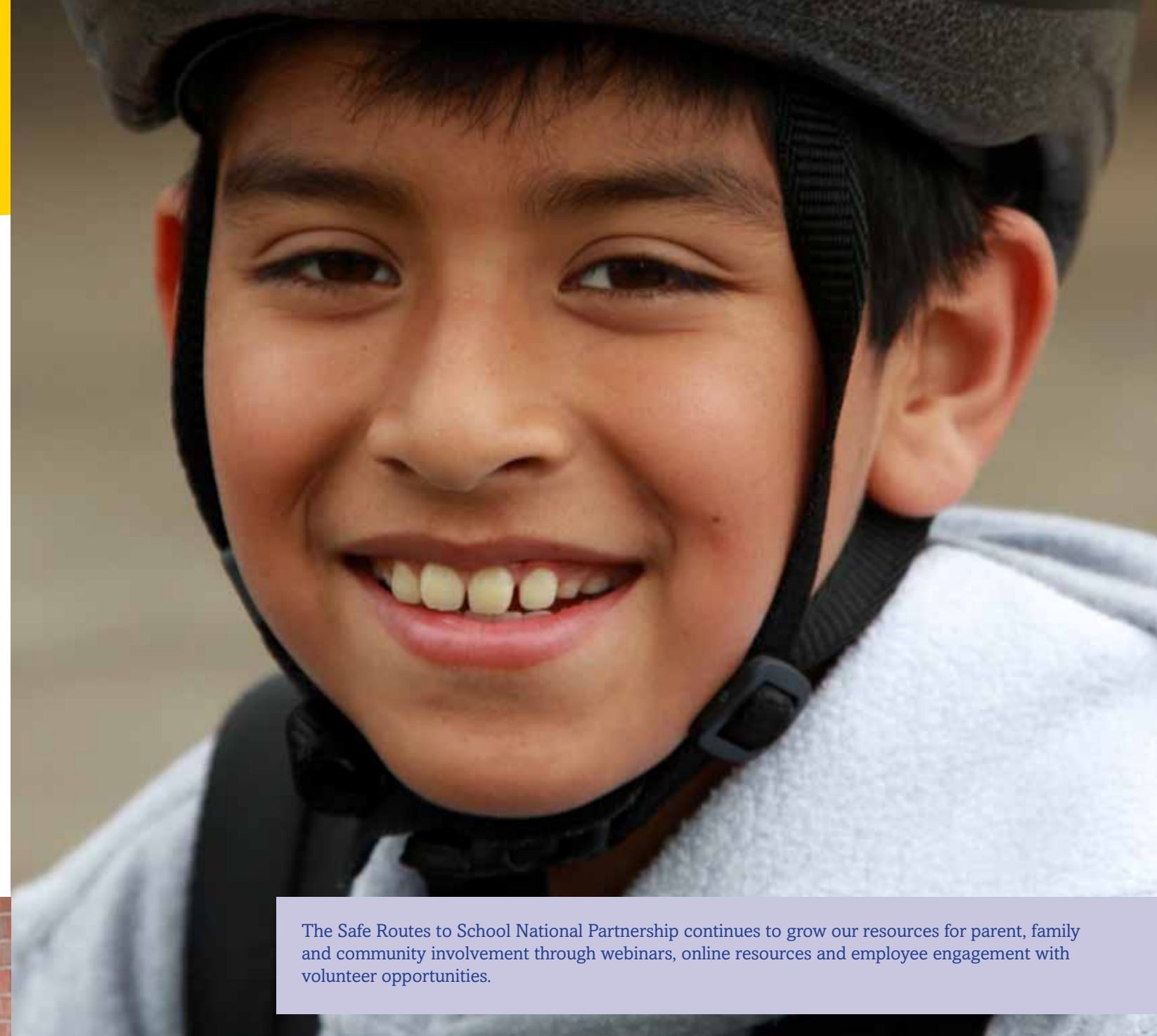
The Safe Routes to School National Partnership contributes to improving communities across the country through these program areas:

- ✓ **Advocacy** – working to expand and strengthen Safe Routes to School funding at national, state and local levels
- ✓ **Policy Change** – advancing issues like school siting and Complete Streets
- ✓ **Best Practices and Technical Assistance** – providing policy and program resources with focused efforts on low-income schools, which are facing some of the highest obesity rates
- ✓ **Publications and Research** – advancing the knowledge base of Safe Routes to School through reports, case studies and research

The National Partnership knows how important it is to measure the impact of our work and demonstrate that we are making progress. Our three primary goals are to:

- ✓ Increase the rates of children walking and bicycling to school
- ✓ Decrease the distance to school – a major barrier for many students
- ✓ Improve safety for young pedestrians and bicyclists

With a focused and ambitious 2011-2015 strategic plan we will achieve these three goals by enhancing our communications, creating policy change, and building more routes to schools, which will help inspire future leaders, advance social equity, and assure sustainability.



The Safe Routes to School National Partnership continues to grow our resources for parent, family and community involvement through webinars, online resources and employee engagement with volunteer opportunities.



The Safe Routes to School National Partnership is generously supported by foundations, corporations, government contracts, fee for service work, partner organizations and individuals. We collaborate with funders at national, state, regional and local levels to improve the health and well-being of America's children and to foster the creation of livable, sustainable communities.

You can help advance the Safe Routes to School National Partnership by:

- ✓ Becoming a sponsor or marketing partner
- ✓ Donating money
- ✓ Joining as a partner affiliate
- ✓ Volunteering
- ✓ Educating civic leaders

Contact us: info@saferoutespartnership.org



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