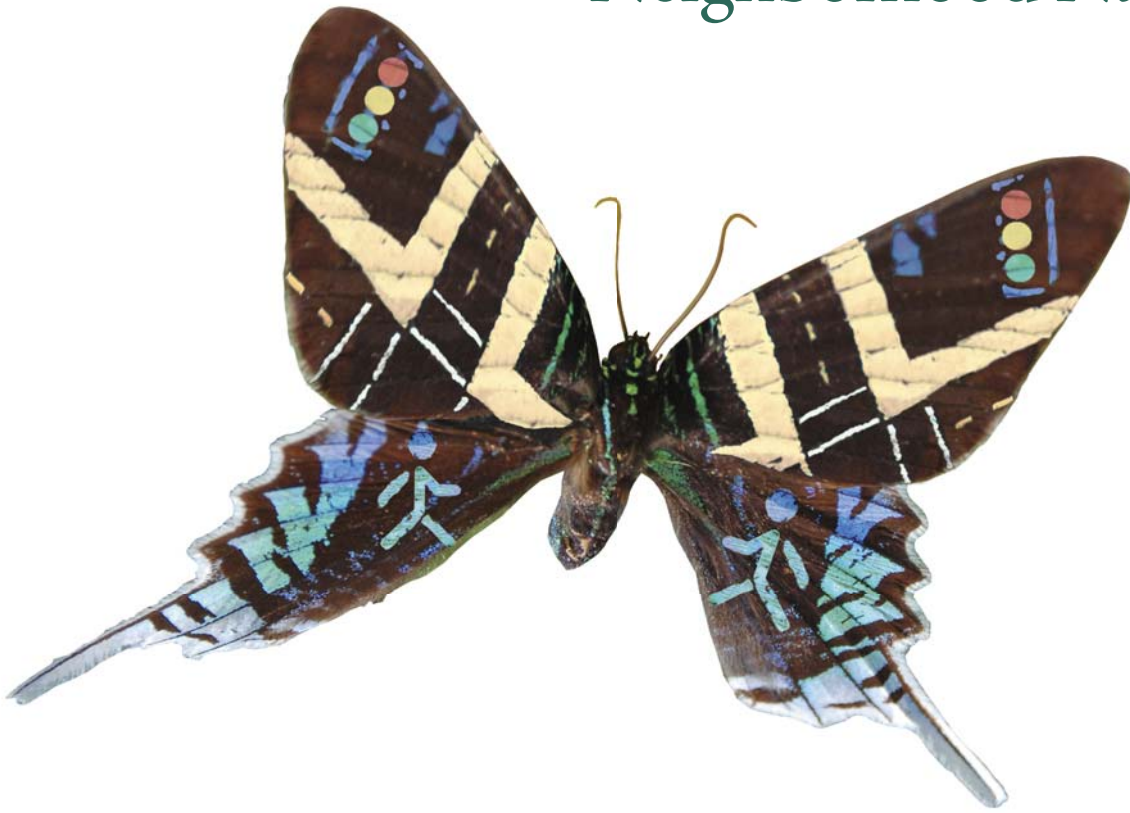


Neighborhood Navigators



Oregon Safe Routes to School
Curriculum for Grades K–8



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This curriculum is dedicated to our children, who are learning to become safe, active participants in the complex system of transportation, and their teachers, who are providing them with the tools to be successful.

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Introduction

The *Neighborhood Navigators* curriculum focuses on safe, efficient and healthy transportation choices, pedestrian safety, community and neighborhood design, and was developed for Oregon's Safe Routes to School Program.

Why This Course?

Never has the need been greater for programs that encourage active lifestyles and healthy eating in a supportive environment. One in four Oregon 8th graders is overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. If this trend continues, this will be the first generation of youth to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.



Regular physical activity is associated with enhanced health and reduced risk of disease, and yet a 2003 survey by National Survey of Children's Health found that 49% of youth were not regularly exercising. Also, in the 1970s, 67% of kids walked and biked to school--today, fewer than 15% of all trips to and from school are made by walking or bicycling. In addition, our youth are not eating the recommended levels of fruits and vegetables (Oregon Department of Human Services, Health Services).

At a time when many schools lack funding for physical education and nutrition classes, youth have few models of healthy and active lifestyles and few structured opportunities to engage in physical activity in school and throughout the community. All youth need to have healthy, active living modeled and taught to them at an early age. With early modeling, healthy active lifestyles are more likely to be carried forward over a lifetime.

The educational content of *Neighborhood Navigators* is aligned with Oregon Education Standards for the appropriate grade, and many of the lessons meet other subject standards, as shown at the beginning of each section. While the specific benchmarks have been identified, please remember that the ultimate goal is to get out and about, have fun and help our youth develop healthy, active lifestyles.

Lesson Outline

Each grade level section has five lessons plus walks to reinforce what was learned during the lesson. Ideally, students will complete all five lessons and the walks within a month with repetition and practice reflecting best practice and personal choice throughout the year. Flexibility regarding planning and teaching style is certainly encouraged.

Each lesson includes all the components you will need to understand the objectives and plan for the activities:

- Lesson Objectives
- Lesson Overview
- Materials
- Vocabulary
- Preparation
- Activities
- Teacher Reflection/ Evaluation
- Extension Activities

Children and Traffic

Although children are part of the same traffic system when they walk or ride on the same streets as other road users, research tells us that children perceive traffic differently than adults.

- Children are likely to believe that cars can stop instantly, and that if they can see the car, the driver can see them.
- Children have difficulty judging speed and distance.
- Young children have underdeveloped peripheral vision.
- Children have trouble telling where a sound (siren/ horn) comes from.
- Children often lack a sense of danger.
- Children are often restless, and have trouble waiting for things like traffic lights.
- Children have problems paying attention for long periods of time.
- Children have not developed the ability to think through cause and effect and have difficulty understanding complex chains of events.

- Children tend to focus only on the things that interest them most.
- Children have difficulty discerning myth from reality.
- Children may believe that grown-ups will always look out for them.

Excellent pedestrian videos which depict the child's perspective on traffic are "Children in Traffic," (1983) and "The New Children in Traffic," (1999). To view them, go to the American Automobile Association (AAA) video vault link: <http://www.aaafoundation.org/multimedial/index.cfm?button=videos&vidsearch=1>

Through ongoing skill development and practice, children can significantly reduce the likelihood of injury-causing crashes.

Getting Started

The *Neighborhood Navigators* program can be taught in a variety of settings but we do recommend that each day starts in a classroom setting with convenient access to outside.

Permission Forms: check with school policy about off-school permission required.

As you decide on locations of the walk, be sure it is a reasonable distance to do in the time available. Walk a route you propose, assume it will take longer for the class to walk it than it takes you to walk it, and see the difference with the first walk with the class. Use this as a benchmark as you decide future walking routes. Always give the school office a map of the route you will be taking each day and be sure that both you and the office have a list of participants and their parents' or guardians' contact information.

Thank you for taking an active role in your students' and the community's present and future health.





SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



OREGON SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY DIVISION – ODOT



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