

# 700 steps

## A parent's guide



Help your child learn to cope as a pedestrian. ***Traffic is one of the greatest threats to their lives.***

The purpose of this leaflet is to give you some ideas on teaching road safety to your child so they know what to do, whether you are with them or not.

As an adult it's easy to assume that children will automatically learn how to cope with traffic without explaining what we are doing and why.

Footsteps allows children to make their own choices and decisions *with your help* when walking and crossing the road. Ask them questions rather than tell them what to do. Involve your child in decision making and explain why you are doing things.

You can start Footsteps as soon as you feel your child can understand. It will take years before they can cope on their own, so do not expect quick results and be patient.

Your child will copy your behaviour so be consistent, even if you are in a hurry, and never do anything you wouldn't want your child to do when they are on their own.

Road Safety is not part of the National Curriculum in schools, so parents/carers need to teach their own children. **You cannot rely on anyone else to do this.**

## A good starting point

- Bend down to their height to get a better understanding of their experience of the world and what they can and cannot see.
- Talk about what you can see and what s/he can see.
- Ask your child why they need to hold your hand.

*You are taller and can see more, you can be seen and you have more experience of judging traffic.*

You know your child so you can decide when they have learned enough to walk without holding your hand.

## Listening

- In a safe place ask your child to close their eyes and tell you what they can hear.
- Ask them to point to where they think the sound is coming from.
- Which vehicles are difficult to hear?

*Electric cars and bicycles.*

## Looking

- Ask your child to look for vehicles and tell you what they can see – they may have turned their head but what have they *seen*?
- Are the vehicles moving towards or away from them?
- Do they need to look behind or in other directions?

*Driveways, junctions, roundabouts.*

## On the pavement

- Ask your child why we walk on the pavement?
- What is the edge of the pavement called?
- What does a dropped kerb tell them?

*Vehicles may cross the pavement into or out of driveways/entrances so a dropped kerb must be treated like a road.*

- Why do we stop at the kerb?

*Stopping at the kerb allows time to think, look, listen and decide what to do.*

## Crossing the road

- Ask your child to choose the safest place to cross.
- Ask your child where to stand to get the best view.
- Can they be seen by approaching drivers?
- If you are near a corner or a bend, ask your child to listen carefully for approaching traffic they cannot see.
- Ask your child how they will cross the road – walking or running and why?
- Ask your child which is the safer option – straight across or diagonally?

## Parked vehicles

Sometimes crossing between parked vehicles is unavoidable.

- How can you cross between parked vehicles safely?
- Is it likely that either of the vehicles could move while you are between them?
- How can you tell?

*Is there a driver in the vehicle?*

*Can you hear an engine noise?*

*Can you see white reversing lights?*

- If your child has decided the vehicles will not move, what do you do next?

*Walk to the outside edge of the vehicles until you can see more clearly and treat this as the edge of the kerb.*

## Clothing

- Ask your child to look at their clothes and shoes. Which would be easier for a driver to see and which more difficult, why is this?

*Bright and florescent colours.*

*Dark school uniforms.*

*Hoods, hats and scarves can block vision and muffle hearing.*

*Shoe soles may be slippery and high heels unstable.*

## Weather

- Ask your child if they can see as far in the rain, mist, fog, snow, or bright sunlight?
- Ask if drivers can see you as well in these conditions.
- As vehicles need longer to stop in wet and icy conditions, what does this mean when we want to cross the road?

## Pedestrian crossings

- Ask your child to take you across the road using a pedestrian crossing.
- Do they remember to check that traffic has stopped before they cross?
- Does the green man always mean go?
- Which vehicles may not stop?

*Emergency vehicles displaying blue lights, and inattentive drivers*

### **Road testing**

After a while check the progress of your child to see how much they have learned.

- ❖ Ask your child to choose a good place to cross the road and ask why they have made that decision.
- ❖ Check that they are looking and listening.
- ❖ Wait until they tell you when it is safe to cross.
- ❖ If your child forgets or does something wrong, remain encouraging. Give them hints and ask them questions so they can work out what they should be doing.
- ❖ Repeat the exercise as often as you like, until you feel confident that your child understands what to do in different situations and can cope with confidence without you.

# Road Crossings

## How to teach your child to use a Zebra Crossing

- **Ask your child where do we need to stop?**
- **Ask your child why they should wait for traffic to stop?**
  - To ensure the drivers have seen you before you begin to cross.
- **Ask your child once the drivers have seen you and stopped, is it always safe to walk across? What do we need to be aware of?**
  - A vehicle may overtake the stationary vehicle, so keep looking and listening.



## How to teach your child to use a Pelican Crossing



- **Ask your child where do they need to stop?**
- **Ask your child what pushing the button will do?**
  - This turns the traffic light red, so the traffic has to stop.
- **Ask your child what does the red man mean?**
  - The traffic light is on green so it is not safe to cross.
- **When the green man is showing does this mean it is always safe to go? What vehicles may not stop?**
  - Emergency vehicles.
- **Ask your child what they should do when the green man starts flashing?**
  - If you are on the pavement do not start to cross as the traffic will soon start moving. If you have already started to cross, you will have time to finish crossing, so don't worry.
- **While you are at the crossing it is possible someone else may choose to cross even on the red man.**
  - Use this as an opportunity to discuss why this is not safe.



## A Puffin Crossing

A **Puffin Crossing** is similar to a Pelican Crossing - but it has the red/green man signals on your side rather than the opposite side of the road. It also has two detectors - one can tell when people are waiting to cross; the other detector controls the red light signal to drivers so people have enough time to cross.



**Ask your child, is it safe to cross when the red man is showing?**



**Ask your child, why do we need to keep looking and listening when we are crossing when the green man is showing?**

## A Toucan Crossing

A **Toucan Crossing** is a shared signal-controlled crossing, to assist both pedestrians and cyclists to cross the road. It is similar to a Pelican Crossing. Crossing time is monitored by detectors and varies to ensure enough time is given to both pedestrians and cyclists to cross.



**Ask your child, is it safe to cross? Why do we need to keep looking and listening when we are crossing?**

A vehicle may overtake stationary vehicles and cyclists do not have to dismount to use this crossing.



**Ask your child, is it safe to cross now?** If the green cycle & green man go out while you are crossing, and the red cycle/red man reappear, keep going as you will have enough time to complete your crossing before the traffic starts to move.

**Please be aware at all times that emergency vehicles may not always stop at red lights in an emergency.**

**For further information or help with the  
Footsteps initiative please contact:**

Email: [roadsafety.education@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:roadsafety.education@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 07836 532545 or 07769 915856

[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/footsteps](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/footsteps)

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