



*The Independent Voice for Kentucky's Children*

KENTUCKY  
YOUTH  
ADVOCATES

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**International Walk to School Day**  
Eight Kentucky Communities to Participate

**Louisville, KY** – Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup> will be a day for children across Kentucky to walk back in time. Several Kentucky communities will celebrate International Walk to School Day by teaching safe walking and biking skills, encouraging kids to walk or bike to school and promoting walking and biking throughout the year. Schools in Bowling Green, Lexington, Louisville, Murray, Paris and Versailles are among those that are participating.

“What was once a typical way for a student to get to school is now, sadly, the exception,” said Lacey McNary, Deputy Director of Kentucky Youth Advocates. “Inaccessibility to side-walks or cross-walks and remote school locations make walking and biking to school unsafe for some Kentucky children and families, and inconvenient for the rest. Only 16 percent of children walked or biked to school in 2001 compared to 50 percent in 1969.”

Since 2005, federal Safe Routes to Schools dollars have been available for schools to make walking and biking safer and more convenient for children and families. Many of the communities that are participating in the walk to school day event also receive Safe Routes to School funding. Communities awarded with a grant may use the funding for educational programs, for the promotion of physical activity and/or for educating students on walking and biking safety. Other infrastructure related projects may involve construction of new bike lanes, pathways, sidewalks, and/or crosswalks.

Thus far, many schools across the state have become part of this movement that not only creates safer and easier routes to school, but also improves air quality, and enhances the health of our children.

Research shows that children who walk or bike to school are more physically active throughout the day, and physically active children are less likely to be overweight or obese. Inactivity and obesity are serious issues in Kentucky as it ranks as the 4<sup>th</sup> most inactive state, and the rate of overweight or obese children is one of the highest at 37 percent, compared to 30.6 percent nationally.

“International Walk to School Day is an opportunity to raise awareness about the need for kids to be physically active,” said McNary. “We must all become involved in educating our children on the importance of keeping their bodies and their communities healthy.”

- For more information about communities participating in International Walk to School Day in Kentucky, see <http://www.walktoschool-usa.org>
- For more information about Kentucky Safe Routes to School funded projects, see <http://www.saferoutes.ky.gov>

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***Kentucky Youth Advocates** is a non-partisan, non-profit, children's advocacy organization. KYA represents a voice for Kentucky's most precious asset – its youth. We believe that Kentucky's youth deserve the opportunities and resources necessary to ensure their productive development and health.*