

# 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 use a Zebra Crossing

- **STOP AT THE KERB AT THE CROSSING.**
- Wait for the traffic to stop.
- **WHEN THE TRAFFIC HAS STOPPED**, walk across but keep looking and listening in case a driver has not seen the crossing and tries to overtake a car which has stopped. Always cross on the stripes as many accidents happen close to zebra crossings.
- **IF THE CROSSING HAS AN ISLAND** in the middle of it, stop there and wait for the traffic on the other side of the island to stop before you continue to cross.



## How to use a Pelican Crossing



- **STOP AT THE KERB AT THE CROSSING.** Press the button and wait for the 'green man' signal to light up. Never cross while the red man is showing.
- **WHEN THE 'GREEN MAN' SHOWS**, check that vehicles have stopped, then walk across. Keep looking and listening in case a driver has not seen the crossing and does not stop.
- **WHEN THE 'GREEN MAN' STARTS TO FLASH ON AND OFF**, the traffic will soon start moving, so stay on the pavement. If you have already started to cross, you will have time to finish crossing.
- **IF IT IS A 'STAGGERED' CROSSING** there will be another signal on the traffic island. Stop and press the signal button to get the 'green man' again before crossing the second part of the road.



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

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, often a black mat, can tell when people are waiting to cross. The other controls the red light signal to drivers so people have enough time to cross.



## How to use a Puffin Crossing



**STAND ON THE MAT** if there is one, or about one pace back from the kerb if there isn't. Press the button.

**DO NOT START TO CROSS IF THE 'RED MAN' IS SHOWING.**

When the 'green man' shows and you are sure that the traffic has stopped, go straight across, looking and listening. If the crossing is staggered treat each half as a separate crossing.

**THE SIGNALS WILL STAY RED FOR DRIVERS.**

Until you get safely across, keep looking and listening in case a driver doesn't stop.

The **Toucan Crossing** is a shared signal controlled crossing to assist both pedestrians and cyclists to cross the road. Crossing time is monitored by detectors and varies to ensure enough time is given to cross, before allowing traffic to move.



## How to use a Toucan Crossing



**STOP AT THE CROSSING.** When you see the red man and cycle signal you must not cross as traffic is being given a green light. Press the button on the box and wait for the green man and green cycle to appear.



**DO NOT START TO CROSS IF THE 'RED MAN' IS SHOWING.**

When the green signal for pedestrians and cyclists appears the traffic will be given a red light. Check the traffic has stopped, then cross. Keep looking and listening in case a driver has not seen the crossing and does not stop.



**WHEN THE GREEN MAN AND GREEN CYCLE GO OUT,** if you have already started to cross, and the 'green man' and cycle signal go out, keep going, as you will have enough time to complete your crossing before the traffic starts to move.

**For further information or help with the  
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