

### **National PTA Joins Safe Routes to School National Partnership**

National PTA became a member of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, a collaboration of bicycling and walking groups, health advocates, schools, and conservation organizations formed to advocate for the establishment and support of Safe Routes to School programs.

Safe Routes to School is a national and international movement to create safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to bicycle or walk to school. In August, Congress authorized federal funding for establishing Safe Routes to School programs in all 50 states. Funds are available for infrastructure projects (bike lanes, sidewalks, traffic calming, etc.) and non-infrastructure activities (public awareness campaigns, outreach to community leaders, educational programs, volunteer trainings, etc.).

The goal of Safe Routes to School is to get more children bicycling and walking to schools on an everyday basis. This improves community and personal health, benefits the environment, increases safety, and helps to decrease traffic congestion around schools.

**Q: Why do we need Safe Routes to School?**

*A: Safe Routes to School is aimed at reversing the decline in children walking and biking to school. In 1969, approximately 50% of children walked or biked to school, and 87% of children living within one mile of school did. Today, fewer than 15% of schoolchildren walk or bike to school. As a result, kids today are less active, less independent, and less healthy. As much as 20 to 30% of morning traffic is generated by parents driving their children to schools, and traffic-related crashes are the top cause of death and major injury for children in the U.S. ages 1 to 17.*

Visit the [Safe Routes to School](http://www.bikesbelong.org) website at [www.bikesbelong.org](http://www.bikesbelong.org) to learn more.

Source: This Week in Washington, Jan 6, 2006