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## Secretary LaHood Urges Parents and Students to Consider Safe, Healthy and Green Back-to-School Transportation Options

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With schools back in session, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood urges parents and students to be safety conscious and consider greener alternatives for getting to and from school, such as riding the school bus, walking or biking.

“If it’s an option, leave your car, van or SUV parked at home and let your kids ride the school bus, their bike or walk to school,” said Secretary LaHood. “Not only are these options safer, a single school bus can take the place of multiple passenger cars, cutting down on traffic congestion and air pollution, and walking and biking are good choices that improve the health of our kids.”

Walking and biking are also consistent with First Lady Michelle Obama’s nationwide [Let’s Move](#) challenge to solve the epidemic of childhood obesity in America. Community leaders and parents across the country can tap into the [Safe Routes to School](#) program for information and resources to improve safety and find ways to encourage more children, including those with disabilities, to safely walk and bicycle to school.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator David Strickland noted that despite the safety benefits of alternative forms of transportation many parents and young drivers elect to use private passenger vehicles for the drive to and from school.

“While such choices may often be convenient, they are not without risk,” Administrator Strickland said. “Teen drivers are at an especially high risk of a crash whenever they drive. And this risk goes up as more teens pile into a vehicle.”

He also noted that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15- to 20-year-olds. In 2008, more than 2,700 teenage drivers were killed and nearly 230,000 were injured according to NHTSA statistics.

Parents who choose to drive their children to school are reminded to carefully secure each child in the proper child safety seat, booster seat or seat belt, based on the child’s age and size. Adult and teen drivers should also buckle up, because wearing a seat belt is the single most effective action anyone can take to avoid serious injury or death, should a crash occur.

Given that no mode of transportation is completely without risk, Secretary LaHood recommends that parents and children visit <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/> or <http://www.nhtsa.gov/School-Buses> for tips on how to maximize their safety when traveling to school by bus, on foot, by bicycle, or by car.

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