There was a time when the sight of children walking and bicycling to school was a familiar scene in communities across California. In fact, in 1969 approximately 50 percent of children walked or bicycled to school. Today, fewer than 15 percent of children do and rates of childhood obesity and overweight are overwhelming.\(^{1,2}\)

Concerns about traffic safety are often cited as one of the main reasons children do not walk or bicycle to school.\(^{3}\) And for good reason, as in 2010 alone, over 21,000 California school children were sent to an emergency department and over 1,500 were hospitalized due to pedestrian or bicycle injuries.\(^{4}\)

Creating safe opportunities for walking and bicycling is critical to improving the safety of young pedestrians and bicyclists and to reducing overweight and obesity among California’s youth. As such, Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs are key to reversing these trends. SRTS programs increase the number of children who safely walk and bicycle to school through education and encouragement programs, enhanced enforcement, engineering improvements, and strong program evaluation.

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**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL SUCCESS STORY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Increase in walking to school during a four week period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66%</td>
<td>Increase in bicycling to school during a four week period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>Average increase in bicycle safety knowledge among middle school students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>Average increase in bicycle safety knowledge among elementary school students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,234</td>
<td>Students benefitted from having the Safe Routes to School program at their school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Santa Cruz, California**

CALTRANS DISTRICT 5, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Students benefitted from having the Safe Routes to School program at their school.

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Ecology Action worked in collaboration with the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency through a two-year Cycle 1 SRTS award at 26 elementary and middle schools in Santa Cruz County.

The goal of the collaboration was to increase the frequency and safety of bicycling and walking to school to help decrease childhood obesity, increase active transportation, and reduce traffic congestion at and near schools.

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August 2012

*California Safe Routes to School Technical Assistance Resource Center, a program of California Active Communities*

www.CaSafeRoutesToSchool.org

(916) 552-9874

CaActiveCommunities@cdph.ca.gov
Implementing Agency
Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency

Location
Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz County
Caltrans District 5
CA Assembly District 27
CA Senate District 14

Funding
Federal SRTS Non-Infrastructure – Cycle 1

Participating Schools
Santa Cruz Gardens Elementary, Vine Hill Elementary, Pacific Elementary, Delaveaga Elementary, Shoreline Middle School, Gault Elementary, Mission Hill Middle School, Bay View Elementary, HA Hyde Elementary, Landmark Elementary, MacQuiddy Elementary, Mar Vista Elementary, Starlight Elementary, Rolling Hills Middle School, EA Hall Middle School, Mintie White Elementary, Tierra Pacifica Charter School, Main Street Elementary, Monarch Community School, Del Mar Elementary, Lakeview Middle School, Cesar Chavez Middle School, Aptos Junior High, Pacific Collegiate School, New Brighton Middle School, Branciforte Middle School

Up to 76 percent of students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Meals Program

Contact
Jeanne LePage
Program Specialist
Ecology Action
jlepage@ecoact.org
(831) 515-1344

Specifically, it accomplished this by:

- Bicycle safety classroom presentations, rodeos and street rides;
- Daily walk/bicycle to school encouragement through four-week classroom tracking program;
- Recruiting new schools for bi-annual Bike to School Day; and
- Establishing a bi-annual Walk to School Day.

PROGRAM SUCCESSES

- In-class education increased bicycle safety knowledge pre-/post-program by an average of:
  - 16.6 percent among middle school students
  - 15.8 percent among elementary school students

- During a four-week monitoring period:
  - Walking to/from school increased by 7 percent
  - Bicycling to/from school increased by 66 percent
  - Skating to/from school increased by 100 percent
  - Carpooling to/from school increased by 50 percent
  - Driving alone trips to/from school decreased by 19 percent

- Students participating in the program:
  - Traveled 34,718 miles
  - Burned an estimated 1,388,720 calories
  - Eliminated 27,655 car trips resulting in 34,718 pounds of CO\text{2} not released

- 22 out of 31 teachers rated the program as “excellent”