



Youth Safety

Introduction

Keeping children safe in their leisure activities has been an important part of Optimist programs for many years. The Optimist International Youth Safety community activity encompasses all of the activities originally included in the Safety on Wheels program as well as new activities concerning Internet safety.

Bicycling

A survey indicated that there are more than 100 million people riding bicycles in the United States and Canada. Half of the bicyclists are 14 years old and younger, and 70 percent of all bicycling accidents involve children between five and 14 years of age.

A bike safety rally or clinic increases youth awareness of safer cycling, safer bicycles and safe riders. Bike safety can be a day-long project to test skills and equipment, or can be expanded into several days starting with a decorated bike parade followed by skills testing, equipment testing, a safety expo and safe biking education.

Bicycle Education

(suitable for an outdoor event or inside a classroom)

The following items can be used in conjunction with your bike safety program:

- Coloring books, crossword puzzles and games
- Handouts with safety tips and safe places to ride in your town
- Proper bicycling equipment
- Films/videos - can be obtained through the police department or local library
- Other literature from the National Safety Council or the U.S. Department of Traffic Safety

Bike Registration

Register bikes with the help of local law enforcement officials. Bike registration information should include a description (color, manufacturer, style, etc.), serial number, owner's name, address and phone number.

Safety Inspection

- Verification of helmet fit.
- Make sure the right size helmet is chosen
- Use sizing pads for a comfortable fit
- Adjust the straps for a snug fit

Helmets should be approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or the Canadian Standard Association (CSA) and contain one of these stickers on the inside. Helmets are light, cool and should always be worn when riding. Display additional safety equipment such as reflectors, reflective clothing, etc.

Minor Repairs

If you have the manpower and knowledge for minor repairs (invite a representative from a local bike shop to attend your event), inspect the bikes and make the necessary repairs and adjustments. If a bike does not pass the inspection, a form should be given to parents with the necessary repairs and adjustments required to make the bike safe.

Bicycle Safety Skills Testing

Bicycles that do not pass the safety inspection should not be ridden in competition. Helmets are always required.

Balancing at a Slow Speed

Mark a lane 3-feet wide with white chalk or highway paint. Have each cyclist ride for 50 feet at the slowest possible speed, keeping inside the lane lines. Start with 100 points and deduct for the following:

- Two points each time a tire touches either lane
- Five points each time a wheel rolls outside the lane on either side
- 10 points each time a rider falls off the bicycle
- One point for each second of time less than one-half minute of riding a distance of 50 feet

(Note: points may be added to score on the basis of one point per second of time in excess of one-half minute.)



Circle Riding

Mark two concentric circles with diameters of 16 and 12 feet to make a circular path, 2-feet wide. Have each cyclist stay within the path while circling four times. Start with 100 points and deduct for the following:

- Two points each time a tire touches either circular line
- Three points each time a wheel rolls off the path (toward the inside or outside)
- Five points each time both wheels of the bike roll off the path (inside or outside)
- 10 points each time the rider falls off the bike

Maneuvering

Place cardboard cartons (or the beveled blocks from a previous test) 25 feet apart along a straight line 150 feet long (seven markers required). Have each cyclist ride at a comfortable speed, weaving to pass on alternate sides of the markers. Start with 100 points and deduct for the following:

- Five points each time a marker is touched by any part of the rider or bike
- 10 points each time the rider falls off the bike

Braking

Using a portion of the testing area, have each cyclist pedal continuously at a comfortable speed. At some point in this ride give the command "stop" as a signal for the rider to make an emergency stop in a straight line. Start with 100 points and deduct for the following:

- Five points if the rider stops pedaling before the command to stop is given
- Five points if the rear tire skids in making the stop
- Five points if the rider falls off the bike while stopping

Steering

Have each cyclist ride at a comfortable speed for 30 feet between parallel lines four inches apart, without disturbing beveled blocks placed against the lines in pairs (12 blocks required at distances of 6 feet). Start with a total of 100 points and deduct for the following:

- Two points each time a tire touches either line
- Five points each time a wheel rolls outside the line on either side
- Eight points each time a wheel touches a beveled block
- 10 points each time a rider falls off the bicycle

Turns and Signals

Lay out a "Z"-shaped track, the initial portion of which should be long enough for the cyclist to pedal at a comfortable speed. Place a stop sign at the intersection where the cyclist will turn right. The cyclist enters the track, should stop at the sign, turn right, get back up to speed and exit the course with a left turn at the top of the Z. Start with 100 points and deduct for the following:

- Five points if "slow-stop"; right turn and left turn hand signals are not given
- Eight points for not looking over the left shoulder before moving to the left for the left turn
- 10 points for failing to stop at the stop sign
- 10 points for making the left turn from the right side of the track

Bike Activities

A helmet is required for all events. Bikes that do not pass the safety inspection should not be ridden in competition. **No Races - Optimist International's general liability insurance policy does not cover motorized or non-motorized bicycle racing.**

Parade

Organize a parade of decorated bikes, and award prizes for the best decorated bicycle, kiddie car or scooter in children's age divisions. If the riders are in costume, give awards for the funniest or best costumes in each division. Old fashioned or bicycles built for two would be an appropriate beginning for the parade.

Plank Ride

Have a plank ride by laying planks about four inches wide end-to-end. Prizes are given to those who can ride the greatest distance without rolling off the planks.



Newspaper Throwing Contest

Five barrels or boxes are placed 25 feet apart. The contestant starts with his/her bicycle on a marked line 25 feet away from the barrel line and parallel to it. Without getting off the bicycle, the contestant throws the first five newspapers to the left, into the box or barrel, reaches the end of the block and turns around, coming back the same course and throwing five more newspapers as the contestant rides. On the return trip, the newspapers are thrown to the right. The contest is judged as follows:

- 10 points for each paper in the barrel. Total possible - 100 points
- 10 points are deducted every time the contestant's foot touches the ground
- 10 points are added for the best time in case of a tie

Obstacle Course

This event is a race with various obstacles:

- Dismounting and getting under a rail fence
- Riding over a narrow teeterboard (low enough to prevent injuries)
- Riding through a slalom—course with cones
- Dismounting to maneuver through sand or gravel with a bike

Ride and Coast

Give riders a 50 foot start, then they must remove their feet from pedals and coast. The contestant coasting the furthest wins.

Traffic Safety Components

Hold a Safety Town event to teach children what traffic signs mean and the bicycle rules of the road. Instruct participants to:

- Choose routes that have low traffic volume and smooth surfaces.
- Always ride on the right-hand side of the road with traffic. (In some Caribbean countries the left-hand side of the road is appropriate)
- Ride far enough from the curb to avoid parked cars, potholes, rocks and rough surfaces.
- Do not weave in and out of parked cars.
- Obey traffic signs and signals. This is the law.
- Use hand signals.
- Follow lane markings, and look behind you before changing lanes.
- Be visible—wear brightly-colored clothes.

- Wear white and/or reflective clothing, if you must ride at night. Your bicycle should be equipped with a bright headlight and taillight.
- Use good sense when riding with others. Be aware of obstacles and traffic, just as if you were riding alone.
- Always wear a helmet.

Inform children of the safest places to ride:

- Parks, schools, churchyards
- Smooth surfaces with low traffic
- Quiet streets, local bike paths

In-Line Skating and Skateboarding

Traditional roller skates have been replaced with new skates with wheels forming a single line from toe to heel. There are a lot of unskilled first-time skaters taking to the streets. Many lace up their skates and head into vehicular and pedestrian traffic before they know the proper way to stop. In addition, skateboarding continues to be popular among children, yet most have never been taught to use protective gear, much less guidelines for selecting a safe place to play.

In-Line Skating and Skateboarding Education

These items can be used in conjunction with your event:

- Coloring books, crossword puzzles and games
- Handouts with safety tips and safe, approved areas in town to skate
- Displays of proper equipment and gear



Protective Gear

Skateboarding and in-line skating require the same safety equipment. The following protective equipment is required to participate safely in these sports:

- Helmet (A standard bike helmet works great)
- Wrist guards
- Knee pads
- Elbow pads

Remember: when falling while skateboarding or in-line skating, the surface you come in contact with is often cement, which offers no cushioning effect for the body.

Equipment should be checked and maintained on a regular basis. In-line skating or skateboarding on a hill or incline is similar to skiing on cement. Adults and children should seriously consider taking a lesson to improve their knowledge about skateboarding or in-line skating. Children should not be encouraged to in-line skate or skateboard until they are old enough to stop when necessary and to remain in control at all times.

In-Line Skate\Skateboard Safety Inspection and Minor Repairs

- Place identification tags on the skates/skateboard.
- Verification of helmet fit
- Review the condition and placement of wrist guards, knee and elbow pads.
- Enlist the aid of a skate shop representative to assist with minor repairs and skate safety inspections.
- Allow skate retailers to set up a booth at no charge at your event to promote their establishment and discuss in-line skating/skateboarding with children and their parents.
- Verify the fit of the skate and the clamps/ties.
- Make sure that the wheel and break areas are clean and free of debris.
- Wheels tight enough. (not too tight?)
- Have the wheels been rotated for even wear? (rotate if necessary)
- Is the brake in good condition, or does it need to be replaced? (replace if necessary)

In-Line and Skateboarding Skills Testing

Many of the skills tests listed under bike safety also can be used for in-line skating and skateboarding.

- Each participant must successfully demonstrate a safe way to stop
 - Stand without rolling
 - Set up an obstacle course using cones and stop signs
- Start with 100 points and deduct for the following:
- Five points for going out of the marked boundaries
 - Five points for hitting a cone
 - Five points for falling down or off the skateboard
 - 10 points for not stopping at the stop signs
 - 10 points for not stopping in a safe manner
 - 10 points for not staying in control

In-Line Skating and Skateboarding Activities

Helmet, elbow pads, knee pads and wrist guards are all required for participation. **No Races - Optimist International's general liability insurance policy does not cover motorized or non-motorized racing.**

- Traffic safety components tell what different traffic signs mean/Safety Town setup (see: bike safety town) how to cross a street on skateboard/in-line skates navigating uneven pavement on sidewalks and curbs.
- Hold a skate exchange so children can trade or purchase used skates.
- In-Line skating and skateboarding demonstration by IISA professionals or local skate instructors.



In-Line Hockey

League Formation

With the popularity of in-line skates, in-line hockey is fast becoming the sport of choice for young people. The speed and excitement of the game, along with the relatively low cost of required equipment and the fact that any flat open parking lot or paved space is a potential playing area, has added to the tremendous growth of this great sport.

If you are interested in starting an in-line hockey youth league in your area, contact USA Hockey at (719) 576-8724 for information on this process. A listing of International and US Clubs and leagues is available at www.inlinehockeycentral.com/calendar. You may choose to work on this project with a local parks department, sports center or a hockey equipment store in order to secure participants and possible sponsors.

USA Hockey provides many benefits for members including coach and referee education, rule books, instructional materials and general assistance on the coordination of a local in-line hockey league. In-line hockey differs from ice hockey in that girls are encouraged to play, and in-line hockey isn't as physical as ice hockey. Fighting and physical contact are not allowed.

In-Line Hockey Night Out

With the explosive growth of organized in-line hockey teams, consider organizing a night out at a professional game. Based on the number of Optimists and young people involved, you may be eligible for group-rate tickets. Contact the team's management and request that they give a presentation regarding the safety aspects of the sport either before or after the game.

School Bus Safety Program

More than 22 million children ride a school bus on a daily basis. Of those children, many have not received any type of bus safety training. The majority of bus related injuries and fatalities occur when a child is boarding or exiting the bus. Getting hit by their own bus or by a passing motorist are the most prevalent types of accidents. Therefore, it's important to practice safety techniques from the time the child leaves his/her home until he/she arrives at school and then returns safely home.

Hands-on demonstrations effectively reinforce school bus safety concepts. Use an actual school bus for this clinic whenever possible. Check with a school District, or local student transportation company about providing a bus and helping with the demonstration. If you cannot obtain a bus, improvise by setting chairs in rows.

Your Club may want to do this program in conjunction with a local school, so you can present it during the school day. This would allow you to reach large groups of children at one time and give you easy access to a District school bus.

Bus Riding Education

Introduce the Bus' Safety Features

While on the bus, point out all of the onboard safety features. This includes both the structure of the bus (safety glass, emergency exits, etc.) and the bus contents (first aid kit, fire extinguisher, etc.). Call the company/school District that owns the bus you'll be using to see what features that particular bus will have.

Driver's Duties/Responsibilities

Explain the training and qualifications required of bus drivers. If a bus driver is present, ask him/her to explain. This reassures the students that they ride with experienced professionals. Just as the students are expected to follow rules, they can expect their driver to: check the bus before each trip, be on time to each stop, drive safely at all times and obey all laws.

Behavior

Explain the type of behavior required of bus riders not only while they are on the bus, but also during loading, unloading and waiting for the bus to arrive.



At The Bus Stop

- Leave home early enough to arrive on time at the bus stop. You should never run to meet the bus.
- Wait for your bus in a safe place. Don't stand in the roadway.
- Don't run around at the bus stop. Passing drivers will not be prepared to stop if you dart into the street.

Boarding The Bus

- Stay away from the bus until it stops, and the driver signals you to board. Enter in a single file line without pushing or shoving.
- Never walk in the danger zone (close to the bus where the driver can't see you). If you are closer than 10 feet to the bus, you can not be seen.
- Use the handrail.
- Secure loose coat drawstrings and other objects that may get caught in the handrail or bus door.

While On The Bus

- Follow the instructions of your bus driver at all times.
- Eating and drinking are not allowed on the bus.
- Enter the bus in an orderly manner. Take a seat right away and remain seated facing forward.
- Keep your head and arms inside the bus at all times.
- Keep your books, lunch and other belongings out of the aisle and away from emergency exits.
- Stay in your seat and sit quietly so that the driver is not distracted. The driver needs to be able to hear sirens and horns. Remain especially quiet at railroad crossings.
- In an emergency situation, stay calm. Listen to the driver and follow instructions. Help the driver by getting the smaller children off safely.
- Some school buses now have seat belts. If you have seat belts on your bus, learn to use the seat belt correctly.

Getting Off The Bus

- Get off the bus carefully, and be alert to traffic. Look to the right and left before exiting. Drivers in a hurry may try to sneak around the bus on the right.
- Take five giant steps away from the bus and out of the danger zone. You should be able to see the driver and the driver see you.

- If you cross the road when you get off, look both ways, wait for the driver's signal and cross in front of the bus. Check again to make sure you're five giant steps away from the bus.
- When you get off the bus, look for the bus safety lights and make sure they are flashing.
- Never run back to the bus even if you dropped or forgot something. If something falls under or near the bus, tell the driver or another adult. Never pick it up yourself.

Safety Drills

Once you've gone over all the rules, put them to the test! Involve the children by having a child act as the bus driver during the safety drills.

The driver should be able to see the children at all times, even when a child stands outside of the bus. Practice walking several feet away from the bus when loading/unloading and crossing the street. Stress the importance of not bending over to pick anything up, or walking too close to the bus. Chances are, if the child cannot see the driver, the driver cannot see the child. Make sure they are finding a seat quickly, and using the handrail while getting on and off the bus. The student bus driver can make sure no one has their feet in the aisle, check for students using the handrail, watch for loose drawstrings or anything that could get caught, and monitor the noise level.

Bus Evacuation

Assure the children that staying on the bus is the best option, but there may be a rare instance when they would have to evacuate, such as being stuck on a railroad track or having a fire onboard.

Practice an evacuation through the front and back exits. Explain that if the danger, such as a fire, is in the front of the bus, the evacuation would take place through the back door, but the people sitting in front would evacuate first, and vice versa. Remind the children to exit single file without running and yelling.

School Bus Safety Activities

- Sponsor an elementary essay contest on "Why my driver is the greatest."
- Have a driver recognition dinner and honor winners of the essay contest; have students vote for their favorite driver; honor outstanding safety/driving records, years of service, etc.
- During a school assembly, show a safety video obtained from AAA, state or local Safety Council, or the State Department of Education or Transportation.



Adopt-A-Bus

- As an Optimist Club, adopt a school bus of young children and help them get acquainted with their school and riding the school bus. The Optimists could return and visit “their bus” on holidays and pass out small favors or cards to the children.
- Sponsor “**The Big Yellow Limo**” with a driver on prom night. To discourage drinking and driving, use a school bus and driver to transport the prom participants from event to event. It’s a safe mode of transportation on prom night for all!

School Bus Safety Poster Contest

Sponsor a School Bus Safety Poster Contest at your host school. Your entire Optimist Club may wish to act as the judging panel for this type of exciting competition! Evaluate the posters according to grade level; choose the winners based on the safety message, artistic ability and originality. The children’s safety art work displayed in the sponsoring school will be a reminder of the Optimists’ involvement in School Bus Safety. Your Club should present prizes or safety citations to the winning student “artists.”

Each year, the National School Bus Safety Week Committee holds a School Bus Safety Poster Contest. The contest takes place in October and has a theme for each year. The National School Bus Safety Week Committee offers four entry categories:

- Division 1 - Grades K-3
- Division 2 - Grades 4-6
- Division 3 - Grades 7-8
- Division 4 - Special Education Students

If you would like to coordinate your School Bus Safety Poster Contest with this competition, please contact your local state or provincial Director of Student Transportation before planning your poster contest. Students are required to comply with a number of official rules in order to be considered for the national contest. Each state or province submits one winner in each entry division to the National School Bus Safety Committee for final judging. For more information about the National School Bus Safety Week Committee’s Poster Contest, please write to:

National School Bus Safety Week Poster Contest
P.O. Box 2639
Springfield, VA 22152 U.S.A.
www.schooltrans.com/pstrules.htm

Contact your state director of pupil transportation or the national contest at the above address for the address of the state or province contest. Then you can correspond with your state or province for their deadlines, rules, and details.

In Canada, School Bus Safety Week is organized by the Association du transport écolier du Québec (ATEQ) and is held during the weeks of January 29 and February 9, 2007. This program strives to make pre-school and primary students aware of the importance of adopting safe behavior on board and around school buses. Another important focus of the program is to sensitize motorists and parents to the dangers, which may occur if they do not respect the basic safety rules and to double their vigilance when in the presence of school buses, particularly near schools.

The theme for students is “Hold it! Think Safety!” and theme for motorists and parents is “Hold it!”

Information on the School Bus Safety Week program can be found on the Association du transport écolier du Québec (ATEQ) website, <http://www.ateq.qc.ca/evenements/campagne.html>. The ATEQ Safety Campaign Organizational Guide is available on the website in French and English.

For information on running this campaign in your local school, contact ATEQ at:

5300 boulevard des Galeries, Suite 300
Québec Qc G2K 2A2
Telephone : (418) 622-6544
Toll-Free Number : 1 877 622-6544
Fax : (418) 622-6595
Email : courrier@ateq.qc.ca
Internet : www.ateq.qc.ca

Automobile Safety

Long before most youth reach the legal driving age, they are already counting down the days until their birthday. Along with the excitement, it’s important to remind and teach teens that driving means more than fun and freedom. Educate participants on the serious responsibility that comes with being a driver and how dangerous it can be.

Automobile Safety Education

- Demonstrate and have students change a tire
- Locate controls and major parts of the vehicle
- Ask an insurance agent or AAA representative to explain what actions to take if you have car trouble or are involved in an accident
- Have a representative from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), hospital emergency room, police department or past offenders speak on the dangers of playing behind the wheel.



Automobile Skills Test

Obstacle Course

Create an obstacle course using cones and stop signs for drivers to maneuver through.

Start with 100 points and deduct for the following:

- Five points for hitting a cone
- 10 points for not signaling before turning
- 10 points for not stopping at stop sign

Parallel Parking

- Set up two markers to parallel park between

Driving in reverse

- Mark a section for the driver to back up in a straight line
- Test the driver on backing into a parking space

Automobile Safety Activities

- Obtain a seat belt simulator so students can experience the impact of an accident
- Display a car that has been involved in a severe accident
- Display information about the safety of children riding in cars equipped with air bags. Air bags or not, all non-driving children should be seat belted into the car's backseat. If under 40 pounds, the child should be in a car seat in the back seat.
- Conduct a survey to assess seat belt usage among local students
- Make the community aware of dangerous intersections, and enlist the help of local groups to try affect change

Prom Night Programs

- An important safety tip for prom night is to promote safe teen driving. This is a momentous occasion for most teenagers, and the memory should be lasting and cheerful.
- Promote with fliers, advertisements in your local newspaper, on the radio or TV **"Don't Drink & Drive."** Let this be a night you'll remember for the rest of your life and not a night that could end your life.

Optimist Safety On Wheels Rally

Each of the previously listed activities make for an effective safety clinic on their own, but consider organizing an all-inclusive Optimist Safety On Wheels Rally! Like the others, this event can take place at a local park, school ground or other public place. It is important to use an event site that is visible and central to your entire community. Promote your rally as much

as possible through local community bulletins and newspaper articles, community service radio announcements, and by posting signs at local schools, sports arenas, retail stores and in other public areas.

Rally ideas:

- Depending on the type of community in which you live, incorporate other "wheeled" safety events with farm trucks and tractors, off-road vehicles, lawn mowers, etc.
- Hold a School Bus Safety Program - contact your local school District for the use of one of their buses
- Bike Safety - including bike inspections, skills testing and related activities
- Give away donated merchandise with a safety theme including bike/skating helmets, water bottles and T-shirts
- Coordinate an in-line skating and/or skateboard demonstration and safety clinic
- Set up a booth containing information about in-line hockey and league formation
- Arrange for a local vendor of bicycles, skates and sports equipment to display and discuss their merchandise
- Invite your local police department, state patrol or department of traffic safety agency to discuss pedestrian safety along with driving techniques and related programs. Request that they supply information concerning the dangers of drinking and driving, seat belt use, child safety seats, etc.
- Contact railroad organizations to set up displays and safety tips on railroad crossings and trains
- Integrate fun activities with your safety programs by adding face painting, balloons, clowns and prize drawings
- Allow food vendors to set up refreshment stands to provide cash and carry items, or secure sponsorships of donated food and beverage goods
- Set up a table staffed by an Optimist member to answer questions about membership and the other youth programs that your Club conducts throughout the year. This type of event is the perfect way to recruit new members and to share the philosophy of Optimism with your community!

Welcome

Name: _____ Home phone: _____

Business phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Notes: _____

Name: _____ Home phone: _____

Business phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Notes: _____

Name: _____ Home phone: _____

Business phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Notes: _____

Name: _____ Home phone: _____

Business phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Notes: _____





Youth Safety Evaluation Form

Club Name _____ Club Number _____

Title of activity _____

Summary of activities

Number of Club Members involved _____ Number of people reached _____

Please circle any other organizations that worked with your Club(s) on the project:

School *Youth Group* *Civic/Volunteer Group* *Community Center*
Local Business *Government Office*

Cost of sponsoring this activity _____

Did you secure any type of sponsorship? *Yes* *No*

Publicity received (circle all that apply): *Newspaper* *Bulletin* *Newsletter* *Radio*

Did you recruit new Members from this activity? *Yes* *No*

Will your Club conduct this activity again?

What recommendations would you make for improving this activity?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. This information is extremely valuable. Please submit the form by either mail, fax or e-mail.

Mail to: Optimist International, C/O Programs Department, 4494 Lindell Blvd, St. Louis, MO. 63108

Fax to: (314) 371-6006

E-Mail: programs@optimist.org