Footsteps

CHILD PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Follow **Footsteps** and help your child become a safer and more confident pedestrian.

OXFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

As adults, we have become safer pedestrians through experience. But young children won't have learnt those skills yet.

Use the **Footsteps** guide to support your child to gain the skills they need to be a safer, confident, independent pedestrian.

- Ask lots of open questions and involve your child in the decision making.
- Encourage your child to make their own decisions safely when you are out and about together.
- Always be a good role model as your child will copy your behaviour. Even if you are in a hurry, never do anything you wouldn't want your child to do.

Start Footsteps as soon as you feel your child is ready, the sooner the better. This is a learning journey and it may take a long time before your child can cope on their own.

Please don't expect quick results, take it at their pace. As your child shows you they can cope, move on to more challenging tasks. You know your child best, so you will know when they are ready to go out without you.

A good starting point

- Bend down to your child's height to get a better understanding of their experience of the world and what they can and cannot see.
- At the roadside, ask what your child can see.
- Ask your child why they need to hold your hand.
  Show them you are taller and can see more, you can be seen and you have more experience of judging traffic.

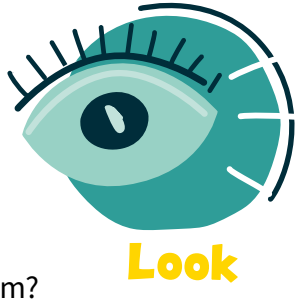
You know your child so you can decide when they have learned enough to walk without holding your hand.

Listening

In a safe place ask your child:

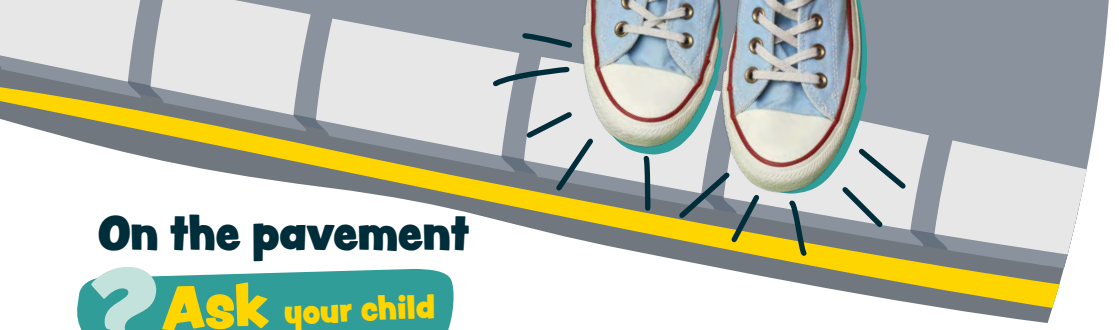
- To close their eyes and tell you what they can hear.
- To point to where they think the sound is coming from.
- Which vehicles are difficult to hear?
  Electric cars, e-scooters and bicycles.

Looking



In a safe place ask your child:

- To look for vehicles and tell you what they can see – they may have turned their head but what have they actually 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 do you walk on the pavement?
- What is the edge of the pavement called?
- What does a dropped kerb tell you?
  Vehicles may cross the pavement into or out of driveways/ entrances so a dropped kerb must be treated like a road.
- Why do you 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.
- Where to stand to get the best view.
- Can you be seen by approaching drivers?

If there is no safer option and you have to cross near a corner or bend

- To listen carefully for approaching traffic they cannot see.
- How will you cross the road? Walking or running? Why?
- Which is the safer option when crossing the road, straight across or diagonally?

Parked vehicles

Sometimes crossing between parked vehicles is unavoidable.

Ask your child

- How can you cross between parked vehicles more safely?
- Is it likely that either of the vehicles could move while you are between them?
- How can you tell if a vehicle might move?
  Is there a driver in the vehicle?
  Can you hear an engine noise?
  Can you see white reversing lights? Check that your child understands what those lights signify.

Involve your child in decision making

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 think about what clothing would be easier for a driver to see and which more difficult. Why is this?
  Bright and fluorescent colours are easier for drivers to see and dark school uniforms are more difficult.

Weather

Ask your child

- Can you see as far in the rain, mist, fog, snow, or bright sunlight is in your eyes?
- Can you or other road users see as well in these conditions?
- As vehicles need longer to stop in wet and icy conditions, what does this mean when you want to cross the road?

Involve your child in decision making

Pedestrian crossings

- Does the green man always mean go? **Remind your child to check that traffic has stopped before they cross.**
- Which vehicles may not stop? **Emergency vehicles displaying blue lights or 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

Zebra Crossings

Ask your child

Why should you wait for traffic to stop?

To ensure the drivers have seen you before you begin to cross.

Where do you need to stop?

Once the drivers have seen you and stopped, is it always safe to walk across? What do you need to be aware of?

A vehicle may overtake the stationary vehicle, so you need to **keep looking and listening.**

Pelican Crossings

Ask your child

Where do you need to stop?

What will pushing the button do?

This turns the traffic light red, so the traffic has to stop.

What does the red man mean?

The traffic light is on green for vehicles so it is not safe to cross.

When the green man is showing, does this mean it is always safe to go? Which vehicles may not stop?

Emergency vehicles or inattentive drivers.

What should you do when the green man starts flashing?

If you are on the pavement, do not start to cross as the traffic will soon start moving. If you have already started to cross, you will have time to finish crossing, so don't worry.

While you are at the crossing it is possible someone else may choose to cross even on the red man.

Use this as an opportunity to discuss why this is not safe.

Puffin Crossing

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 can tell when people are waiting to cross, while the other detector controls the red light signal to drivers so people have enough time to cross.

Ask your child

Is it safe to cross when the red man is showing?

Why do you need to keep looking and listening when crossing while the green man is showing?

Emergency vehicles or inattentive drivers.

Toucan Crossing

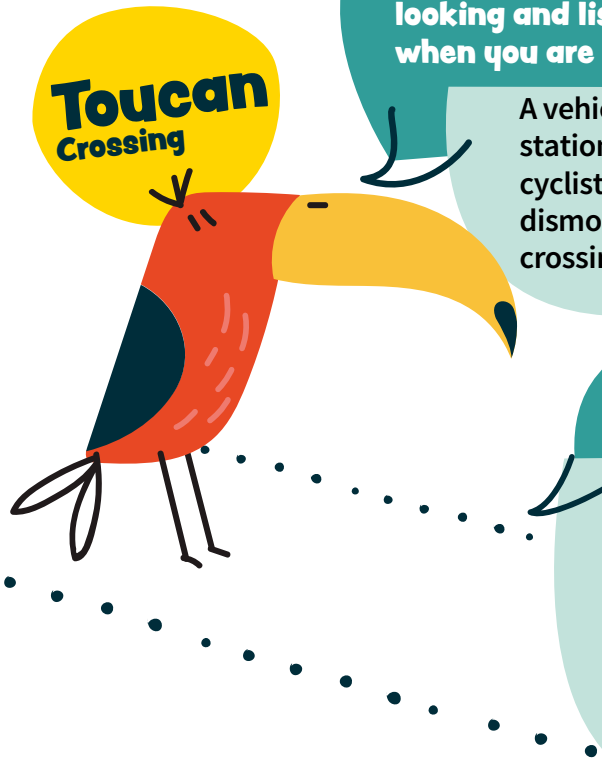
A Toucan Crossing is a shared signal-controlled crossing, to assist both pedestrians and cyclists to cross the road. It is similar to a Pelican Crossing. The crossing time is monitored by detectors to ensure enough time is given to both pedestrians and cyclists to cross.

Ask your child

Is it safe to cross?

Why do you need to keep looking and listening when you are crossing?

A vehicle may overtake stationary vehicles and cyclists do not have to dismount to use this crossing.



Is it safe to cross now?

If the green cycle or green man go out while you are crossing and the red cycle or red man reappear, keep going as you will have enough time to finish your crossing before the traffic starts to move.

EMERGENCY VEHICLES MAY NOT STOP AT RED LIGHTS IN AN EMERGENCY

Roads can be dangerous places, without the skills Footsteps can give your child they could be putting themselves at risk of injury when they go out alone.

Learning to cope with traffic is a practical life skill that is gained through experience in real life situations. Your child won't learn this valuable, practical, potentially life-saving skill at school.

Following **Footsteps** will help you support your child to become a safer, more confident, and independent pedestrian. It will give you reassurance and allow your child to enjoy the health benefits of walking, which is great for the planet too.

Road safety education team contact information:

Email: roadsafety.education@oxfordshire.gov.uk

365alive.co.uk/footsteps

365alive.co.uk/roadsafety

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