

October 21 – 25 is National School Bus Safety Week

- Safe Kids Kansas

Topeka — Oct. 21 to 25 is National School Bus Safety Week, making it a good time to teach children how to stay safer in and around school buses. This year's theme, "Stand Back from the Yellow and Black," is a reminder to motorists and students about the dangers that exist outside the school bus.

"School buses are, by far, the safest way for kids of all ages to get to and from school," said Cherie Sage, Safe Kids Kansas. "Students are about 50 times more likely to arrive at school alive if they take the bus than if they drive themselves or ride with friends – more than 20 times safer than if they ride with a parent or other adult."



Simply put, school buses are built to reduce rider fatalities and injuries in a crash.

While school buses are the safest mode of motorized transportation for getting children to and from school, injuries can occur if kids are not careful and alert when getting on and off the bus. The greatest risk involved is not riding the school bus, but getting on and off the bus.

It is illegal for vehicles in Kansas to pass a school bus when its red signal lights are flashing, however; it is important to teach kids to pay attention to traffic at their bus stop and never assume that every vehicle will stop as expected.

Kids need to put away their own distractions, such as texting, talking on the phone or listening to music, when crossing the street. Check out these videos about the importance of drivers and pedestrians paying attention around school buses and crosswalks.

Bus Stop Safety: <http://youtu.be/5V-pQVymOH8>

Moment of Silence: <http://www.safekids.org/video/video-moment-silence>

Here are some school bus safety tips that all children should know:

- Walk with your kids to the bus stop and wait with them until it arrives. Tell kids to stand at least three giant steps back from the curb as the bus approaches and board the bus one at a time.
- Teach kids to wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before getting off and never to walk behind the bus.

- If your child needs to cross the street after exiting the bus, he or she should take five giant steps in front of the bus, make eye contact with the bus driver and cross when the driver indicates it's safe. Teach kids to look left, right and left again before crossing the street.

- Instruct younger kids to use handrails when boarding or exiting the bus. Be careful of straps or drawstrings that could get caught in the door. If your children drop something under the bus, they should tell the bus driver and make sure the bus driver is able to see them before they pick it up.

- Drivers should always follow the speed limit and slow down in school zones and near bus stops. Remember to stay alert and look for kids who may be trying to get to or from the school bus.

- Slow down and stop if you're driving near a school bus that is flashing yellow or red lights. This means the bus is either preparing to stop (yellow) or already stopped (red), and children are getting on or off.

National School Bus Safety Week is conducted every year in the third week of October and led by the National Association for Pupil Transportation.

Visit www.napt.org for more details. To learn more about pedestrian safety and child passenger safety, visit www.safekids.org.