

Existing Education Programs

City of Clearwater residents and visitors enjoy and learn bicycle safety skills through a variety of education programs. Several entities conduct bicycle education programs within the City of Clearwater. These include the Parks and Recreation Department, the Police Department, the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization and Pinellas County Schools. The methods that are employed include elementary school lessons, high school driver's education programs, walking school buses, bicycle rodeos, safety fairs, volunteer trail patrol and informational websites.



Child Education

The hardest part of raising a child is teaching them to ride bicycles. A shaky child on a bicycle for the first time needs both support and freedom. The realization that this is what the child will always need can hit hard.

~Sloan Wilson

Elementary School

Pinellas County Schools provides bicycle education curriculum for fourth and fifth grades. The two-week program has an in-class component as well as hands-on education with bicycles that are delivered to the schools in advance. In the 2003-2004 school year, the following elementary schools participated and implemented the program:

- Belcher
- Belleair
- Curtis Fundamental
- Leila Davis
- McMullen Booth
- North Ward
- Skycrest
- South Ward

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Walking School Bus

The City of Clearwater assists communities in the initial planning and implementation of a Walking School Bus. A Walking School Bus is a small, organized group of students who are accompanied by one or more adults on their walks to and from school. Typically, the students live near each other.



Walking School Bus

The primary benefit of the Walking School Bus is the provision of a consistent, supervised system in which children can walk under adult supervision, typically the parent of one of the students. Although this may be the primary benefit, there are many additional benefits:

- As a large and visible group that is supervised by adults, children are seen safely into school. This comforts parents who are concerned about letting their children walk on their own.

- Children learn pedestrian skills so that when they begin to walk on their own, they are equipped to successfully navigate traffic. The nature of the group encourages additional students to walk, introducing them to an important and easy form of exercise.
- Auto traffic is reduced, particularly near schools during drop-off and pick-up times. Reducing auto traffic reduces air pollution and improves our local environment for everyone. It strengthens communities by getting people (parents and students in particular) to work together for a common good.
- Children have a chance to talk and make new friends. When they arrive at school and have already socialized, they are more ready to learn.
- Over time, parents become the "eyes on the streets" of their neighborhood. They can help



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identify problem intersections along the route and monitor said areas so children can cross safely.

Driver's Education Curriculum

In addition to the bicycle education programs offered in the fourth and fifth grades, Pinellas County Schools also provides specific bicycle and pedestrian education in their driver's education programs that are offered in high school.

Bicycle Rodeos

The City of Clearwater Parks and Recreation Department conducts bicycle rodeos on a regular basis. Bicycle rodeos are designed as an effective way to help young bikers learn how to ride safely. At bicycle rodeos, participants generally learn the following skills:

- Entering the road from a driveway
- Proper Hand Signals
- Maneuvering through an intersection
- Scanning for cars
- Balancing techniques
- How to weave and avoid obstacles and

- Stopping

Bicycle rodeos are small scale and can be implemented in any parking lot.

Safety Fairs

The City of Clearwater and the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization participate in numerous health and safety fairs throughout the City. Using portable displays, they teach bicycle and pedestrian safety at events such as National Trails Day, corporate fairs and neighborhood association meetings. Residents are encouraged to request bicycle and pedestrian



Bicycle Rodeo



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Volunteer Trail Patrol

safety education participation at their special events by calling the Parks and Recreation Department.

Volunteer Trail Patrol

The City of Clearwater's East-West Trail is patrolled by volunteers. Through regular monitoring, volunteer trail patrol members provide bicycle and pedestrian safety information. The volunteer trail patrol is administered by the City's Police Department in coordination with the Parks and Recreation Department.



Websites

Informational websites are also utilized by both the City of Clearwater and the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization to provide bicycle and pedestrian safety education. In addition to specific bicycle and pedestrian safety tips and brochures (for downloading), these

supply information regarding upcoming special events, specific trail and bicycle lane information and links to other sites that provide educational opportunities for children and adults.

Conclusion

The City of Clearwater offers its residents and visitors several opportunities to participate in bicycle and pedestrian safety education. These programs include bicycle education for fourth and fifth graders as well as high school driver's education classes, walking school buses, bicycle rodeos, safety fairs, volunteer trail patrol and website education.