



## [Keeping Your Children Safe from School Bus Injuries](#)

by [John Demas](#) on 04/04/09 at 11:18 am

If you walk your children to the school bus stop and wait until they're safely seated before leaving, you may think you've done your job. In fact, school buses are almost eight times safer for children than privately driven vehicles. Nevertheless, other accident statistics indicate that we must take a closer look at the school bus safety issue. In its most recent report entitled, "Traffic Safety Facts: 2006 Data," See the PDF document link at: [click here](#). the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) states that between 1996 and 2006, there were 1, 387 fatal motor vehicle traffic crashes that were "school transportation-related." Although about 140 people die in such crashes each year, most of the fatalities involve the passengers in the privately driven cars.

Still, close to nine children riding in school transportation vehicles died each year between 1996 and 2006. Numerous school-age pedestrians, age 19 or younger, have also lost their lives by coming into contact with school buses. About half of these young pedestrians who died were between the ages of five and seven.

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These statistics clearly indicate that whether we are parents, caregivers, teachers, general pedestrians or drivers, we must provide children with plenty of safety rules and suggestions. Likewise, we must carefully monitor our own driving and walking behavior when we're near school buses.

The following suggestions are made with all school-age children in mind:

### [\(See this link\)](#)

- Remind your children to never push and shove when boarding a bus. They need to walk calmly and carefully, boarding or exiting the bus one at a time. They should always wait for the driver's signal that they may board or disembark. Also, they should try to arrive at their bus stops at least five minutes early to avoid rushed attempts to board. Once on the bus, children must remember to never engage in any rough play or throw objects at one another.

- Be sure your children use the handrails when boarding or exiting a bus. That way, should another child be pushing or shoving others, they'll be less likely to fall down. Kids should always wait for the driver to make a complete stop before even thinking about standing up and exiting the bus.
- Children need to be told that the most dangerous areas around a school bus are those just behind the bus and on both sides, closer to the front of the bus. Kids should never step out into the street from between parked cars or from behind nearby bushes since this may further prevent drivers from seeing them in time to stop.
- As tempting as it is to all of us to take shortcuts, remind your children to always cross the street in a crosswalk, if one is available, and at a corner.
- Tell your children to remain seated at all times and to keep their belongings just below them. Putting anything out in the aisle may prove dangerous.
- Remind children to immediately go and tell the driver if they have dropped something near the bus so the driver won't accidentally hit them when they are bending over to pick it up and out of view. Be sure your kids have backpacks or other items in which they can carry all of their school books, supplies and lunches. Make sure their carry-on items don't have anything hanging off them that could cause them to get caught in a bus doorway or elsewhere.
- When a school bus stop is located in a particularly dangerous location, ask the school district if it might be moved someplace nearby — perhaps closer to a reputable store, place of worship or other safe gathering place.
- Remind children to never start walking as soon as the driver tells them it's safe to disembark from the school bus. They must always look for themselves to be sure that there are no cars on the shoulder near the curb or on the street side of the bus.
- Children should walk at least five big steps out in front of the bus, catching the driver's eye and waiting for his or her signal that it's safe to cross the street, before they begin to do so. Next, young people should always personally look to both the left and the right to be sure the road is clear of all vehicles before crossing. Children should always keep their eyes on vehicles while still crossing the street. They need to be reminded that just because most drivers are adults, they may still not look carefully for pedestrians because they are often distracted by their passengers, traffic lights, cell phones and other items.

If we will share each of these warnings and explanations with our children, we should be able to dramatically decrease the number of kids who are annually harmed, both as riders and pedestrians, in school bus accidents or fatalities. Having represented many children in California who have been [injured in different motor vehicle accidents](#), we hope you will never to call our offices for possible representation.