



FIRST GRADE LESSONS: DANGERS OF THE STREET, CROSSING SAFELY, PARKING LOT SKILLS AND INTRODUCTION TO HELMETS

First Grade is an important time for young students to learn how to be safe when out with their friends and families. These lessons cover many of the basics for street and parking lot safety. Additionally, many first graders are learning to ride bikes at this age. The resources section of the Bicycle Colorado Safe Routes to School Teacher Tool Kit has many useful handouts including a “Teach Your Child to Ride Without Training Wheels” guide.

LESSON 1: DANGERS OF THE STREET (5-10 MINUTES)

Take time to discuss traffic and street dangers with small children. The majority of crashes and fatalities among this age group are due to “dart outs”. Discuss what to do if the child sees a toy, pet, other children or parents are in the street. Small children should ask an adult to help and never enter the street unsupervised (even to greet an adult in the street). Ask students to tell stories about their experiences with the street. You will be surprised what they know already and can share with the class!!

LESSON 2: CROSSING THE STREET (15 MINUTES)

Objectives: To understand the need for crossing any street with care and caution. And, to become familiar with the important steps in crossing a street, such as stopping at the curb and finding the edge, looking left, right, and left again before crossing, and continuing to scan for traffic while crossing.

Materials:

Masking Tape or floor tape

Small cones (optional)

Sidewalk chalk (if working outdoors)

Suggested Location for Lesson: This lesson should be taught in a gym or other indoor space. First grade students often have trouble with distractions outdoors. Once students learn basics of crossing the extended lesson can be performed outside on a playground or field.

Preparation: Practice crosswalk should be set up ahead of class. Take into consideration the floor surface when deciding to use masking or floor tape, as masking tape can damage wood floors. Setup should take no more than 5 minutes. “Draw” a crosswalk using masking tape, floor tape, or sidewalk chalk. Mark the ends of the “curb” with traffic cones to make it easier for students to know where to line up.



Vocabulary: pedestrian; edge; crosswalk; scan; diagonal; straight; safe; dangerous; left; right; traffic

Note to Teacher: This lesson is geared towards teaching first graders the basics of crossing the street. It is important to note that children at this age are not ready to cross streets on their own. They should be encouraged to cross the street only with the help of an adult.

1. 50% to 60% of pedestrian injuries to children aged 5 to 9 are “mid-block dart-out” crash types. (*Federal Highway Administration, 1996*)
2. Pedestrians under age 10 are over represented in crashes where contributing factors are “ran into street”, “ran from between parked vehicles”, and “playing in street”. (*Federal Highway Administration, 1996*)

Assemble students to in a small circle for discussion. Use the following discussion topics to engage students:

1. Do any of you walk places?
2. What kind of things do we need to be careful of when walking? (Cars, trucks, bicycles, trains)
3. Should kindergarteners walk places by themselves?
4. Can any of you tell me what a crosswalk is?
5. Is it safe to think that cars will always stop for us in crosswalks? (no, we need to look and wait for them to stop)
6. What are some things that grownups do in their cars instead of paying attention?
7. If a crosswalk signal says I should walk do I still need to look both ways?

Activity: Crossing the street safely!

- Assemble students at sample crosswalk. Define the edge and where students should be standing to prepare for crossing. Students should stand near the edge but not in the street.
- Have students “check their feet” for untied shoelaces etc. Discuss dangers of tripping and falling in the street.
- Instruct students to look both ways, discuss what they are looking for. Correct students who are simply turning their heads or looking at the ceiling or floor.
- Discuss what to do if a car is coming. Students should learn to wait for cars to pass and look both ways again to ensure the street is clear.
- As a group students should practice crossing. Instruct students to continue to scan the street for cars as the cross. Correct students who are running or walking too slowly.

Practice this until students can perform the crossing on their own. If time allows or in another class period take students outside to practice crossing either on the playground or if possible in a parking lot which has a crosswalk painted on it. The street crossing will be more difficult with the distractions of traffic, other students playing etc. Encouraging students to concentrate on crossing despite distractions is important.



LESSON 3: PARKING LOT SAFETY (15-20 MINUTES)

Objective: Small children should understand that they cannot be seen easily in parking lots.

Suggested Location for Lesson: School parking lot.

Preparation: Obtain permission from school administration to take children into the parking lot of the school. Try to find parent volunteers to assist if possible in order to maintain control of the group. Put cones in parking lot to cordon off the section you will be in with the students

Activity: Trip to the Parking Lot!

Take students (and volunteers if available) out to a designated part of the parking lot. Discuss how cars back up (look at lights, talk about sounds that cars make, etc).

Another helpful exercise is to have one adult and one student stand on one side of a car while the class is on the other side. Discuss who you can see the easiest and why a grown up might not see a kindergartener out when driving in a parking lot.

Activity: Penny in a Parking Lot

Materials: Coin, small toy or piece of candy (or anything enticing to the students you are working with)

Have students sit in a circle. Place a coin (or other small toy) in the middle of the circle, and have a student volunteer stand up and hold teacher's hand. Tell student to pretend he/she is in a parking lot with a parent and ask student to run (or "dart out") and pick the coin up.

- Ask other students if the child's behavior was safe? What would be a safer way to get the coin if he/she wanted it?
- Help student to demonstrate the safe way to get the coin/toy. (Ask adult for permission, hold a hand, look both ways, no matter what)
- Ask: What kinds of places do children need to pay attention to cars and other dangers? (Parking lots at grocery stores, schools, playgrounds, driveways)
- Ask: What kinds of things might you see in the street/parking lot that you would want to pick up?
- Tell students to pretend they have Velcro or glue on their body and to "stick" themselves to an adult whenever they exit a vehicle or are in a parking lot/busy street area. Remind them that if the adult they are with has his/her hands full, they can always grab onto a pocket, purse etc. to stay connected.



LESSON 4: HELMETS AND BICYCLE SAFETY (15-20 MINUTES)

Believe it or not some first graders are riding bicycles! This varies community to community, so we suggest taking a quick show of hands in your classroom and finding out if your students are riding at this age. If so teaching them basic bicycle skills and the importance of helmets are very important.

NOTE: Bicycle helmets have been proven to prevent a large percentage of traumatic brain injuries when worn correctly. At Bicycle Colorado we believe that all cyclists should wear a helmet, but should do everything possible to prevent a crash. Think about wearing your seatbelt! You put it on every time you are in the car anticipating the possibility of a crash, but you drive as carefully as possible to avoid the crash.

Objectives: First graders should learn to stop at intersections and learn the proper way to wear a helmet.

Materials: Size small sample helmets

Activity: Helmet Fit

Using the helmet fit guide in the resources section, discuss proper helmet fit. Mention that many students wear helmets, but not correctly. Ask: If you wear a helmet, but it isn't on right, will it do its job?

Have students split into small groups, giving each group a helmet. Have them take turns trying on and fitting the helmet to each other's heads. Check each student for proper fit.