

Back to school means focusing on safety for drivers and parents

From Safe Kids Canada, now a part of Parachute. For more information visit www.safekidscanada.ca.

(TORONTO) August 30, 2012 – It's back-to-school time, and Safe Kids Canada and FedEx Express Canada want all road users to remember that the most important stop they can make is at school crossings.

FedEx and Parachute (a new organization, which unites the former Safe Kids Canada and three other injury prevention groups) are reminding parents and drivers to ensure kids can walk safely to and from school on our neighbourhood streets. That means drivers need to slow right down in residential areas and parents need to show their children safe pedestrian practices.

Child pedestrian incidents are a leading cause of death for Canadian children under the age of 14. Every year more than 30 children are killed and 2,400 are seriously injured. Most incidents happen between 3 and 6 p.m., when drivers are coming home from work, and children may be walking home from school or after-school activities.

"With children back on the streets in large numbers, we all play a role in helping to keep kids safe while they walk in their communities," says Kristen Gane, Children's Program Manager at Parachute. "When drivers slow down, and when parents take every opportunity to teach their children about pedestrian safety, these injuries can be prevented."

The Parachute and FedEx *Walk This Way* program recommends the following tips for back-to-school safety:

- Teach your child to **look and listen every time** they cross the street.
- Children under the age of nine lack the developmental skills to cross the street on their own and should be accompanied by an adult or responsible older children.
- **Cross at the corner.** Be a good role model by walking with your children to school and demonstrating safe pedestrian practices.
- **Drivers need to slow down.** The higher the speed, the higher the risk of injury, or even death, to a child pedestrian. If you hit a child at 50 km/hr, there is an 80 per cent chance that child will die. If you hit a child at 30 km/hr, there is a 95 per cent chance that child will live!
- **Put away distractions.** Cell phones and other electronic devices should not be used when walking across streets or driving.

"With the school season set to begin, it's a good time for parents to review with their children their route to school and discuss safe cell phone use," says Gane. "And parents are their children's best role models. You can tell your kids what to do, but showing them, by modeling safe behavior, is a very effective way to teach your children good safety habits."

For more information on child pedestrian safety, including fact sheets and parent tip sheets for the *Walk This Way* program, visit www.safekidscanada.ca.

Parachute is generously funded by FedEx Express Canada to provide the *Walk This Way* pedestrian safety program year-round, providing education, resources and support for parents and community groups to increase the safety of their streets.

"As the world's largest express transportation company, FedEx Express puts safety above all, both in the workplace and in the communities in which we operate. Our drivers know the importance of being extra alert around school and pedestrian crossings, since these are the most important stops they make each day," said Lisa Lisson, president of FedEx Express Canada.

About Parachute

Parachute is a national, charitable organization dedicated to preventing injuries and saving lives. Parachute officially came into being in July 2012 and unites the former organizations of Safe Communities Canada, Safe Kids Canada, SMARTRISK and ThinkFirst Canada into one leader in injury prevention. Parachute's programming and advocacy efforts are designed to help Canadians reduce their risks of injury while enjoying long lives lived to the fullest. For more information, visit parachutecanada.org.

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