BACKPACK SAFETY

- Choose a backpack with wide, padded shoulder straps and a padded back.
- Pack light. Organize the backpack to use all of its compartments. Pack heavier items closest to the center of the back. The backpack should never weigh more than 10 to 20 percent of your child's body weight.
- Always use both shoulder straps. Slinging a backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles.
- Consider a rolling backpack. This type of backpack may be a good choice for students who must tote a heavy load. Remember that rolling backpacks still must be carried up stairs, and they may be difficult to roll in snow.

TRAVELING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Review the basic rules with your child:

SCHOOL BUS

- If your child’s school bus has lap/shoulder seat belts, make sure your child uses one at all times when in the bus. If your child’s school bus does not have lap/shoulder belts, encourage the school to buy or lease buses with lap/shoulder belts.
- Wait for the bus to stop before approaching it from the curb.
- Do not move around on the bus.
- Check to see that no other traffic is coming before crossing the street.
- Make sure to always remain in clear view of the bus driver.
- Children should always board and exit the bus at locations that provide safe access to the bus or to the school building.

WALKING TO SCHOOL

- Make sure your child's walk to school is a “safe route” with well-trained adult crossing guards at every intersection.
- Be realistic about your child's pedestrian skills. Small children can be impulsive and less cautious around traffic, carefully consider whether or not your child is ready to walk to school without adult supervision.
- If your child is young or is walking to a new school, walk with them the first week or two to make sure they know the route and can travel safely.
- Bright colored clothing will make your child more visible to drivers.
- In neighborhoods with high levels of traffic, consider forming a “walking school bus group,” in which an adult accompanies a group of neighborhood children walking to school.

Source: AARP