

## Step 4 Negotiate my License

TEACHING YOUR CHILD the skills to be able to free-range does take an investment of your time. Giving your child a "License to Range" is a great way to negotiate boundaries and rules.

### Negotiating a Learner's License

1. Check out potential routes. Walk with your child from home to school. It may be easier to do this after school so you can take your time and explore options. (Check to see if your school has designated drop off points and safe routes already mapped. This may save you time.)
2. Decide with your child the nature of their Learner's License – where they are walking to and from, and with whom.
3. Practice the skills needed to walk safely, such as road rules.
4. Discuss and practice safety issues.
5. Help them become familiar with the neighbourhood.
6. Gradually give them more license. For example, let them walk the last block then increase the distance they walk on their own. Set milestones and celebrate achievements.

I like walking because  
I get lots of energy.

Melinda Grade 3

### Negotiating an Open License

1. Celebrate their achievement of moving to an Open License.
2. Gradually increase the boundaries of the Open License as they become more capable and confident.
3. Discuss strategies if something goes wrong.
4. Consider discussing how to use their mobile phone to increase their independence.



I love walking. It is amazing because you find so much stuff.

Cameron – Grade 4

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## FREE-RANGE KIDS What's your adventure?

Dear .....

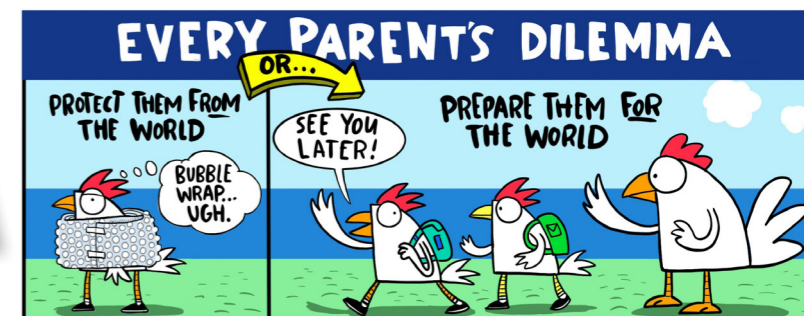
My class has joined Free-Range Kids.

We earn a point each time we walk to or from school. When we reach ..... points, our class will get a reward of .....

I would really like to help my class earn the reward. Thanks for read this brochure.



## Step 1 Read what I stand to loose



MOST PARENTS think of getting their children to and from school as a transport task – what is quickest and easiest. But there is far more than time and convenience at stake. Here is what your child may be missing if you decide to drive them.

### 1. Confidence and Resilience

Going places on your own is part of developing a sense of control, independence and confidence – essential for resilience and success in life. According to Jessica Lahey, parents who bubble-wrap their children, raise children that are "destined to an anxious adulthood, lacking the emotional resources they will need to cope with inevitable setback and failure".<sup>1</sup>

### 2. Learning to Negotiate Risk

Risk-taking is an essential part of a child's developmental processes. Children need to test limits and learn the extent of their capabilities. Attempting to protect our children from all risk means they are ill-equipped to negotiate the much higher risks of adolescence. Learning to negotiate risk is essential for success in all areas of life – business, relationships and creativity.

### 3. Health

It is recommended that children get one hour physical activity per day if they are to grow into healthy adults, and avoid chronic diseases, such as diabetes.

### 4. Connected – sense of place

One thing that adds to the psychological well-being of children as they transition into adulthood is a 'sense of place' – a feeling that they are connected to their physical environment and community. When children walk and explore their physical environment they build a mental and emotional map of their 'home territory', which becomes integrated into their sense of self.

### 5. Switched on to learn

Students who get exercise before class are more mentally alert. They therefore learn better. Free-Range Kids often say, "Walking gives me energy". Their engagement with a world full of stimuli makes them feel more energized. And the adventures they have while walking stimulates their creativity and imagination. Free-Range Kids are more likely to become life-long learners.

## FREE-RANGE KIDS



LICENS TO RANGE

Your Name

Parent or Carer Signature

Your Signature



## FREE-RANGE KIDS

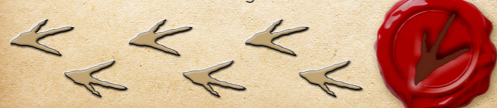


LICENS TO RANGE

Your Name

Parent or Carer Signature

Your Signature



## Step 2

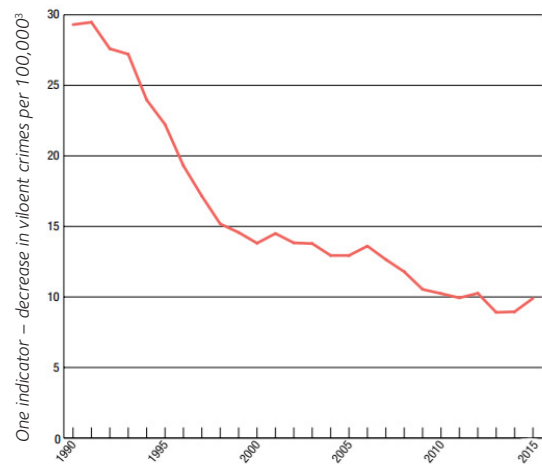
### Help make it even safer for me to walk

AS A RESPONSIBLE PARENT, you want to do your part in creating the safest possible walking environment for your children.

#### Building on a great base

Believe it or not, all the statistics show that it is just as safe, or safer, for your child to walk to school as when you walked to school. Crime rates have plummeted over the past 25 years (in some cases down by two-thirds) and, in spite of the perceptions created by the media, there has never been a safer time in history to let your child free-range.<sup>2</sup>

But let's not rest on our laurels. Here are two ways to make a safe environment even safer.



#### 1. Reduce cars around school

Every time you drive your child to school, you make it more dangerous for other children. In Victoria, Australia, 65% of pedestrian accidents involving children happen while children are being picked up or dropped off by other parents.

If you need to drive your child, drop them at one of the drop-off points. (See back page for details.) This reduces car congestion around the school.

#### REFERENCES

1. Jessica Lahey *Why parents need to let their children fail* The Atlantic Jan 29, 2013
2. Steven Pinkler, 2011 *The better angels of our nature: Why violence has declined* Penguin Books.
- Christopher Ingraham *There's never been a safer time to be a kid in America* The Washington Post April 14, 2015.

- <http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/Child%20Kidnapping%20LE%20Report.pdf>
- <http://boingboing.net/2015/02/24/our-children-are-safer-than-ou.html>
- FBI Uniform Crime Reports (1990-2014), Police and City Reports and Brennan Center Projection (2015).
- Jane Jacobs, 1961 *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* Random House.

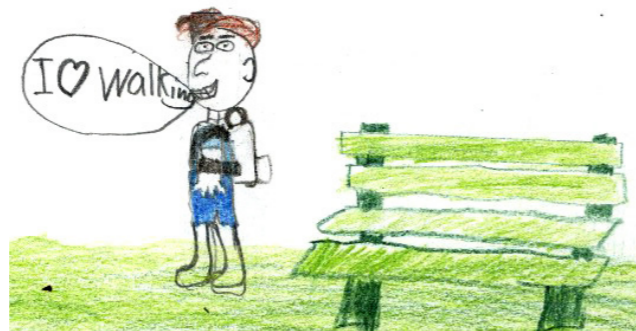
Walking to school means there are less cars



#### 2. More eyes on the street

What makes it safer for children to free-range is what Jane Jacobs called "eyes on the street"<sup>3</sup> – people keeping an eye out for each other. This is something the entire community can work towards.

- Every time an adult chooses to walk or cycle, rather than driving, they increase the number of eyes on the street.
- Simply saying hello to the people you pass in the street increases the feelings of a caring community that look out for each other.
- Placing a seat in front of your house or in a prominent location, and encouraging people to sit out (particularly the elderly), increases passive surveillance. Even when no one is sitting on the seats, the environment feels safer and more civilised.
- Taking down your front fence increases the feeling that there are eyes on the street. Put something in your front yard that will intrigue children and adults. Help create an adventure for children.

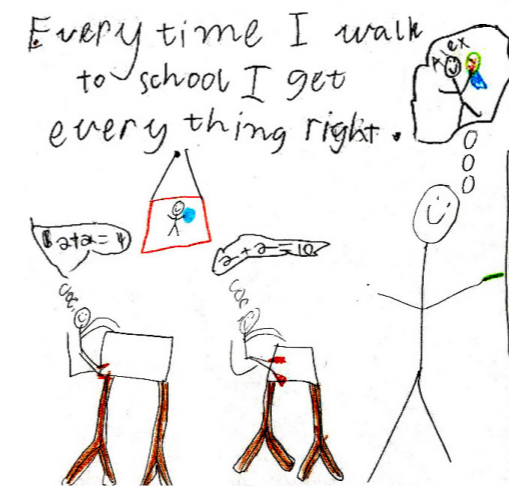


## Step 3

### Tell me about your adventures

SHARE WITH YOUR CHILD the adventures you had while walking to school, and 'free-ranging' in your neighbourhood.

- At what age did you start walking to school?
- What other freedoms did your parents give you to free-range?
- What was the biggest adventure you ever had?
- Looking back, how do you think the freedom to free-range contributed to your confidence, resilience, and sense of connection to your neighbourhood?



When I went walking I saw a butterfly and a bee, a ant, a beautiful river, a baby, a bird, a cat, a beautiful sky, a flower, a park and a world

Pippa Grade 1



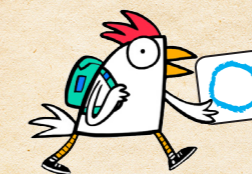
When I was walking I learnt a new rule. It was that you don't run across the road... You can only walk fast.

Ines - Grade 1



Waving good-bye to mum.

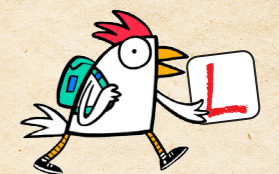
### MY LICENSE TO RANGE



Open License

Walk without supervision

### MY LICENSE TO RANGE



Learner's License

Walk with supervision