



# Crossing the Street

## *How to teach your child to cross safely*

## You & Your Child

The street is a dangerous place for young children.

They are used to running wherever they want to. And they don't really understand the harm that can come to them if they run into the street.

It takes a long time to teach young children how to safely cross the street – many years, in fact, before they really understand the danger and become responsible enough to cross on their own.

But you must teach them, for their own safety, and for your peace of mind.

The best way to teach your child to cross safely is to do it slowly, step by step. Don't hurry your child and don't expect too much of him or her too soon.

And because the street is so dangerous, you need to be very firm about not allowing your child to go into the street.

### **On Back**

**How you can teach your child to safely cross the street.**



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# How to teach your child to cross safely

## **Keep very young children out of the street**

Very young children – children under 4 years old – should never go into the street at all, unless you are carrying them, holding their hand.

When you carry them, say you are in the “street” so they learn the word. This helps to make it clear that the street is not a place where they ever walk by themselves.

## **Between ages 4 and 6, start teaching them how to cross**

Teach in a way that is clear to children. For example:

- Stand on the edge of the street, hold your child’s hand, and say, “First, we look and listen this way. Any cars coming? Then we look and listen this way. Any cars coming?”
- If a car is coming, say, “Car coming. We have to wait.” Then start the look-and-listen process all over again.
- If no cars are coming, say, “Can we go?” Have your child say “yes,” and then walk – never run – together, holding hands across the street.

## **Insist on crossing with your child holding his or her hand**

Don’t let your child cross the street alone, even if you are watching. It is hard for children to understand when it is okay to cross alone and when it is not okay. Set a simple rule – “You never go in the street alone.”

## **Always follow the rules yourself when your child is watching**

When you cross the street, and your child is with you, look both ways, even say out loud, “No cars coming this way. No cars coming that way.” If you don’t, your child will not understand why it’s okay for you not to look and listen before crossing.

## **Teach your child not to chase a ball into the street**

Even a child who seems to be learning how to cross the street is likely to forget and chase a ball or follow a friend into the street.

If a ball rolls into the street, let it go. Tell your child to stay on the side of the road while you walk – not run – to get it. Look and listen both ways before going into the street to get the ball.

## **When your child is ready to cross alone, practice together**

Between the ages of 6 and 8, your child may be ready to cross the street alone if you have trained him or her.

Practice together.

- Stand at the side of the street. This time, don’t hold your child’s hand.
- Let your child go through the crossing routine, looking and listening up and down the street.
- Watch your child walk across the street. Be sure he or she doesn’t run.
- For a long time, the rule is that your child can only cross when you are watching.
- Practice many times before allowing your child to cross without you being around to watch.

## **Breaking the rules**

If your child breaks a rule, stop him or her, say what was wrong about what he or she did, and practice the right way.

You might even bring your child into the house for awhile and say, “You can’t play outside unless you obey the rules.”

