



Crossing the Street

How to teach your child to cross safely

You & Your Child

A guide for new parents

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.



ocd.pitt.edu
[@OCDPitt](https://www.instagram.com/OCDPitt)

HOW TO TEACH YOUR CHILD TO CROSS SAFELY

Safety

Ages
4-6

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.

If your car has an airbag...

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

- Plan ahead so that you do not have to drive with more children than can be safely restrained in the back seat.
- Only children 12 years or older should ride in the front seat of a car that has air bags, and even then, only when necessary.
- If an older child must ride in the front, move the seat back as far as it can go, away from the air bag.

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.



Pitt | School of
Education

Office of Child Development

HOW TO TEACH YOUR CHILD TO CROSS SAFELY

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.

- Plan ahead so that you do not have to drive with more children than can be safely restrained in the back seat.
- Only children 12 years or older should ride in the front seat of a car that has air bags, and even then, only when necessary.
- If an older child must ride in the front, move the seat back as far as it can go, away from the air bag.

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.”

