

# Tip #3 School Bus Safety

## Where?

are your children at greatest risk for accidents and injuries during their daily travel to and from school?

F  
A  
C  
T

Safety studies show that accidents and injuries happen most often before children get on the bus or after they get off.

What should you do to reduce the risk?

1

Step 1: answer this question—Are my children mature or responsible enough to go on their own to and from the bus stop and home in the

European environment?

DoDDS-Europe believes that primary age children—those aged five through eight, in Kindergarten through grade three—should have supervision, preferably by their parents or another adult, when they go to and from the bus stop and home in the European environment. Parents should also check local command or community policy—in some communities, child supervision is required.

If you believe your children meet the maturity and responsibility test, go to 2, 3 and 4.

**IF THE ANSWER IS NO**, or if there are environmental safety or security conditions in your area that mean they should not be on their own, you must arrange and guarantee that they are supervised going to and from the bus stop and home.

2

Teach all children the following rules to prevent most accidents and injuries going to, while at and returning from the bus stop:

*Walk*—don't run

*Don't cross the street between parked cars*

*Cross streets only at designated crossings*—wait for traffic to stop before crossing

*Mornings*—stand at least 3 steps back from the curb while waiting for the bus

*Afternoons*—get off the bus, take at least 3 steps away and wait until the bus has left before walking home

3

For all children, check the route. Point out dangers or hazards and how to avoid them. Re-check at least monthly for changes. Regularly ask your children about problems or changes that may have come up since you last checked. Be sure they know where to go to get help if needed.

In addition, for primary age children who are mature or responsible enough to go back and forth without supervision, practice walking the route with them. Show them where and how to cross streets safely at designated crossings. Check how much time they will need to walk the route safely at their pace.

4

*A few more things:*

Make sure your children leave on time and with enough time to walk to the bus stop safely at their pace—late usually means rushing and that can cause accidents.

Put reflective tape or devices on your children's outer clothing and book bags—European winters are dark, making it vital that children can be seen.

In Europe, traffic is not required to stop for loading/unloading school buses—make sure your children know that fact and that they must never go in front of or behind the school bus.

## Do Your Children Walk to School?

Children who walk to school are also at risk for many of the same reasons as those who ride the bus. You can and should reduce the risk by applying the actions in steps 1-4 to your children's daily walk.