



WOW – We Often Walk (or Wheel) is an easy way to promote regular walking & cycling among children and youth. Even something as simple as designating one day a week as a walking or wheeling day helps motivate kids to get moving. Students keep track of how often they walk using WOW cards and receive rewards or recognition from the school for their efforts. WOW is best suited to elementary grades or ages 5 to 12. Schools or youth-serving organizations may participate. Although typically school-based, the program focuses on general active travel – to the store, to a friend’s, to/from/at school – so whether students are bussed, driven in cars or walk, they can participate.

Active & Safe Routes to School of the Ecology Action Centre provides WOW cards, posters and this guide to schools in Nova Scotia to run WOW. The ideas in this guide are only suggestions. WOW is meant to be flexible. Get creative and use it in a way that best suits the needs of your school or organization.

This is the WOW poster (11 x 17 inch size).

Comments from schools about the WOW program:

“It got the kids excited about walking.”

“The concept definitely made students aware. They were choosing to walk to school.”

“It was simple with the cards. Students could do their own no matter what grade level.”

“It gave the kids something to fill out and work towards filling their card.”

How to Kick Off WOW

First decide on the time period over-which you will run WOW. Here are some ideas:

- Use over the course of one week
- Use over the course of a month
- Use on an ongoing basis
- Consider designating one day a week as your WOW day



Kick off WOW at your school or organization by:

- Filling in your WOW day (Monday, Tuesday, etc.) or period of time (week, month, or that it is all year) on the WOW posters and placing them around the building.
- Having PA announcements, information in the school newsletter and on bulletin boards and/or class visits by the Principal or VP to communicate how WOW will work.
- Ensuring participating students receive their WOW cards.
- Promoting WOW on an ongoing basis. Perhaps a weekly announcement is made as a reminder about the WOW program.

How to Run WOW

What Counts

For students who walk to or from school, walking one way is considered one trip or one box on the WOW card. For bussed students or those who participate at school, we suggest an intentional walk of at least 10 minutes to be considered one trip or one box on the WOW card. Use what works best for your school or organization.

When to Walk

There are many options for fitting walks in during the day so they may be recorded on the WOW cards. Some schools have:

- Encouraged students to walk to and from school
- Had intentional walks together as part of classes
- Had intentional walks together before school, at recess or at lunch time (in the gym or on school grounds, for example)
- Encouraged students to walk on their own time at home or after school

Recording Walks

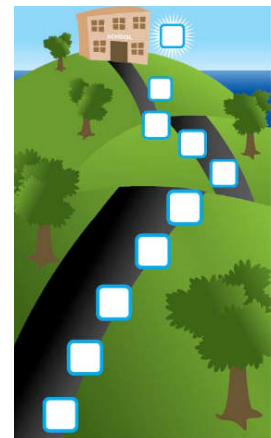
Decide who will record walks on the WOW cards.

It could be done by:

- Students/youth (the honour system)
- A teacher/leader
- A parent/caregiver
- School/parent/student leadership volunteers

You might record the walks using check marks, initials, stars, stamps, hole punches, etc. Also, decide on how often the cards will be checked (every day, once per week, etc.).

This is the front and back of the WOW card (business card size).



Recognition & Rewards

Recognize or reward students for filling up their WOW cards. Consider doing this every time a student fills a card or by placing filled cards into a weekly or monthly draw. Recognition or rewards could mean giving an object, certificate of accomplishment, experience or privilege. Ideas some schools have used include:

- Sports equipment
- Stuffed animals
- Water bottles
- Pencils
- Stickers
- Healthy snack certificate for the canteen
- Dollar store items
- Hats or toques
- Stickers
- Gift certificates from local businesses
- Umbrellas
- Toys
- PEBS awards and recognition
- Extra gym period (for a high-achieving class)
- Extra recess for (for a high-achieving class)
- “Golden Shoe” award (for a high-achieving class) – an old sneaker (Principal’s/teacher’s) is spray painted gold and placed on a wooden plaque

Active & Safe Routes to School does not provide prizes. Your school may purchase “I Walk to School” branded resources (hats, t-shirts, sticker, pencils, etc.) at www.mprusso.com/iwalk/home.asp.

Contact Us

If you run out of cards, we’ll provide you with more on a first-come-first-served basis as long as supplies last. Contact us at asrts@ecologyaction.ca, (902) 442-5055 or fill in the online registration form at www.saferoutesns.ca (click WOW).

Let us know how your program is going. We’d love to learn from you what works and what could be improved.

Active & Safe Routes to School

WOW is an initiative of Active & Safe Routes to School, which encourages more children, youth and their families to use active transportation, such as walking and cycling, to school and other places they go.

Active & Safe Routes to School is coordinated in Nova Scotia by the Ecology Action Centre in partnership with the Department of Health and Wellness as part of the Active Kids Healthy Kids Initiative.

