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Parents play a key role in teaching children about school bus safety

Edmonton... To ensure the continued safety of the quarter million Alberta students who ride school buses, parents, teachers and caregivers must ensure children know and practise basic safety rules.

Preparing a child

- Practice the "Point, Pause and Proceed" crossing system: look in all directions before crossing the street; scan for danger left, right, ahead and behind; then point across the road with your hand and arm and proceed when safe. When practising, exaggerate your head turns and narrate your actions so children know you are looking left, right, ahead and back.

Getting to the bus stop

Younger children should walk with an adult to the bus stop while older children should walk in groups, as groups are easier for drivers to see. Don't let children arrive at the bus stop too early as they may be tempted to wander or get into mischief. Make sure children get safely to the bus stop by teaching them to:

- Walk on the sidewalk; if there is no sidewalk, walk on the left side of the street facing traffic, staying as far away from the vehicles as possible.
- Be at the bus stop at least five minutes before the school bus arrives. Never run after the school bus to try to catch up.
- Wait for the bus at a safe place at least 10 giant steps away from the road. Have younger children practise the steps to become familiar with this rule and pick a designated spot.
- Use the "Point, Pause and Proceed" crossing system. Keep checking for traffic as you cross the street.
- Remember that if you can't see the driver, the driver can't see you either.

Boarding the school bus

Tell children how to safely get on the bus and why these rules are important:

- Stay away from the three danger zones - the front, sides and back of the bus - stand at least 10 giant steps away from the school bus.
- Approach the bus only when the bus driver says it's safe to board.
- Walk up the steps, one at a time, using the hand rail. Never run, push or shove.
- Never pick up an item you have dropped near or under the bus. Tell the driver about it and follow his/her instructions.

Riding on the school bus

School bus drivers have an important responsibility and should not be distracted while driving, so instruct your children to:

- Take a seat as quickly as possible once inside the school bus.
- Sit facing the driver, feet in front of them. Put their belongings under the seat.
- Stay seated and talk quietly during the trip.

- Listen to and obey the school bus driver at all times.

Getting off the bus

If you meet your children at the bus stop after school, wait on the side where the child will be dropped off, not across the street. Children may be excited to see you and forget the safety rules. Teach children the following rules for getting off the bus safely:

- Wait until the school bus comes to a complete stop before standing up. The bus driver will tell you when it's safe to get off.
- Use the handrail when getting off the school bus. Do not push or shove.
- Don't pick something up if you drop it near or under the school bus. Tell the bus driver about it and follow his/her instructions.
- Never go behind the bus.
- Walk - never run away from the bus.
- Take 10 giant steps away from the bus to take you out of the danger zone.
- Use the "Point, Pause and Proceed" system when crossing the street.
- Come straight home from the bus - no detours.

Emergency evacuation the safe way

Make sure children know the following emergency evacuation rules:

- Listen to the driver's instructions for the correct exit.
- Be calm, quiet and don't panic.
- Leave your belongings behind.
- Exit seat by seat alternating rows.
- Leave the bus quickly without pushing or shouting. If stopped on railway tracks, go away from the tracks as far as possible in a direction away from the train to avoid being hit by debris from the crash.
- Walk to a safe place and stay together.

For information about traffic safety, visit www.saferoads.com.

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