A CHANCE TO RIDE

Lesson 3
Pedestrian Safety & Awareness of Surroundings
Introduction
Pedestrian Safety & Awareness of Surroundings

Techniques of pedestrian travel including safe street crossing need to be mastered for a student to be successfully travel trained. Teaching skills such as where and when to cross a street should be taught when individuals are very young. Many transition students with ASD are accustomed to having people tell them when and how to cross the street or walk across parking lots, so they lack experience making these judgments for themselves. Many individuals can recite from memory how to safely cross a street but when they are out in the community they cannot apply what they have been taught.

Potential trainees need to possess “street-wise” behaviors before traveling independently. The students must know how to prevent and avoid any unwanted or dangerous situations. They need to be aware of their surroundings and cognizant of people and activity in the areas they travel and know places where they can seek help, if needed. The student also needs to look confident and walk with a purpose. Included under this category are carrying appropriate identification and emergency numbers, holding money and valuables correctly, and appropriate dress. Prevention needs to be practiced at all times and in all places en route to a person’s destination.

Street safety can be taught in a classroom to a group of students as it is done in Level I and II. This experience lends itself to modeling and practicing various scenarios of street behavior. For the more advanced Level III, it may also provide an opportunity to screen out students who are not ready for independent travel. Techniques learned in the classroom should be individually reinforced during travel training with emphasis given to any special areas of need.

Level I’s focus is limited to crossing a street only at a crosswalk. It introduces the crosswalk light and works on listening skills for sounds the student may hear in the community. Level II uses a video as a teaching tool to illustrate different types of street crossings and safe and unsafe behaviors. Level III has the student going out in the community with the teacher and/or paraprofessional and evaluating the student’s skill set for street crossing. The teacher should first model the correct behavior, break down the steps, provide cues/prompts for safe street crossing and then begin to fade as the student successfully does this independently.

Being out in the community requires focus and awareness. Sensory differences among students on the autism spectrum may cause challenges with overall environmental awareness. For example, on a bright day trying to cross a busy street with traffic noise and other pedestrians may cause an individual with ASD sensory overload. Smells can also be off putting, such as blooming bushes in spring, steam emanating from a construction zone, or smells from a restaurant. This sensory stimulation may result in disorientation and confusion for the student.
As the Autism Speaks Tool Kit for Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism points out, challenges within the area of Executive Functioning may be present. The student may get stuck on the smaller details, which can take predominance over the bigger picture. Other students may have difficulty with working memory, which often requires retaining more than one train of thought at a time. Some students may find maintaining attention and organizing thoughts and actions a challenge. Executive Functioning challenges are also associated with difficulty planning, sequencing, self-regulating and impulse control. All these areas may cause significant roadblocks for students as they work toward independent travel. Challenges that cannot be accommodated in other ways may preclude a student from moving forward to individual travel training.

For example, the student who looks down at the sidewalk may miss the transition to a crosswalk. Students need to be taught to scan their whole environment and practice this skill often.

Identifying and understanding the thoughts, feelings and intentions of others is described by the term, Theory of Mind. When traveling in the community, students need to be aware of how others interpret their behaviors and actions. The student may also need reminders to stay focused on their own actions rather than concern themselves with others who may or may not be following the rules of travel.

All individuals on the autism spectrum are different but they may:

- Appear not to be listening or paying attention
- Panic if yelled at or lash out if touched
- Need extra time to respond
- Have difficulty making eye contact
- Appear rude or say tactless things, especially if anxious or confused
- Interpret statements literally
- Engage in repetitive behaviors
- Speak too loudly, softly or use unusual intonation or words
- Misinterpret instructions or things said
- Become anxious or upset for no obvious reason

Each student is different in how he or she responds to the environment. All teaching strategies must address these differences and be tailored to meet the learning strategy of the individual students as well.
GOAL
Introduce safe behavior when walking in the community, along the street and when crossing the street.

PREREQUISITE
Safe while walking indoors.

MATERIALS PROVIDED
1) Social Story Set: Lesson 3 Level I Safe While Walking Indoors and Outdoors
2) PowerPoint: Lesson 3 Level I Using a Crosswalk Light

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
❖ Identify safe and unsafe pedestrian behaviors in the community.
❖ Practice the “Stop, Look and Listen” technique for checking for hazards before crossing the street.

INSTRUCTIONS

Section I: Walking in the Community

1) Review Social Story Set: Lesson 3 Level I Safe While Walking Indoors and Outdoors.

2) Introduce several sounds commonly heard when walking on a street (car horn, beeping of audible crosswalk light, etc.). Consider individual students’ needs and strategies for coping with sounds (and other stimuli) that might make the student uncomfortable.

3) Show the students a picture of a sidewalk. Tell the students that sidewalks keep people who are walking (pedestrians) separated from moving traffic. If possible, use a sidewalk when walking in the community.

Model “right” and “wrong” examples of walking in the community. Point out what was correct and incorrect. For example: walk straight while scanning the environment, then walk in a zigzag pattern while looking only down at the ground.

Section II: Crossing a Street

1) It is best to cross a street where there is a crosswalk or at an intersection.

   A. Before crossing, stop, look left, then right, then left again for oncoming traffic. Listen for traffic.
   B. Cross the street in a straight line.
   C. Do not look down at your feet when crossing the street. Look straight ahead and around you.
2) Practice street crossing techniques in the classroom with cues and prompting. If students show comfort with these skills in this safe environment, practice in the community. Students should practice looking in all directions for approaching vehicles at locations with and without proper crosswalks and signage.

3) At a crosswalk:
   A. Look left, then right, then left again for approaching vehicles.
   B. Model turning head to look in one direction to check for vehicles. Repeat in opposite direction. Give examples of hazards students should be looking for (i.e. moving vehicles, bikes). Have the student work with the teacher or aide to prompt the student(s) using the statement “no cars coming” when it is safe to cross.

Section III: Using a Crosswalk

1) Use the PowerPoint Lesson 3 Level I Using a Crosswalk Light to teach and review each of the symbols on a crosswalk light (stop, walk, and wait) and their meaning.

2) Take the students for a walk outside. Have them practice looking for hazards as they walk, walking on the sidewalk, looking and listening for traffic, watching and waiting for a crosswalk light.

3) Practice using the pedestrian walk light. Have students wait for the walk light and check for hazards before crossing the street.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXTENDED LEARNING

- Create a video where students demonstrate proper street crossing procedures. Use the video to show students how to improve their street crossing skills.
- Model and practice proper body posture when walking. Review what a person could miss if he or she is looking down at the ground.

Tip 1: It is usually best to first practice at a crosswalk with minimal to no traffic, such as in the school's driveway or parking lot.

Tip 2: Play recordings from Apple app “I Hear Ewe” (third screen) of sounds students might hear while navigating sidewalks.
**Learning Objectives**

- Identify the hazards to look and listen for when walking in the community.
- Demonstrate sidewalk etiquette.
- State why it is not safe to text, play games or talk on phone while walking.
- Identify safe places to cross streets.
- Demonstrate crossing the street safely.

**Instructions**

1) View Lesson 3 Level II Pedestrian Safety video. This video gives examples of safe and unsafe street crossing in different situations: busy street, side road, and parking lots. Use the Instructor Guide: Lesson 3 Level II Pedestrian Safety Video Scene Description to lead the classroom discussion.

2) Review rules for crossing the street:
   
   A. Give your full attention when walking in the community. Music, games, phone conversations or texting while walking in the community can wait for a later time.
   
   B. Cross the street at a crosswalk or at an intersection. Use a pedestrian crosswalk light if present.
   
   C. Before crossing the street, stop, look left, then right, then left again for oncoming traffic. Listen for traffic.
   
   D. Look straight ahead and around you when walking in the community or crossing streets. Avoid looking down at your feet.

3) View the video in the final slide of the PowerPoint Lesson 3 Levels II & III Using a Crosswalk Light. This video shows a changing crosswalk light. Have the students identify the meaning of each symbol.

4) Take a walk in the community. For each student, use the Lesson 3 Levels II & III Pedestrian Safety Checklist to evaluate the students’ practical skills in this area. It is recommended that this checklist be completed individually or in small groups.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXTENDED LEARNING

- Create a video where the students demonstrate proper street crossing procedures. Use the video to show students how to improve their street crossing skills.
- Have students identify names of streets they are walking on.
- Have students look at map of streets they are walking on to become familiar with the route that will be traveled prior to field experience (i.e. google maps).
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate competency in being aware of surroundings, walking in the community, navigating parking lots, crossing the street and interacting with drivers and others in the community.

INSTRUCTIONS

1) Ask the rules for walking in the community (e.g. be alert; no texting; game playing, or talking on the phone; walk on the sidewalk if available; watch for drivers; in the parking lot walk close to the side of the aisle of parked cars and watch for back-up/brake lights; don’t assume the driver sees you.)

2) Ask what the procedure is for crossing the street (e.g. cross at a crosswalk or at an intersection, use the crosswalk light if present, look and listen for traffic)

3) Take a walk in the community. For each student, use the Lesson 3 Levels II & III Pedestrian Safety Checklist to evaluate the students’ practical skills in this area. It is recommended that this checklist be completed individually or in small groups.

The purpose of this assessment is to identify areas in pedestrian safety that need to be remediated before the student is eligible for one-to-one travel training. This checklist can be completed multiple times for the same student and on varied walking routes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXTENDED LEARNING

- Create a video highlighting the student’s strengths as well as the skills that needs to be remediated. Use instruction and modeling to teach the new skills.

- Pair up students and provide the “leader” of each pair with a checklist of the skills being remediated. Shadow the students, allowing them to help one another. Intervene as necessary for safety. Review the session with each pair.
Pedestrian Safety Concepts & Awareness of Surroundings

Lesson 3 Materials

1. Level I Social Story Set: Safe While Walking Indoors and Outdoors
2. Level I Using a Crosswalk Light (PowerPoint)
4. Level II Instructor Guide: Pedestrian Safety Video Scene Description
5. Level II Using a Crosswalk Light (PowerPoint with video component on slide # 8)
Lesson 3 Level I
USING A CROSSWALK LIGHT

Slide 1
Symbol means “Don’t Walk.”

Slide 2
Press crosswalk button.

Slide 3
Wait at corner.
Look for crosswalk light symbol.

Slide 4

Slide 5
Pedestrian “Walk” symbol

Slide 6
Stay in crosswalk.
Scan for vehicles.

Slide 7
Crossing safely allows you to get to your destination.
Staying safe while walking is important for everyone.

When walking, people have a starting point and an ending point.

Along the way, I may see people I know.
I may see no one.

Or I may see people I don’t know.

People sometimes walk together to stay safe.

I am learning to walk with other people.
During a walk, people often choose to keep their hands and feet to themselves.

I can do this too so I don’t get hurt.

My teachers and my parents will be so happy to see that I can get where I need to go safely indoors.

Learning to walk safely indoors can be lots of fun!
Staying safe while walking outdoors is important too.

It is helpful to know some of the same things.

When walking outdoors, people still have a starting point and an ending point to get where they need to go.
Another thing that is the same is that sometimes people walk together outdoors to stay safe.

I have learned how to do this safely indoors so I can practice doing the same outdoors.

There are a few more things to consider for outdoor safety like looking for moving vehicles.

Moving vehicles include cars, trucks, motorcycles, mopeds, buses, taxis, bikes and trains.
Moving vehicles are driven on roads or tracks.

Most of the time, people choose to walk together on sidewalks when outdoors.

Sidewalks help people stay away from moving vehicles.

Walking together on the sidewalk can help to keep people safe.
I can do this too so I don’t get hurt.

I am learning to walk safely outdoors with my class.

My teachers and my parents will be so happy to see that I can get where I need to go safely outdoors.
Instructor Guide: Pedestrian Safety Video

Scene Description
Lesson 3 Level II

Directions: Play the Pedestrian Safety Video featuring Joe. Pause after each scene and discuss what has happened. For each scene have the students:

-- Decide if Joe is being safe or not safe
-- Tell what Joe does well and what he does wrong

Use the discussion points listed below to help guide your conversation with your class

Scene 1 - Crossing at a Crosswalk with a Stop Sign Correctly

Scene Description: Joe looks both ways before starting to cross. Joe scans to the left and right while crossing the street. Joe walks.

Key points:

❖ **ASK:** Why should pedestrians use crosswalks when available?
  Crosswalks are designated for pedestrians. Drivers expect pedestrians to cross the street using a crosswalk. When crossing, a pedestrian should go directly to the other side (no stopping, walking backwards or zigzagging).

❖ **ASK:** What did Joe do before crossing and while he was crossing?
  Before crossing, a pedestrian should look in the directions that a car could come.

Scene 2 - Crossing at a Crosswalk with a Stop Sign Incorrectly

Scene Description: Joe is looking at his phone while walking. He does not stop or look up before walking into the street.

Key points:

❖ **ASK:** What was Joe doing that was unsafe?
  If a pedestrian does other things while walking, he or she could walk off the sidewalk or into signs, trees or other people. The pedestrian could come upon unexpected hazards such as a ditch, raised sidewalks, or items left on the sidewalk.

❖ **ASK:** Why is it not safe to talk on your cell phone while walking across the street?
  Pedestrians need not only to be watching for hazards but they also need to be listening for sounds around them.

❖ **ASK:** What should a pedestrian do if he or she needs to talk on the phone or check text messages?
  A safe time to check text messages or talk on the phone is when the pedestrian has stopped on the sidewalk out of the way of other pedestrians and away from moving vehicles (not at the entrance of a driveway or parking lot). When on the phone use a soft voice. Be careful not to give out any personal information when other people can hear you.
Scene 3 - Crossing at a Crosswalk with a Stop Sign Incorrectly

**Scene Description:** The driver is drinking coffee while driving. He is not paying attention. Joe walks into the street without looking and almost gets hit by the car.

**Key points:**

- **ASK:** What was the driver doing wrong? What should Joe have done differently?

> Even if a pedestrian has the right of way, it is not always safe to cross the street. Drivers may be distracted and may fail to follow traffic rules. A pedestrian should be sure drivers know they intend to cross by making eye contact with the drivers before considering crossing in front of the vehicle.

> After getting a driver’s attention, pedestrians should still look in all directions that vehicles could come from before crossing. If a car doesn’t stop, a pedestrian can get seriously hurt or even killed. Drivers do not always see pedestrians.

Scene 4 - Crossing at a Crosswalk with a Stop Sign Correctly

**Scene description:** The driver stops car and signals to Joe to cross in front of the car. Joe looks for other vehicles before he crosses the street.

**Key points:**

- **ASK:** What is a driver telling a pedestrian who is waiting at the crosswalk when he stops the vehicle and waves at the pedestrian?

> The driver is telling the pedestrian that he sees him or her and will wait while the pedestrian crosses the street.

- **ASK:** Why should a pedestrian try to make eye contact with a driver who has stopped at a crosswalk?

> Making eye contact with a driver is a way the pedestrian can make sure the driver has seen them.

- **ASK:** What should the pedestrian do before proceeding to cross the street even if the driver has waved them on?

> A pedestrian should look in the directions that a vehicle could come before crossing the street. If no other vehicles are coming, cross the street, wave “thanks” to the driver and cross.
Scene 5 – Crossing Complex Streets Correctly

Scene Description: Joe crosses two streets using a crosswalk on both streets. The second street has four lanes of traffic. When Joe gets to the middle, he stops on the median and checks for traffic before crossing the second half of the street.

Key points:

❖ **ASK:** What did Joe do correctly?
   
   *A pedestrian should look in the directions that a car could come before crossing the street.*

❖ **ASK:** What should a pedestrian do when crossing multiple lanes of traffic?
   
   *The pedestrian should decide if it is safe to cross the entire street without having to stop or if he or she will need a safe place to stop during crossing.*

Scene 6 – Crossing Complex Street Incorrectly

Scene Description: Joe is jaywalking. He is not using the crosswalk. He is also running when he crosses the street.

Key points:

❖ **ASK:** What did Joe do wrong?
   
   *Joe did not use the crosswalk. Drivers expect pedestrians to use crosswalks when crossing the street. A driver may not see pedestrians walking out from between cars or crossing in the middle of the street.*

   *Joe also ran across the street. People are more likely to trip and fall if they are running. A driver may not be able to see a pedestrian.*

Scene 7 - Crossing with No Crosswalk Correctly

Scene description: Joe gets off the bus. The bus pulls away. Joe looks both ways before crossing the street.

Key points:

❖ **ASK:** Why is it important for a pedestrian to wait to cross the street until after the bus has left?
   
   *Unlike a school bus, traffic does not have to stop when the public bus stops to let off passengers. Drivers may not be able to see a pedestrian crossing the street in front of the bus.*
Scene 8 - Walking in a Parking Lot Correctly

**Scene Description:** Joe walks in the area designated for pedestrians and uses crosswalks while walking through the parking lot. The driver does not stop at the crosswalk. Joe is paying attention and does not walk in front of the car. Joe crosses after the car has driven through the crosswalk.

**Key points:**

- **ASK:** What did Joe do correctly?

  *Many parking lots have places designated walkways for pedestrians. A pedestrian should use this walkway when one is available. When approaching a crosswalk in the parking lot a pedestrian should look in the directions that a car could come before proceeding.*

- **ASK:** Why did Joe stop before crossing?

  *A pedestrian cannot assume that a driver has seen him. Pedestrian should always be alert when they are walking in the community. Joe was paying attention and saw the car and waited before crossing.*

Scene 9 – Walking in a Parking Lot Incorrectly

**Scene Description:** Joe is walking in the parking lot. A car’s backing lights are on. Joe keeps walking. The car starts to back up with Joe behind the car.

**Key points:**

- **ASK:** How could Joe have known that the car was backing up?

  *Not all parking lots have a pedestrian walkway. Drivers may not be able to see pedestrians when they are backing out of a parking space. A pedestrian can tell that a driver is about to back up 1) when the backup lights are on and 2) by listening for the sounds from the car. Not all cars, however, make a lot of sound. (Some hybrid cars are very quiet)*

- **ASK:** What do you think you should do if you see a car backing up? Let’s watch Joe in the next scene and see what he does differently.
Scene 10 – Walking in a Parking Lot Correctly

**Scene Description:** Joe is walking in the parking lot. He stops. A car backs out of a parking space. After the car has pulled out, Joe continues walking.

**Key points:**

- **ASK**: What should Joe have done differently?

  *When crossing a parking lot without a walkway, stay close to the cars but leave space between you and the cars. Actively look and listen for vehicles moving around in the parking lot. If you see a car with their backing lights on or hear a car’s motor, look to see if the vehicle is going to move. Try to make eye contact with the driver before proceeding to cross behind the car. A driver may signal you indicating they have seen you.*

- **Ask**: As you look at the video what type of vehicle is next to the car backing up? Is it larger or smaller?

  *Large vehicles obstruct the view of other drivers. Drivers may need to back out a little before they are able to see around these vehicles. A pedestrian should always watch for vehicles moving out of parking spaces. Never assume a driver is going to see you.*
Using a Crosswalk Light
Lesson 3 Levels II

Slide 1
- Press crosswalk button

Slide 2
- Symbol indicates it is not safe to cross

Slide 3
- Wait at corner and look at crosswalk light

Slide 4
- Watch the crosswalk light and look for vehicles. When it is safe, start walking.

Slide 5
- Stay in crosswalk. Scan for vehicles.

Slide 6
- Crossing safely allows you to get to your destination.

Slide 7
- Watch the crosswalk light. Explain what each symbol means.

Slide 8
(Video)
### Pedestrian Safety Checklist
#### Lesson 3 Levels II & III

**Student Name:** _____________________________________

Instructions: Use each time students are traveling in the community. Instructor should carry the list so that students are not distracted by rating their skills as they walk. Have students stop and rate their skills periodically during the outing. Suggestion: review Lesson 2 Level III Street Signs & Traffic Symbols (PowerPoint).

**Key:**
- 0 = Not applicable
- 1 = Intensive instruction suggested
- 2 = Moderate instruction, review and repeated practice recommended
- 3 = Minimal instruction
- 4 = Mastered

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
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**Awareness of Surroundings**
- Scans while walking
- Listens for traffic sounds in the environment
- Stops at intersection before crossing
- Sees street sign and modifies actions
- Looks in all directions for moving vehicles

**Crossing Streets**
- Crosses at crosswalk light and uses crosswalk when available
- Crosses at stop sign
- Crosses at traffic light
- Crosses appropriately in the absence of crosswalk
- Looks before crossing even when he/she has right of way
- If car is coming in one direction, looks again in both directions before crossing
- Identifies when view is obstructed and adjusts actions
### Pedestrian Safety Checklist
#### Lesson 3 Levels II & III (continued)

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<tr>
<th>Walking When Not Crossing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chooses to walk on sidewalk when available</td>
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<td>Student</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stops and looks for traffic at entrances to parking lots and at driveways</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>When no sidewalk is present, walks on side of road</td>
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<td>Student</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When no sidewalk is present, walks facing traffic.</td>
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<td>Instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watches for signs that a car is moving out of a parking space</td>
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<td>Student</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chooses the safest place to walk when crossing parking lot</td>
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<td>Student</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knows what to do if driver signals you can cross</td>
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<td>Student</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
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<tr>
<td>If vehicle honks, pedestrian figures out if vehicle is trying to tell them something</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Makes eye contact with driver before crossing</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
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