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Keeping Kids Safe Walking To School

By Louie Delaware

According to the US National Highway Safety Administration, in 2005 there were almost 4,900 pedestrian deaths resulting from traffic injuries. And there were another 64,000 people who sustained an injury. But more alarming is the fact that nearly 20% of all of these deaths were among children between 5 and 9 years of age.

Young children are at an increased risk due to:

- ◆ Children are smaller and that makes it difficult for a driver to see them. This is made even more difficult when a child stands in between or in the front of parked cars.
- ◆ Young children don't do a good job of judging how fast cars are actually moving and may underestimate how long it may actually take to get across a street.
- ◆ They move quickly and unpredictably, and can run into the street without warning.
- ◆ In many cases, parents can overestimate their child's physical and mental ability to cross the street safely. One reason for this is that many younger children don't properly understand traffic signals and signs, and may not be good at being able to determine how a driver may react to them.
- ◆ Unfortunately, many drivers and child pedestrians each individually assume that the other will see them and give them the right-of-way.

So in advance of children going to school and to minimize the possibility of a pedestrian-vehicle accident, parents teach their children following pedestrian rules:

- ◆ Do not cross the street alone if you're younger than age 10 years old.
- ◆ Only cross the street at a safe corner. If there is a traffic signal, wait for it to change so that there is a Walk indicator. Teach your children how to push the button to get the light to change.
- ◆ Always try to walk on paths or sidewalks. If there are no sidewalks or paths, walk as far over on the road's shoulder or the grass as possible facing traffic.
- ◆ Look both ways for danger before and while crossing the street.
- ◆ Walk, do not run or dart, into the street.
- ◆ Never play in the road.
- ◆ Dress your children in bright colors or wear reflective materials so drivers can easily see them.

You may want to take some time now to get your children ready to safely walk to school.

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Louie Delaware, **The Home Safety Guru™**, president and founder of US Safety Pros, LLC is a Certified Child & Home Safety Professional in all aspects of home safety, from childproofing to home safety, radon testing & mitigation, along with fire, carbon monoxide, and barrier free construction. US Safety Pros has helped safeguard over 700 homes. For more information about Louie Delaware, go to his web site, www.HomeSafetyGuru.com.

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