



Muoversi. Con intelligenza

SAFE BY CHOICE. MOVE. WITH INTELLIGENCE

ON THE ROAD OF YES AND NO 3/4/5 years old

progetto promosso da



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ON THE ROAD OF YES AND NO - 3/4/5 years old

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ON THE ROAD OF YES AND NO - 5 years old

The project "Sicuri per Scelta. Muoversi. Con intelligenza". "Safe by Choice. Move. With intelligence" is an initiative dedicated to road safety education and sustainable mobility, with the following goals: to make all road users aware of the rules, to promote a correct perception of risk, to orientate towards environmentally sustainable choices.

This mini-book has as its protagonists some Hedgehogs who live their experiences on everyday routes, introducing pupils to the topic of safe and sustainable mobility.

The contents deal with certain behaviours that should be adopted on the road for the safety of 5-year-old children. In particular, it examines the learning that children can develop every day in the role of transported passenger, pedestrian and accompanied cyclist, through five typical situations, each illustrated and completed with some exercises to be carried out together, children and adults.

For each child, a typical daily route is from home to school, two emotionally significant places. Adults generally pay a lot of attention to making the environments in which children spend a lot of time cosy and safe, but tend to attach less importance to the child's progressive autonomy in the street. Just as the home and the school are the 'environment', so are the street, the pavement, the step and slide, the pedestrian crossing, the signposts, the traffic lights, the crossroads, the bridges, the buildings, the vehicles, the people, any animals (domestic or wild), the public parks and any other element that makes up a city, a village, a hamlet.

Getting to school by car, walking, biking or taking the school bus allows the child to familiarise himself with the elements of this 'everyone's environment' with which he has to relate.

The daily home-school-home route can be an opportunity for important learning for the child's personal safety, and the adult can effectively accompany this progress.

Children and the perception of danger in urban traffic

On the road, every child is exposed to a rather high risk both because he lacks experience and because he has to complete the stages of his development:

- his height affects his field of vision, which is still narrow, and at the same time makes him less visible to drivers;
- he has difficulty estimating the speed of vehicles, understanding distances and approach times;
- traffic presents a large number of simultaneous perceptual stimuli (sounds, noises, voices, colours, shapes, movements), but a child's reduced ability to concentrate does little to help him perceive the road as a whole;
- in general, he is easily distracted or involved in play situations, engaging in unpredictable behaviour.

Some experts point out that from the age of 5 to 6, when travelling along a busy road, children begin to realise that they are in a dangerous situation.

But the road environment is full of symbols that have to be deciphered, which are not immediately comprehensible. The attention of an adult can help the child to gradually discriminate simple dangers in an increasingly autonomous manner and to overcome some uncertainties that can lead to fearful reactions or, on the contrary, too much bravado.

It is important to ensure that the child has developed some basic skills, such as being able to distinguish public spaces intended for play from those dedicated to road traffic.

A significant experience for the growth of every child is to be able to practise driving along habitual routes accompanied by an adult who, in a calm and attentive manner, explains the potential dangers and the behaviour to be adopted to avoid them.



Some advice

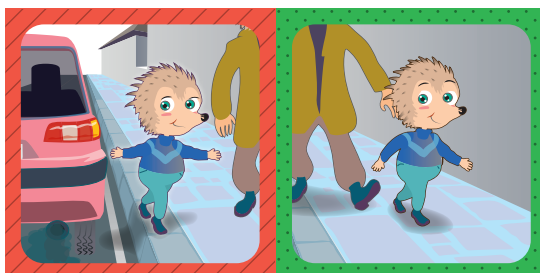
- When participating in road traffic, always be a good example.
- Give your child the opportunity to practise moving around at a pace suited to his or her rhythm, without fear of being late.
- Explain behaviour following a sequence: use simple words, have the child repeat verbally, perform together, praise the child when he/she behaves correctly.
- Choose the safest route (it is not always the shortest) and explain the reasons for the choice.
- Draw the child's attention to the most dangerous spots and explain which behaviour is the safest.
- Point out if visibility is obstructed by parked cars, bushes, hedges, bends.
- Stimulate self-regulation of road behaviour through concrete experiences, e.g.: when walking in the street, one must always maintain balance and concentration on the action of walking in the midst of potential dangers, possibly without having one's hands engaged in carrying various objects; when riding a bicycle without/with pedals, one cannot simultaneously carry a ball.



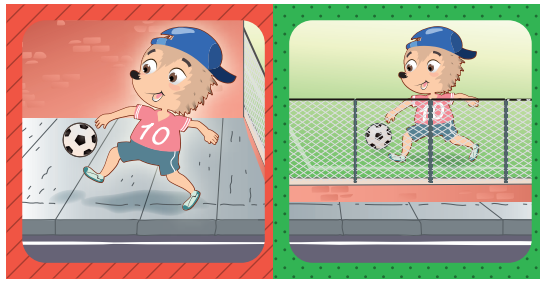
- Encourage the child to transfer learning to everyday routes, e.g. from home to school.
- Have confidence in the fact that the child can understand that following useful rules for every movement on the road is a form of self-protection, for whatever means they will use in their future life.

Walking on the pavement

- Point out the step separating the pavement (reserved for pedestrians) from the carriageway (used by vehicles).
- Explain to always walk on the innermost part of the pavement, away from the traffic side. When the child begins to walk spontaneously on the part closest to the wall, you can say that you have achieved something, but you must maintain it!



- Remember to the child that it is forbidden to obstruct the passage of other pedestrians on the pavement, with particular attention to elderly or disabled persons; it is also prudent to avoid running and playing, risking bumping into and causing other pedestrians with limited mobility to lose their balance.



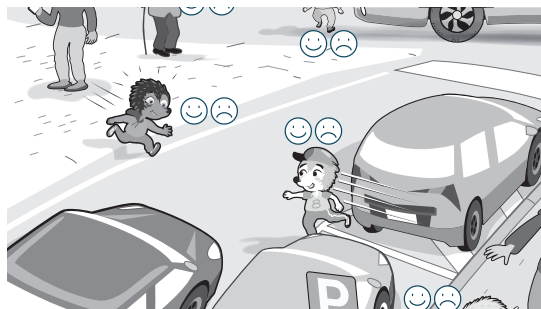
- Explain the importance of making oneself visible to drivers, including through high-visibility elements incorporated into clothing and/or accessories.
- Have drivers observe car exits from private garages facing the pavement.



Crossing the road at the zebra crossing

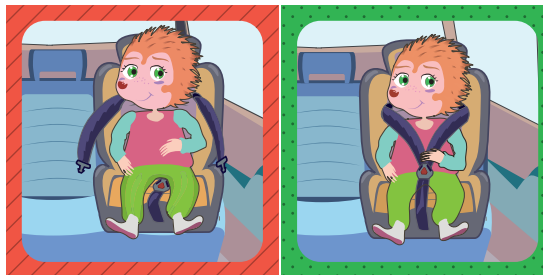
Crossing the carriageway is a very difficult action.

- Explain that you should never cross if there is no crosswalk: the pedestrian does not have the right of way.
- Never cross suddenly between two parked vehicles.

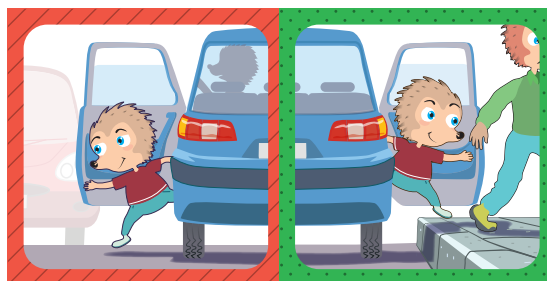


- In an area with little traffic, have the sequence repeated in practice: when I arrive in front of the white lines, I stop at the edge of the pavement, wait, watch/listen, then walk on the lines, possibly giving the accompanying adult a hand.

Passenger transported in the car



- If possible, the child should be seated in the back seat, buckled into the seat.
- Avoid getting the child out of the car in a risky situation, e.g. stopping in a prohibited area or without adequate visibility. Only let the child out of the car safely from the curb side.



- When leaving a car park, make sure that there is no child in front of or behind your vehicle.
- In the passenger compartment of the vehicle, the child sitting in the car seat travels in comfort and safety; when he or she gets out of the car, he or she is suddenly immersed in an environment full of sounds, noises, and many other stimuli and may feel disoriented, increasing his or her vulnerability.

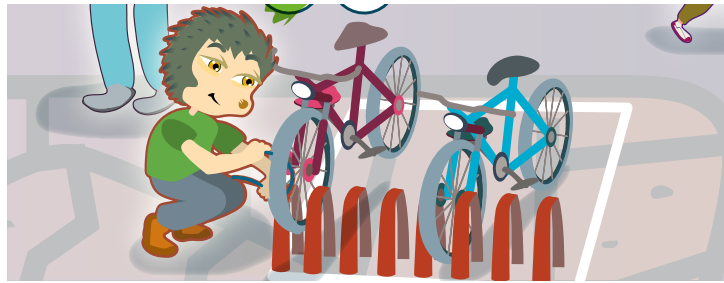


Cycling

- Remember that children generally pay little attention to traffic as they tend to perceive the bicycle as a toy and not as a vehicle.
- Involving the child in choosing and preparing the equipment for cycling helps to promote a sense of independence and confidence in their own abilities.
- Ensure that the velocipede is age-appropriate and fully functional; explain to the child how this vehicle should be kept in order.



- The child must be able to pedal from a seated position, be able to brake and acquire some mastery in keeping the trajectory and balance.
- In Italy, protection for children using a bicycle is not compulsory, but the use of a helmet to protect them in the event of a fall and possibly knee and/or elbow and wrist guards is highly recommended.
- For one's own safety, it is important to be able to get noticed in traffic, through high-visibility elements applied to clothing, in addition to the compulsory lights for the bicycle, yellow front reflectors, red rear reflectors, and reflectors placed on the pedals and on the sides of the wheels.



Up to 8 years old, a child can be transported on a bicycle using suitable equipment that is homologated and complies with European safety standards (EN 14344), consisting of a child seat equipped with a backrest, armrests, a child restraint system and an adjustable footrest.

Carrying your child on a bicycle allows you to share positive moments that reinforce trust and a sense of security towards the adult.



Other tools for micro-mobility

To stimulate a child's global motor skills, the use of certain tools that accelerate gait is becoming increasingly popular, such as the muscle-powered scooter, the kickboard, and the pedal-free bicycle known as the balance bike.

For a child, this is the first approach to speed.

Even in these cases, one must remember the tendency (of both adults and children) to regard such equipment as toys, reducing their attention to traffic. However, it is important to explain to the 5-year-old child that, when using them on the road (pavement or pedestrian or cycle path, as well as carriageway), he or she must already begin to behave as if he or she were riding a vehicle; in fact, the average age of 5 is the age at which the child begins to mature in considering the bicycle as a vehicle and, progressively, less and less as a toy.

For the above-mentioned type of equipment, the same considerations apply as for the bicycle.

