DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 098 297 CE 002 356

TITLE The Safest Route to School Project: Teacher's Guide and Student Leaflet.

INSTITUTION American Automobile Association, Falls Church, Va. Traffic Engineering and Safety Dept.

NOTE 14p.

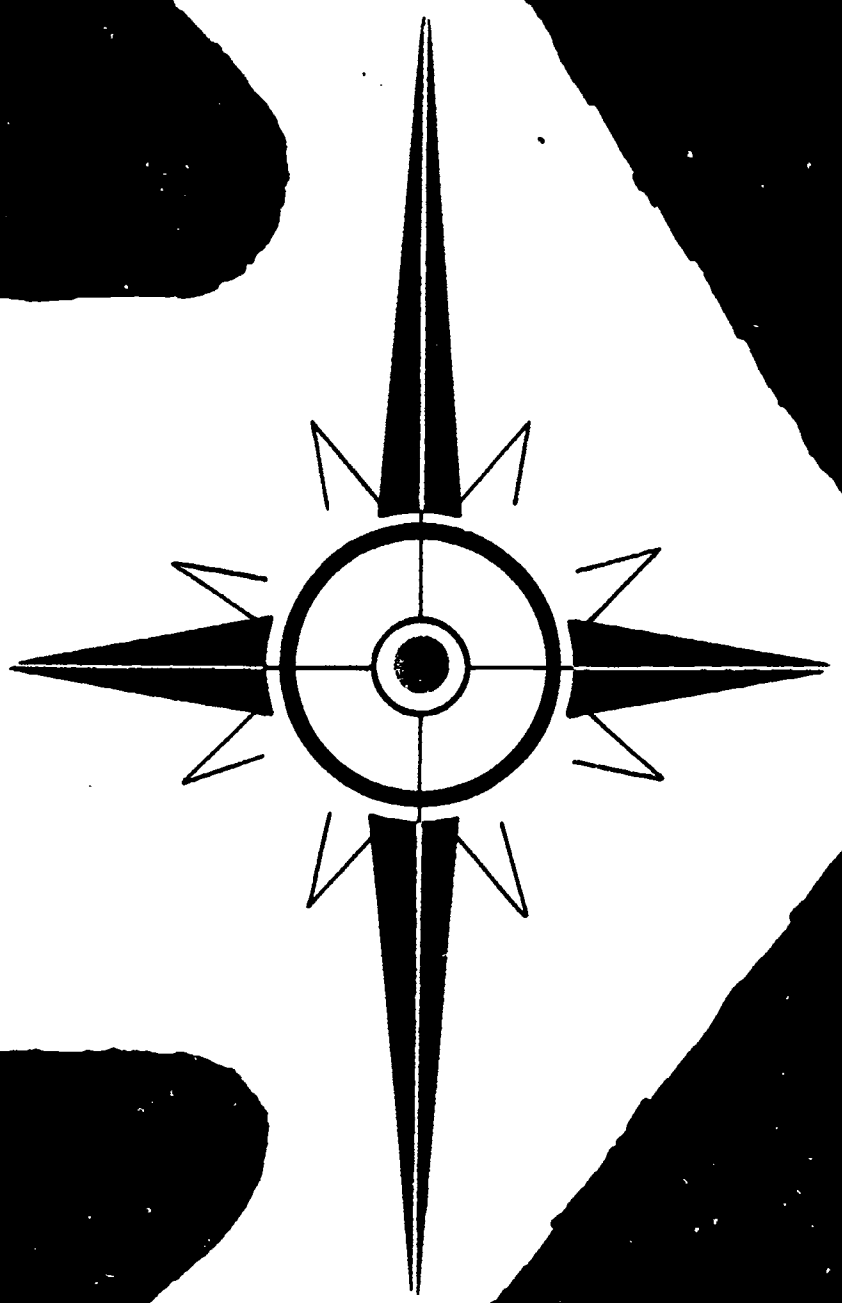
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE

DESCRIPTORS Accident Prevention; Instructional Programs; Safety; *Safety Education; *School Safety; *Teaching Guides; Teaching Procedures; *Traffic Safety

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the Safest Route to School project is to help children develop safe walking habits and inform them of the potential dangers which exist in a seemingly innocent walk to school. This project will foster cooperation between home and school in working toward the common goal of protecting the lives of children. Some of the guiding principles discussed which the teacher can use as a basis for the implementation of this project into the curriculum are: directness, minimum use of roadway, complicated intersections, converging routes, police supervision, adult crossing guards, school safety patrols, stop-and-go signals, school crossings, vehicular volume at crosswalks, one-way streets, stop signs, and pedestrian accident experience. Teaching approaches recommended are a field trip, development of a large-scale school area map, and individual maps. Also provided are sample individual map forms, a copy of a letter to the parents with an attached reply form, and a separate leaflet for parent and child study at home. (BP)

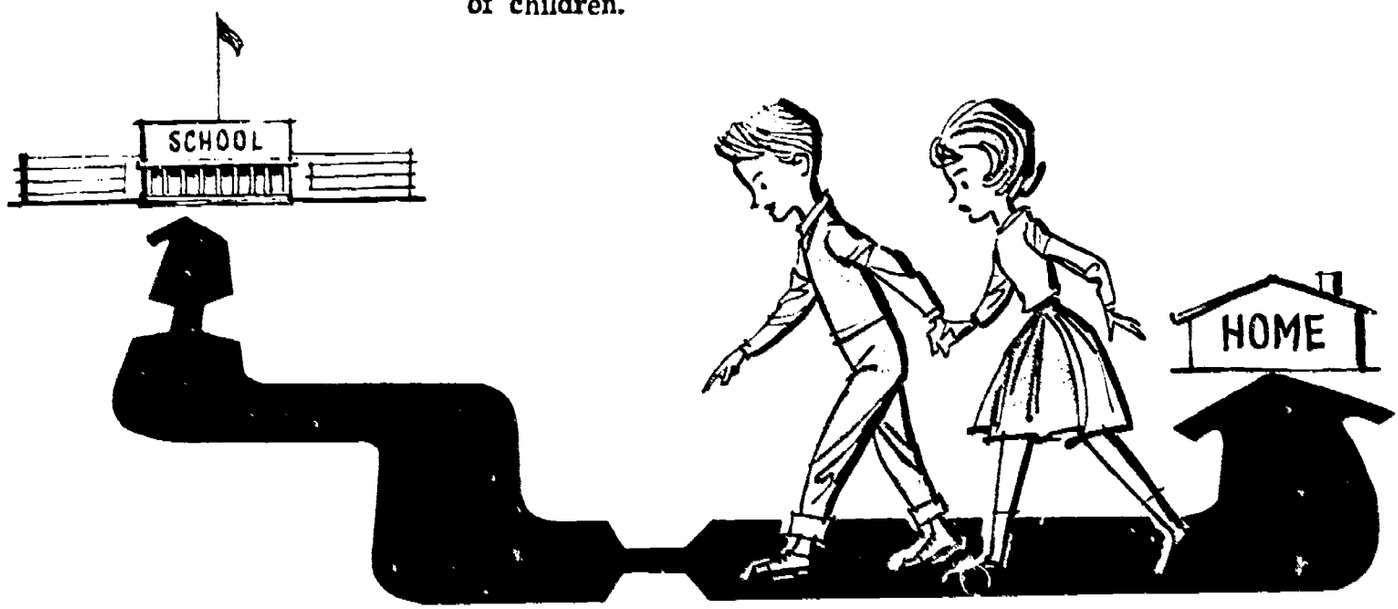
a TEACHER'S GUIDE for the safest route to school PROJECT



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

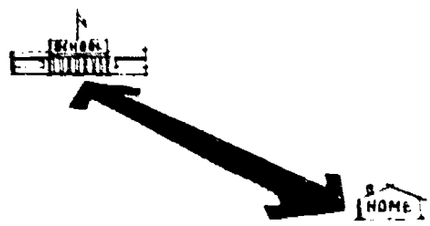
Purpose of the project

The purpose of the Safest Route to School project is to help children develop safe walking habits and inform them of the potential dangers which exist in a seemingly innocent walk to school. The project will also foster cooperation between home and school in working toward the common goal of protecting the lives of children.



Children should enjoy doing the things that will teach them to choose the safest route to school; if we only ask children to talk about the safest route, they will learn—to *talk* about the safest route. But if we also have them visualize their paths to school, discriminate between safe and unsafe parts, discuss their street safety with their parents, teachers, policemen, peers—*then we'll have something!*

Getting the project under way



Reduction of exposure to traffic hazards is possible in almost every school area through better selection of routes. There is no magic formula for selecting safest routes, for conditions differ from one community to another, and even within the same community. There are, however, a number of guiding principles which have nearly universal application. They are:

1. **Directness.** Children will not take roundabout routes unless there is some good reason which they understand. In practically every case there are several possible routes of equal distance between home and school. The problem is to select the one which appears to be the safest, considering all factors. Sacrifices in directness are permissible only where safety advantages are outstanding.

To parents and children: Please sign this statement and return it promptly to your teacher.

We have worked together to select the safest route from our house to school. We have talked together about "safe walking helps," and have discussed safe walking rules to follow every day.

PLEASE TEAR THIS PAGE AND RETURN IT

Here are some good guides for safe walking. Teach them to your children and help them follow them everyday.

Choose the route with the fewest streets to cross.

Go *directly* to and from school —don't "horse-around."

Cross only at corners and cooperate with your Safety Patrol or Crossing Guard. Remember—you are on your own at unguarded corners.

Look all ways before crossing.

Obey traffic signals.

Walk. Don't run across streets—allow yourself plenty of time.

Watch for turning cars.

Never step into the street from between parked cars.

Face traffic when walking on roads without sidewalks.

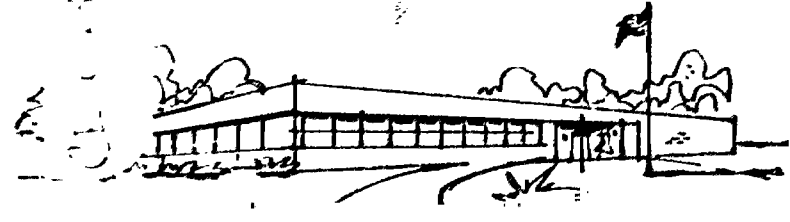
Be *extra* alert on rainy days.

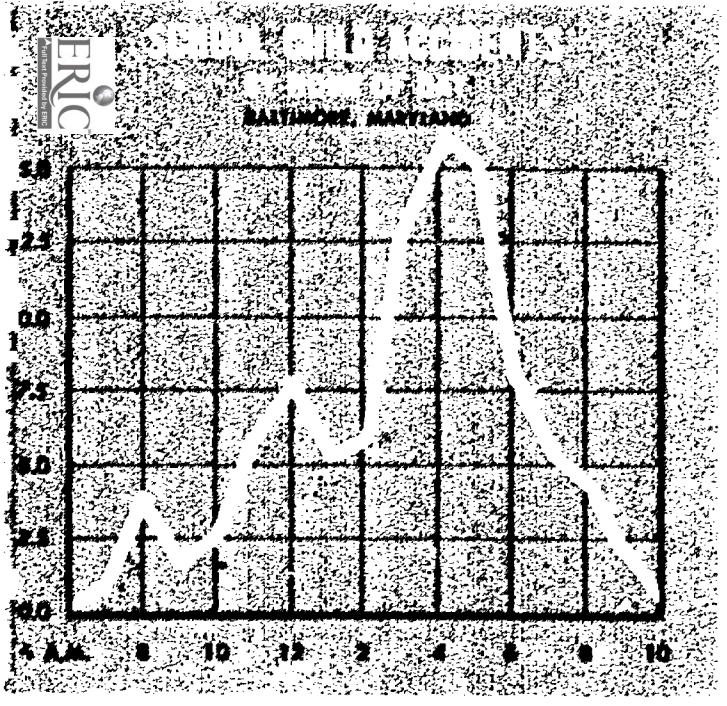
Wear something white or carry a light at night.

8111 GATEHOUSE RD. FALLS CHURCH, VA. 22042

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

THE ROUTE TO SCHOOL

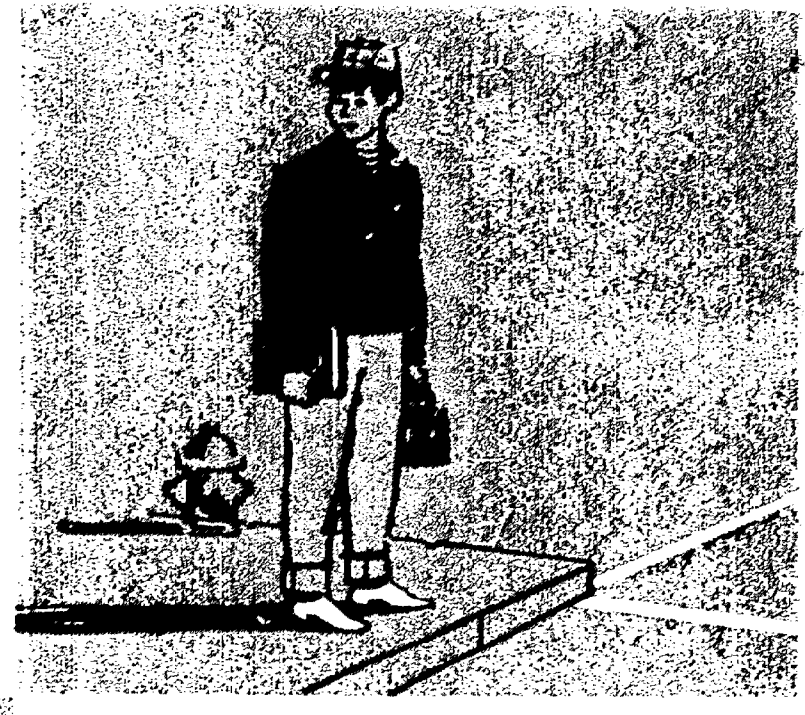




with your children, and map out their safest route to and from school. Help them become familiar with it. Let them help work out the reasons why it is better to cross at one corner rather than another. Go with them over the route selected.

Teach them to use the help of marked crosswalks and traffic signals, and to cooperate with the Safety Patrol or Crossing Guard.

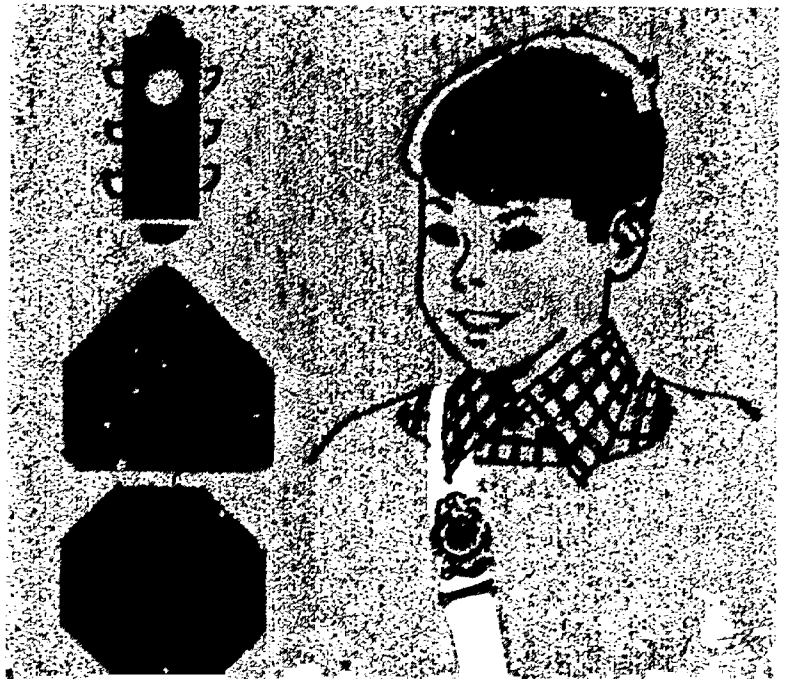
Above all, set a good example by following safe walking rules yourself!



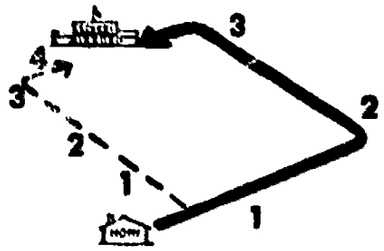
14 years of age and under are involved in a high percentage of pedestrian accidents.

This chart taken from a recent study of pedestrian accidents in a large city shows how school-child accident peaks follow closely the hours when children are going to and from school—morning, noon and late afternoon.

You can help reduce the dangers your children face in traffic on their way to and from school by helping them select the safest route.

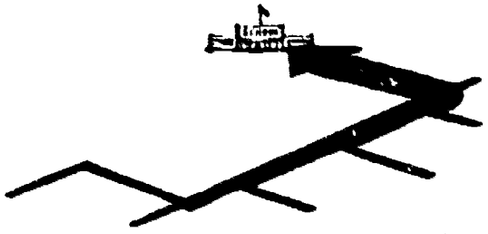


your children to be responsible for their own safety when it is necessary for them to cross at corners with no signal lights, Patrols or guards. Above all, teach them to look in all directions before crossing and to watch out for turning cars from both directions. Impress upon them that when the "coast is clear" they should WALK—not run across the street.



2. **Minimum use of roadway.** Select those routes which involve a minimum amount of pedestrian use of roadways—number and length of crossings. The distance from the curb to the nearest point of refuge must be considered in relation to all of the other factors present.

3. **Complicated intersections.** Complicated intersections should be avoided unless police officers or crossing guards are assigned to assist school children. Where such intersections are signalized and considered in the routing, special attention must be given to the sequence of the signal colors. Often the signal operates in three separate periods, or certain movements (especially right turns) are permitted and controlled by special signal faces.

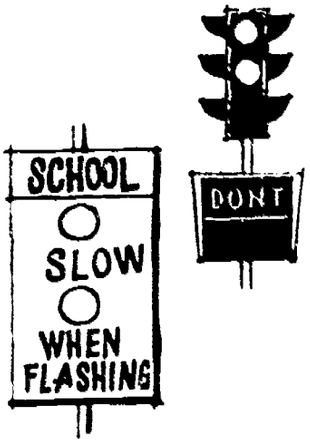


4. **Converging routes.** Select routes so that as many children as possible will converge at one place before crossing an especially hazardous street. By doing this, better and more concentrated supervision is possible. Such concentration may permit a wider and generally more effective distribution of police, crossing guard, and school safety patrol supervision in the district.

5. **Police supervision.** Police officers provide the best protection because they have complete authority to control all movements of traffic. Such protection is effective, however, only if police are *always* on duty when children are going to and coming from school.

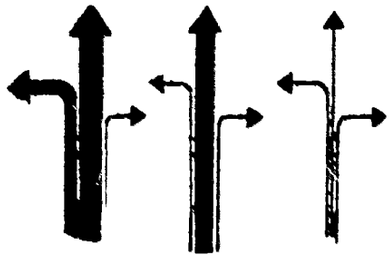
6. **Adult crossing guards.** To relieve the heavy demand for regular police officers and to augment the work of the safety patrol, adult crossing guards have rapidly become popular. These guards are trained by the Police Department and are usually granted authority to regulate the flow of traffic.

7. **School safety patrols.** The patrols' function is to instruct, direct, and control children in crossing streets at or near schools. Routes should be selected to take full advantage of such supervision.



8. **Stop-and-go signals.** Signals afford an appreciable, though not complete, measure of protection to pedestrians. They should not be regarded as a guarantee of safety. Some signals, particularly those with separate pedestrian intervals or "walk" indicators, offer greater protection.

9. **School crossings.** Special crossings are provided in some areas adjacent to school grounds. Motorists are generally warned at these crossings by special school crossing signs or, in some cases, by a flashing amber light.

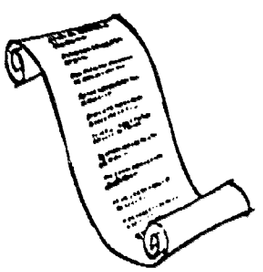


10. **Vehicular volume at crosswalks.** The vehicular volume at all crosswalks which are included in the direct routes to school should be compared and analyzed before the safest routes are finally selected. Other things being equal, preference should be given to those crosswalks which are crossed by (1) the least number of vehicles completing right turns, (2) the least number of vehicles completing left turns, and (3) the least total number of vehicles.

11. One-way streets. Intersections of one-way streets afford relatively safer crossings than do intersections of two-way streets. In some cases the volume of traffic on the one-way street may be so heavy as to create a hazard to pedestrians which may offset advantages gained by the absence of turns. But this is not likely to prevail as a general rule.

12. Stop signs. The signs or pavement markings directing the motorist to stop must be legible and in easily observed positions to be of maximum value to the pedestrian. While a stop sign does not afford as much protection as a traffic signal, vehicles must come to a stop, even if only momentarily. This obviously provides some measure of protection to pedestrians who cross the path of such vehicles, and advantage should be taken of this fact in selecting routes.

13. Pedestrian accident experience. Consideration must be given to the number and types of pedestrian accidents that have occurred at intersections in the district. As far as possible, routes should be selected to avoid those intersections or crosswalks at which pedestrians, especially children, have frequently been involved in accidents.



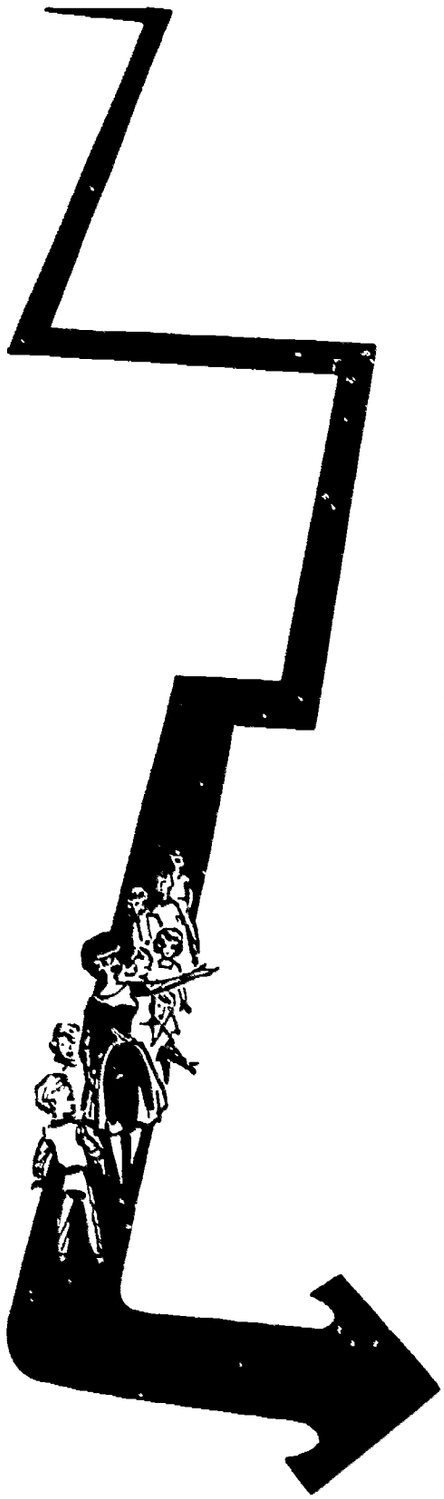
14. Other factors. It is impossible to cite all the numerous factors which in specific instances may warrant major attention. Bus and street car stops which obscure the child's view of traffic, blind corners, intersections where a nearby curve or a sharp grade interferes with the pedestrian's view of approaching traffic, congested streets, mid-block crossings, intersection corners with parking near crosswalks, speeding traffic, rough street surface at crossings, poorly constructed or improperly located safety zones or islands, and bad sidewalks in inclement weather, to mention a few important ones, should generally be avoided in selecting the routes.

Instruction

Field Trip

Before your class attempts to chart their safest routes, take them on a field trip to discover "safe walking helps" in the school area. The following check list may be helpful in making the experience particularly meaningful:

- Have you decided just what you want the children to see?
- Have you planned your own shortest and safest field trip route?
- Have you gone over the route yourself after school?
- Have you considered inviting a safety officer or policeman along to help you explain what constitutes the safest route?
- Have you explained to the children that they must go *directly* home from school in order to utilize all "safe walking helps"—some of which are in operation for a limited time only?
- Will your trip include observation and discussion of the following?
  - Marked crosswalks
  - Unmarked crossings
  - Traffic lights



- Pedestrian control devices, such as "walk" and "dont walk" indicators and push button controls
- Stop signs
- Intersections where there are no controls
- Function of policemen, adult crossing guards, and school safety patrols
- Sidewalks
- Areas where [illegible] are no sidewalks
- One-way streets

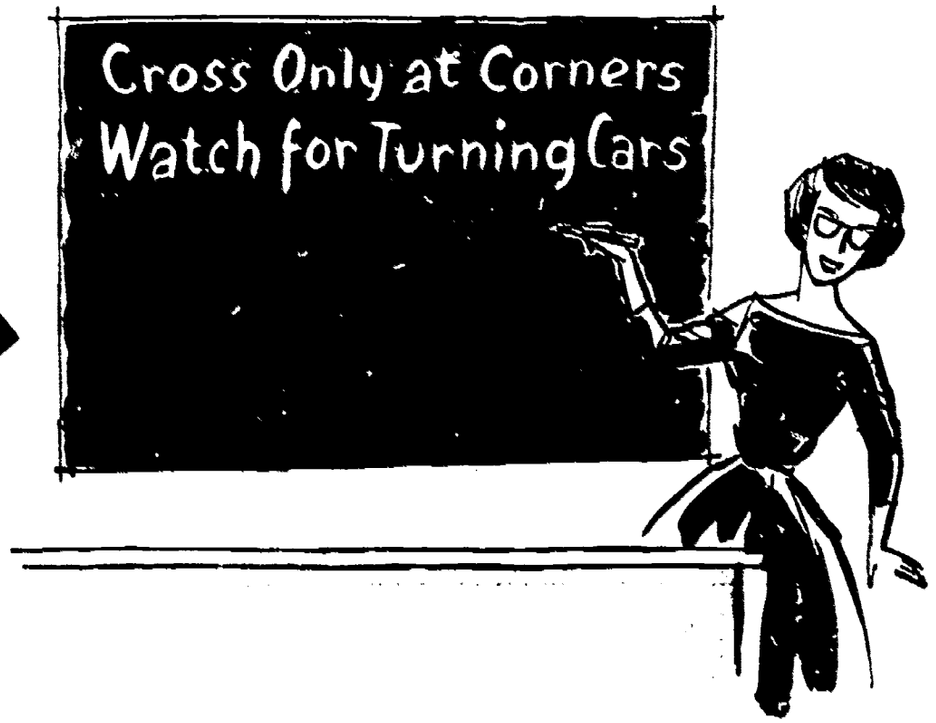
■ Have you asked pupils to think about *their* safest route during the field trip?

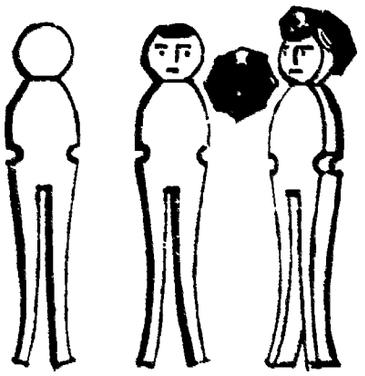
■ Have pupils accumulated information for the area map?

■ Have you prepared a list of comprehensive questions to ask back in the classroom to see whether your pupils understood what they saw?

The Area Map

For the initial plotting of safest routes during the classroom phase of this project, develop a large-scale school area map. An area map will further stimulate your pupils' interest in the safest route to school and involve them in its actual planning. The supplies and steps for making the map are outlined below.





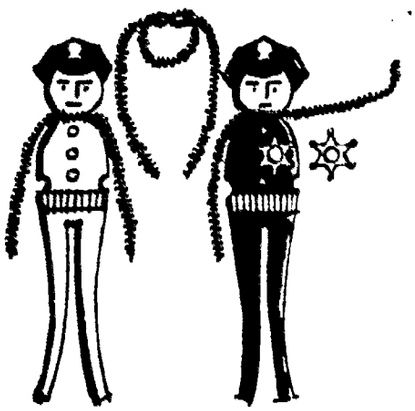
For the area map you will need the following supplies:

1. A large sheet of paper (about 36" wide and 48" long). Wrapping paper would be suitable.

2. Heavy white paper and scissors to make cut-outs of patrol members, traffic lights, etc. Clothes pins may be used for making these models. (See step-by-step illustrations.)

3. Ink and a yardstick for drawing in the streets.

4. Little blocks of soft wood, such as Balsa or the ends of orange crates, to use as models of buildings. You may also make them from folded paper.

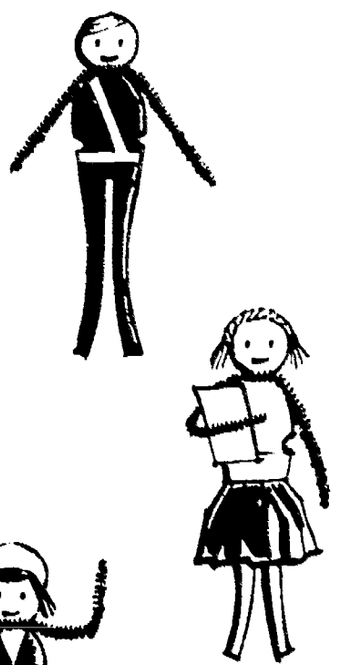


5. Water colors or crayons.

6. A sheet of plywood or beaverboard on which to mount the map so that it may be moved with the models on it. A side of a large cardboard packing box will do.

7. Rubber cement, paste or scotch tape to fasten models to map.

Whether you make the area map or have the children do it depends upon the interests and abilities of the group, and the amount of time available for the project. In either event, the following steps will serve as a rough guide:



1. Collect paper, pencils, etc. A map of your community or school district to serve as a model will help.

2 Spread the paper out on a working space such as a table or even the floor.

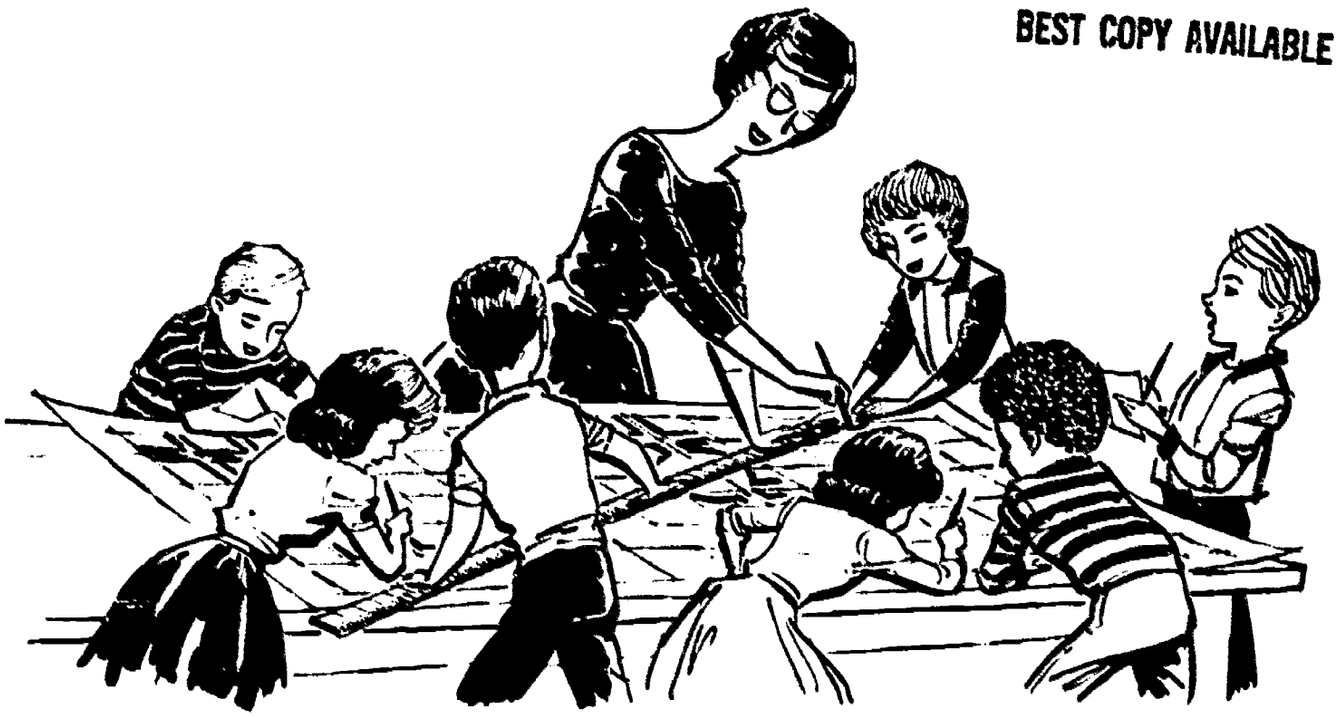
3. Decide what area you must include on the map so that every child's home can be located.

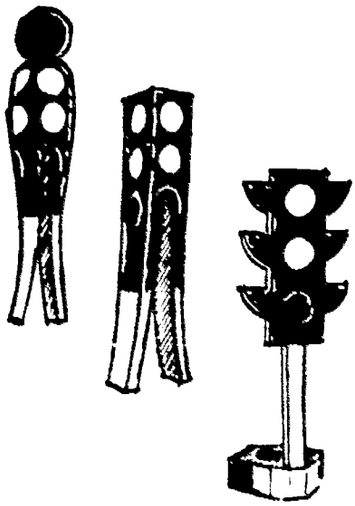
4. Figure the scale to which the map will be drawn. To do this, divide the length of the area to be shown in city blocks into the length of the paper in inches, and the width of the area by the width of the paper. Take the smaller of these two answers, round it off, and that will be your scale in inches per city block. For example, suppose you need to show an area 10 blocks long and 8 blocks wide, and your paper is 36 x 44 inches. $44 \div 10 = 4\text{-}^{4}/_{10}$, and $36 \div 8 = 4^{1}/_{8}$, so your scale is $4\text{-}^{1}/_{10}$ rounded off to 4 inches. Therefore, 4 inches on the map equals one block.

5. Measure and divide your paper into squares the size of city blocks. Use pencil and yardstick. Make your lines very light in order that they may be erased.

6. Draw in lightly any irregular features such as parks, ponds, or railroads.

7. Draw lines to indicate streets, allowing about one-eighth of the block length for the width of a street. The faint lines you drew





under direction 5 will be the center lines of the streets. You may omit sidewalks if you wish.

8. Ink in the irregular features and the block boundaries. Block boundaries should be made to stand out most vividly. Use a ball point pen, crayon or a very soft pencil.

9. Models of homes, the school, traffic lights, stop signs, etc. should be made to the same scale as the map, but they can be made slightly larger if necessary. Traffic lights, patrol members, and stop signs may be made from clothes pins or drawn on heavy white paper or cardboard. Then color them with showcard color, crayon, or water colors, and glue to the edge of a medium-sized nut from a steel bolt to serve as a standard.

10. Houses and buildings may be modeled in clay or carved from soft wood or soap.

After completing the map, first trace the safest route from your own home to the school for your students —explaining as you do so why this is the safest route for you. Then have each child trace his route with a crayon and support his choices with safety rules. Build a list of safety rules on the blackboard as you go along to reinforce learning.

The Individual Maps

Individual maps should be reproductions of the school area map on a form similar to the sample shown below. Routes to school should be drawn locating all safe crossings, correct side of street along which children walk, and safety aids—such as signals, patrols, guards. If preferred, a map showing only the street pattern, school location and safety aids can be prepared. Each pupil may then mark his map individually to show the safest way after instruction or a field trip guided by the teacher.

On the next page we have provided a sample individual map which can be removed and mimeographed. First reproduce your local school area map in the space provided. The sample map contains suggestions for labeling traffic controls, buildings, etc. Also, on the back of the form you will find a suggested letter to parents.

With the map as a master guide, prepare a stencil or duplimat that will fit on a standard sheet of paper. Print enough copies for distribution to all new pupils entering school each year. After the children have traced their own individual routes, they should take their maps home for parental approval.

Many advantages are offered in the use of a reproduction of the master map showing all safe routes and traffic aids located by the traffic engineer. Basically, parents and youngsters learn to know their community better; in addition to the safest school route, the child can be shown the safest route to a friend's home, to church, to the playground, or to the movies. The majority of pedestrian accidents involving elementary school children occur at times other than school hours.

My Safest Route to School Map

After labelling streets, trace your safest route from home to school.

■ Home
School Building

● Traffic Signal Red
● Stop Sign Yellow

● Patrol Boy Black
● Police Officer Blue

● Adult Guard Green
Recommended Route ▬

Intersections Where Protection is Provided for School Children

Crosswalks Painted:

School, STOP or Warning Signs:

Locations of Special Danger

(Street with heavy traffic, unguarded crossings, divided highways)

Child's Name .....

Address .....

School .....

Dear Parents,

On the back of this sheet your child has traced his safest route to school. This activity is part of a safety project which has been organized to help children develop safe walking habits and to become aware of the potential dangers which exist in a seemingly innocent walk to school.

We believe that reduction of exposure to traffic hazards is possible in almost every school area through better selection of routes to and from school. Therefore, our class recently took a field trip to discover "safe walking helps" in the school area. We talked about and examined various traffic control devices, types of intersections, pedestrian aids, etc. We then drew a large map of the school district and each child traced his safest route from home to school. As the child traced his route, he explained why this is the safest for him—demonstrating that he is becoming increasingly aware of safety and traffic rules and his own responsibilities towards them.

Won't you please help us teach your child safety? Go over his map with him and let him explain why he chose the route he did. Then walk your child to school to verify his choice of routes. If you have any changes to make, please explain them in the space provided below. You might also help your child trace the safest route to church, store, or playground.

Policemen, adult crossing guards, and school safety patrols are on duty to guard pupils on their way to school in the morning, noon, and afternoon. In order to utilize the protection they provide, please do not start your child to school too early or too late. Also, see that he comes **directly** home from school so that he may make use of all "safe walking helps"

Thank you for your cooperation.

Teacher .....

Reply to Teacher

I approve do not approve of my child's safest route to school. I suggest the following changes:

.....

.....

....
(Signature of Parent) (Date)

(Do not fill in below this line)

Checked and Approved ....

Changes Suggested .....

.....

.....

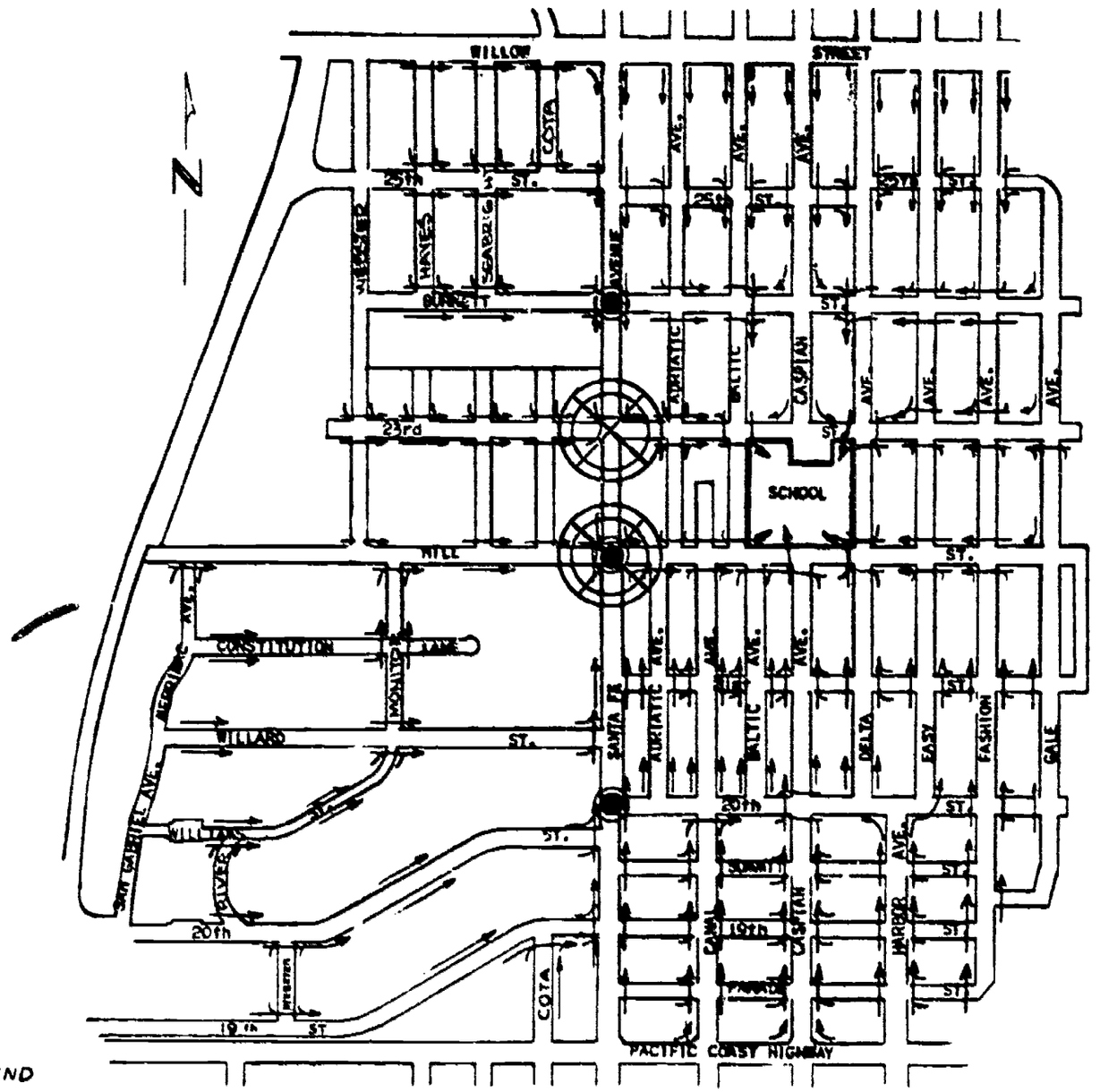
Changes Approved by ....
(Principal or Teacher) (Date)

Changes Explained to Parent by ....
(Captain, School Safety Patrol) (Date)

Traffic Engineering and Safety Department
American Automobile Association
Falls Church, Va.

This map, used by Garfield Elementary School, Long Beach, California, is a reproduction of the master map drawn by the Traffic Engineer, showing all safe routes in the school area. You could use such a detailed map as is, or adapt it in a more simplified form for your own particular use.

GARFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



LEGEND

SAFE SCHOOL ROUTE

TRAFFIC SIGNAL

CROSSING GUARD (ADULT)

SIGNAL AND CROSSING GUARD

SAFE SCHOOL ROUTES

NOTE TO PARENTS:

Will you please take a colored pencil or crayola and help your child mark his or her home and the route he should take to school, following the general pattern of arrows.

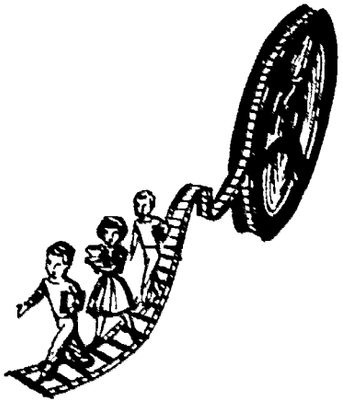
It is suggested that you actually walk over the route with your child, answering any questions he may have concerning the map, pointing out such traffic control features as crossing guards, signals, etc., on his route to school.

Please keep this map in your home and go over it with your child from time to time to make sure that he knows and uses the Safe School Route.

The Safest Route To School Leaflet

The purpose of this leaflet, which is available from your local AAA Club, is to involve parents in this program and to seek their active support. Along with the individual map, it may be taken home, signed, and returned to you.

It is hoped that this leaflet will serve to strengthen the very vital link between the school and the home.



The Safest Way Film

Recently revised by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, **The Safest Way** is a motion-picture story telling how a class of boys and girls discovered their safest routes to school. The children take a field trip, develop an area map, and then trace their own routes. And, they learn that the safest way applies not only to going to school, but also going to the playground, to church, to the movies—or well, to any place!

This is an excellent film to use for launching the Safest Route to School Project. **The Safest Way** is available from your local AAA Motor Club or film rental library.

Traffic Engineering and Safety Department
American Automobile Association
Falls Church, Va.