



Exploring Parental Perceptions of a Walking School Bus in Northern Ontario



Why do we need the Walking School Bus?

Only 26% of children and youth use active transportation (1)

Increased vehicle dependency results in a loss of independence, road-based skills, social interaction and physical activity (2)

WSB may help to increase physical activity as it proposes a safe, active way to get to school (3)

The Project

16 parents of three elementary schools in northeastern Ontario were interviewed on their perceptions of the WSB

Results

Parent's Perceptions

Children can socialize with others while walking to school

Enhances child independence by incorporating a transition from walking together to walking alone

Effective method of relieving energy before the school day

Parental Concerns

Lack of sidewalks
Extreme amounts of snow

No sidewalks in neighbourhood

Located too far away from school to walk

Awareness

- "Get Active" initiatives
- Social media (school website, Facebook & email)



Conclusions

Parental concerns of WSB in the north are similar to parents in more urban settings

Messages that alley parent perceived barriers should be favoured to diminish car dependence and encourage WSB uptake

Findings from this study have been used to promote WSB at participating schools

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2. Woodcock, J., & Aldred, R. (2008). Cars, corporations, and commodities: Consequences for the social determinants of health. *Emerging Themes in Epidemiology*, 5(1), 1.

3. Kearns, R. A., Collins, D. C., & Neuwelt, P. M. (2003). The walking school bus: extending children's geographies?. *Area*, 35(3), 285-292.