

Dear King County families,

Welcome back to another school year! As your children return to the classroom, **Public Health – Seattle & King County** would like to remind you of some important safety tips for getting to and from school.

For all Drivers:

- **Always wear your seatbelt** and require all passengers to buckle up, every time, every ride. Seat belts save lives!
- **Put your phone away during your drive.** Distracted driving is one of the leading causes of vehicular crashes in our county. The road deserves your full attention when driving to keep you and your passengers safe.
- **Obey school zone speed limits.** Slow and steady allows everyone to get to school safely.
- **Stop for school busses.** Not sure when to stop? Check out this handy guide:

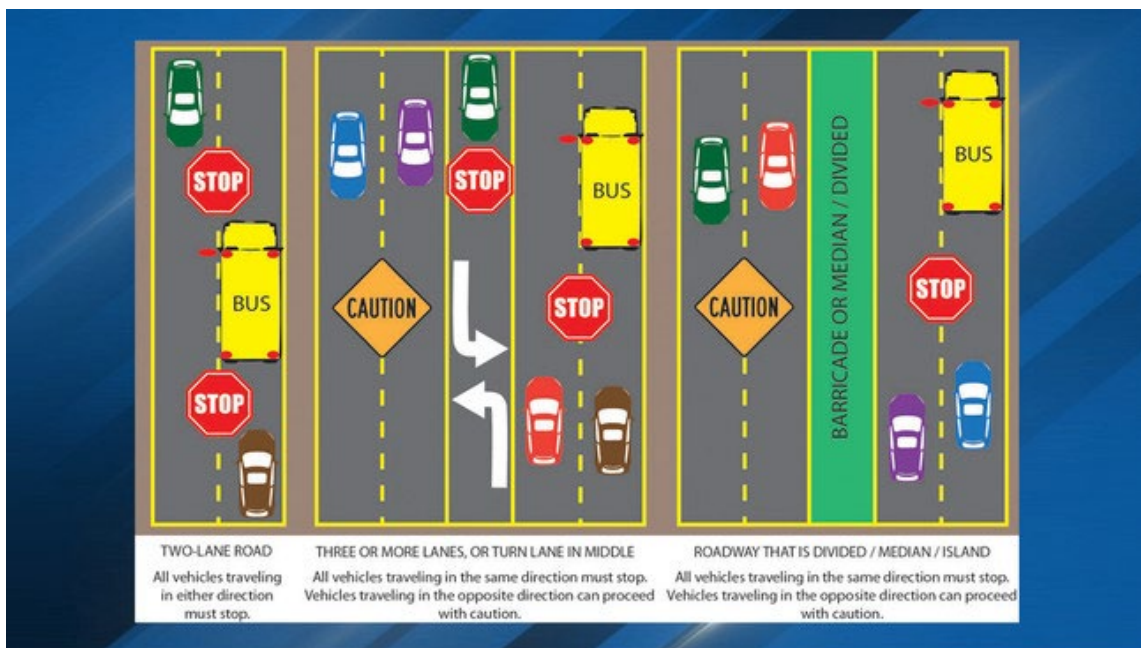


Figure 1: Source Office of Superintendent of Public Education

Driving to School:

- [Washington state law](#) requires **all children under the age of 2 to remain in a rear facing position**, but rear facing as long as possible is best practice. Ideally as close to age 4 as possible.
- **Children ages 2-4 must use a car seat with a harness (rear or forward facing)**, according to state law, but best practice is to keep a child harnessed until they can remain sitting properly in a booster seat 100% of the time. Most kids aren't ready for a booster, either high back or no back boosters, until they are closer to 6 years old.

- State law also requires all **children to remain in a booster seat until they are at least 4'9" tall and fit the seatbelt correctly**, which is usually around 10-12 for most kids. To fit a seatbelt correctly, your child must do these 5 things:



- Kids belong in the back seat!** Washington state law requires **all children under the age of 13 to ride in the back seat of the car**. This protects the child from the front air bag, which can be very dangerous or even deadly in a crash for young kids.

Safe Driving for Teens:

- Emphasize safe driving practices for your teen and communicate consequences, consider using a contract like [this one](#) available from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics
- Talk to your teen about the top risks for car crashes: distracted driving, speeding, late night driving, impairment, and seat belt use. Learn more about these risks at www.t-driver.com
- Have your teen download the [You in the Driver's Seat app](#), which reinforces and rewards safe driving.

When Kids are Walking or Rolling to School:

- If riding a bike or scooter always wear a [properly fitted helmet](#), bright clothing, and bike lights.
- Look left, right, and left again at all intersections, and obey all stop signs and red lights.
- If walking to school, always walk on the sidewalk, but if there isn't one, then walk on the left side of the street, as far from cars as possible.
- Make eye contact with people driving before crossing.
- Walk your bike across busy streets.
- Remember! Pay attention! Focus on the road and look out for kids walking or rolling to school.

Resources:

- Meet with a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician for a car seat check. Find a local CPST at cert.safekids.org or [attend a local car seat check event](#).

- Learn more about car seat safety a www.wacarseats.org
- Stay safe while bicycling with these King County resources: [Bike helmets and bicycle safety - King County, Washington](#)
- [Download a list of free or low-cost bike helmet providers](#)

Stay safe and have a wonderful school year!

Sincerely,

Your King County Target Zero Traffic Safety team



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