

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **Health Department urges families to participate in Bike to School Day on May 6**

**(Lawrence, KS)** – The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department encourages students to walk or bike to school May 6 in celebration of National Bike to School Day. Walking and bicycling to school enables children to incorporate the regular physical activity they need each day while also forming healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

Regular physical activity helps children build strong bones, muscles and joints, and it decreases the risk of obesity. “The research is pretty clear that kids who walk and bike to school are more active. They will be healthier and perform better in school,” said Community Health Director Chris Tilden.

When more students bike and walk to school, it reduces traffic congestion which increases safety. It also can improve air quality. When walking or biking, parents and children get an opportunity to bond and appreciate things they don’t notice while driving — listening to the sounds of the neighborhood, seeing friends and neighbors and feeling connected with their community.

Arlo Fahy, a fifth-grader at Pinckney School, rides his bicycle to school nearly every day. “It’s really fun. I like to take different routes and explore the neighborhood,” he said. His mom, Elizabeth Fahy, said she believes her son has gained responsibility and a sense of freedom.

The Health Department along with Lawrence Public Schools and the City of Lawrence launched a Safe Routes to School program in September 2014. As part of the program, Pinckney School is organizing a Bicycle Train for May 6. Riding bicycles, parents will lead students along four routes to school. “The Bike Train will create a safe and fun way for students to ride as a group, and hopefully, it will encourage more of them to ride throughout the year,” Principal Kirsten Wondra said.

Bike to School Day also is a day to celebrate people — crossing guards, parents and school staff members — who help students safely walk and bike to school. Health Promotion Specialist Rebecca Garza said, “As we remove the danger of cars near the school, keep the air clear for young lungs and reinforce healthy habits in our children, we can ensure a healthy, vibrant community.”