



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 16, 2023

Introducing – RoadSMARTS4Kids! A digital library of free educational resources to help teach kids about road safety.

Ottawa, Ontario:

Seventeen children ages 0 to 14 years were killed in pedestrian incidents in Canada in 2020. On average, there are around 1,000 child pedestrians struck each year. Children between the ages of 1-14 years have the highest incidence of bicycle injury hospitalization as compared to any other age group (Parachute Canada, 2022).

Every one, of all ages, uses the roads on a daily basis, and being safe on our shared roads is an important life skill that children need to start developing from a young age, and reminded of frequently, to keep themselves safe.

Currently, there is very little emphasis on teaching kids road safety skills from a young age – both across the Province and Nationally. While there is no official count of walking and wheeling training participation in the province, estimates show that of the current programs that do exist, they are reaching less than 2% of Ontario's school children each year (Green Communities Canada, 2022).

For over a decade, the Ottawa Safety Council has been delivering in-school road safety education across elementary schools across the City of Ottawa. However, because of the pandemic brought on by COVID 19, the Ottawa Safety Council (OSC) could no longer deliver its in-school WalkSafe presentations as of March 2020. As such, the OSC pivoted its elementary school-based, road safety programming to create a digital platform – RoadSMARTS4Kids (RS4K). This platform addresses the widespread lack of road safety teaching resources to assist elementary educators. The OSC's RS4K platform also provides the opportunity for schools, teachers, and parents outside of Ottawa to gain access to their road safety educational resources!

"We are lucky here in Ottawa that the Municipality recognizes the importance of this and funds the Ottawa Safety Council's WalkSafe program, where presenters go into the schools to teach kids from JK- Grade 6 on how to be safe pedestrians. But we are an anomaly and we are often approached by other municipalities, educators, and public health units that would like to use our resources, as they do not currently have such a program." – Jamie Kwong, Executive Director, Ottawa Safety Council

With support from Transport Canada, the Ottawa Safety Council has created a library of digital resources that assist educators and parents in making road safety fun, engaging, and relevant to children's real world experience, helping them understand other road users perspectives and imparting the message that everyone shares the roads and deserves to get where they are going safely.

The [Ottawa Safety Councils RoadSMARTS4Kids \(RS4K\) library of resources](#) contains “turn-key” educational resources for use by teachers, educators and parents, in both English and French. The lessons align with Ministry curriculum requirements and are free, easy-to-use, and cover a variety of age-appropriate road safety teachings with respect to pedestrian, cycling, and passenger safety. Through downloadable lesson plans, presentations, videos, worksheets, activities, challenges, and e-learning courses, teachers and parents can prepare children to be alert and use safe and good judgement as they start using the road more independently.

“We are excited to launch our [RoadSMARTS E-cademy](#) where students will meet Blinker, who is from the Planet Zero! On Planet Zero, no one gets hurt while using the roads, whether walking, biking, or driving in their space cars. Teachers and parents can enroll their students in the RoadSMARTS E-cademy and Blinker will lead them through a suite of eight fun, educational, interactive, and “gamified” e-learning courses and quizzes. We believe that road safety education delivered in an easy and engaging manner helps create more responsible users down the road,” Kelly Banks, Director of Programs, Ottawa Safety Council.

We can all do better at preparing children with the skills and awareness they need to navigate our roads safely. Teachers and parents are encouraged to visit www.ottawasafetycouncil.ca/rs4k to start using the RoadSMARTS4Kids resources today!

For more information on the RoadSMART4Kids initiative, please visit our digital media kit [here](#).

About the Ottawa Safety Council

The Ottawa Safety Council (OSC) is a not-for-profit organisation offering best-in-class road safety programs and services to the residents of Ottawa, including its M1 and M2 motorcycle licensing programs and its municipal Adult School Crossing Guard services across 260+ locations in Ottawa. Founded in 1957, the OSC is a well-established leader in safety education and awareness. This year also marks many key milestones for the OSC, including its 65th anniversary of operation, its 55th year of offering its popular [Motorcycle Training Program](#), and its 20th year of providing the City of Ottawa with municipal Crossing Guard services. The OSC is always hiring community-minded individuals to join the OSC Team of Crossing Guards! To learn more, click [here](#).

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