

# SAFETY ON THE ROAD

## Protecting Children In The Dark

(NAPSA)—As the days get shorter, it will get dark even earlier. More children will be traveling home from school and other activities in the dark, which puts them at greater risk of injuries from traffic crashes. Children are most likely to be hit by a car when they are close to home, at mid-block locations, between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. Most often, the child darts into the street.

### What Parents Can Do

First, help children learn and practice an important safety rule: **Be Seen to Be Safe.** During the day and at dawn and dusk, children should wear bright or fluorescent clothing. Colors such as day-glo green, hot pink, or construction worker orange amplify light and help the wearer stand out in a crowd.

At night, however, these colors appear to be black. So if children will be out after dark, they should carry a flashlight and/or wear retroreflective gear that reflects light back to its source so motorists can see them. A motorist will quickly detect a child walking with a lit flashlight, or riding on a bike with an attached headlight and flashing taillight. And when combined with retroreflective gear or strips of retroreflective tape on their jacket, shoes, cap, helmet, or backpack, a child's odds of being seen are even more improved. The sooner motorists are alerted to something—like a child moving up ahead—the sooner they can react.

Next, remind children to “stop, look left-right-left, and listen” before crossing the street, even when there is a traffic signal. Also, remind kids to avoid jay-



**As it gets dark earlier, motorists must be more aware of children walking or bicycling home from school or activities.**

walking and “jaybiking,” and crossing streets from between parked vehicles. Crosswalks are safer and more visible, especially after dark.

### What Motorists Can Do

Motorists must be alert and pay special attention to safe driving rules in low-light conditions. Watch carefully for children who may be walking or riding their bikes. Always drive at a safe speed, especially on unlit or winding roads, or when using low beams.

To help increase your ability to see at night, be sure to take off your sunglasses at dusk. Wipe off your headlights regularly, and keep your windshield clean, both inside and out. Adjust the rear-view mirror to the “night” setting to avoid headlight glare. If you need to use your high beams on an unlit road, be sure to turn them off when another car approaches.

You can learn more safety tips online at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury).