

Transportation Social



WHAT IS A TRANSPORTATION SOCIAL?

A transportation social is a simple annual event that helps parents and caretakers connect and build friendships with one another, while giving students a great platform for socializing outside the classroom. They also deliver a safe alternative to walking long distances to and from school, easing worries for working parents and caretakers who aren't able to pick their children every day.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

A transportation social is, first and foremost, social. It's an opportunity to meet with other families from your school in a relaxed environment to find solutions to common transportation issues affecting many families. By working together, you not only build a stronger sense of community, but you can also reduce congestion in pick-up and drop-off areas, ensure fewer pedestrian hazards around the school, and allow for more efficient allocation of parking resources.

PLANNING THE EVENT

ORGANIZING A TRANSPORTATION SOCIAL IS RELATIVELY SIMPLE:

1. Make sure your community wants/needs a transportation social.

To be sure this meeting will be productive and provide useful results, get buy-in from the school Principal and PTA/O before planning.

2. Get some help.

Once you have the support of the administration, start building a network of interested parties. You're likely to find other interested parents and caretakers at PTA meetings, community gatherings, and out and about in your neighborhood.

3. Plan early.

Transportation socials are best held in the beginning of the school year when many parents are figuring out how to get their kids to school and home. Parents and caretakers who are new to the school are especially eager to connect and a transportation social is a great way to bring folks together.

4. Consider piggybacking.

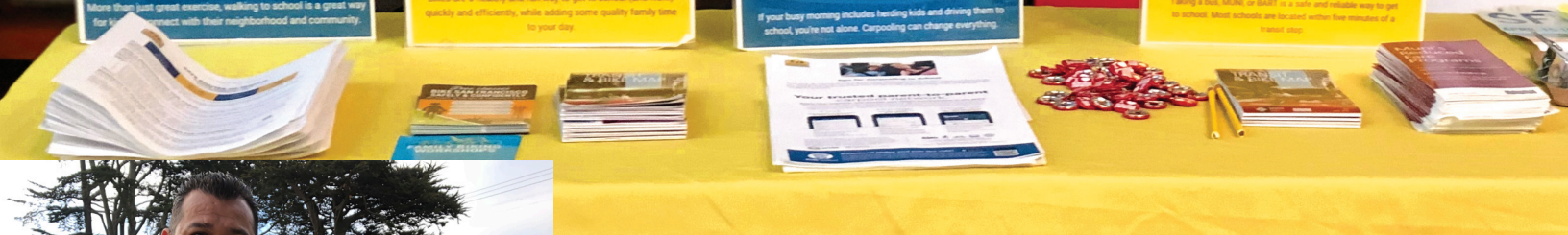
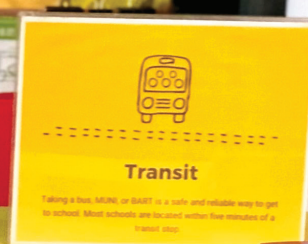
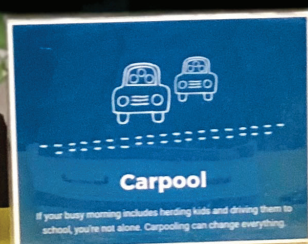
One way to make your gathering easy and accessible is to pair it with an event that is already planned for the beginning of the school year. However, if you do want to do a stand-alone event, be sure to set a date that doesn't conflict with other back-to-school activities.

5. Get interactive!

To make your social more engaging, you might consider finding partners from the community who could set up a table at your event and possibly bring swag and transportation information. Some potential partners might be:

- San Francisco Safe Routes to Schools
- SFMTA
- San Francisco Department of the Environment
- Bay Area Air Quality
- Earth Day Every Day
- Spare the Air





HOSTING THE EVENT

USE THIS HELPFUL CHECKLIST ON THE DAY OF YOUR EVENT:

1. Set up the tables or chair groupings by neighborhoods and encourage families to sit at a table based on where they live.

The idea is to get families who live close to each other to get to know each other and share their transportation stories and concerns.

Try having a facilitator for each table to make sure families are interacting with each other and having fun.

2. Have sign-in sheets & surveys and pens/pencils at each table

You can also have feedback forms to see how your event went.

3. Place tables for your invited vendors alongside the wall.

When families walk in they can stop at the tables and pick up transportation information. It's also a good idea to have thank you cards for your vendors.

REMEMBER THE KEY WORD IN THIS EVENT: SOCIAL!

It's important to keep the event loose and informal so that attendees are comfortable to chat with others and raise questions. Encourage interaction wherever possible.



Consider giving away small, inexpensive door prizes or simple incentives to reward those who volunteer for activities at the meeting.



Take pictures and try to get them included in your school newsletter/webpage/FB. You might even create a special backdrop or prop to encourage photo taking.



Everything is better over food and coffee! Plus some healthy snacks and water for the kids if possible, keeping allergies and sugar content in mind.

