

Carpooling to School Has Benefits

For many families, the school year is a very busy time. Between making lunches and taking the children to and from school, it may feel like you're always in a hurry.

But weekdays can be more manageable if you share the school driving responsibilities with other families, otherwise known as "carpooling."

What is carpooling?

Carpooling is a type of ride-sharing that allows busy people to take turns with other neighborhood parents. Carpooling helps you:

- Save time and money.
- Minimize the wear and tear on your car.
- Reduce traffic during peak hours.
- Get to know other parents and community members.

Choosing carpool drivers

- Share the idea of carpooling with responsible parents also interested in participating.
- Try to make sure that participating drivers have cars that are in good condition and all valid documents (registration, insurance, etc.).
- Figure out how many children can safely ride in the car, depending on its capacity.
- Keep the phone number and address of each parent in case of emergencies.

Recommendations for drivers

- Leave your house early, with enough time to pick up all the children on time.
- Have children under age 13 sit in the back seat, and make sure they wear their seatbelts. In South Carolina, children younger than 8 years old or less than 57 inches tall must ride in a booster or car safety seat.
- Before driving to school, make sure that all the car doors are closed properly and use the child safety locks if your car has them.
- Never leave children alone in the car, not even for a minute.

Advice for driving in school zones

- Drive slowly when you're in a school zone and always obey the speed limit.
- When driving behind a school bus, make sure to stop when the red lights flash. Never try to pass a bus.
- Try not to block or park in front of the school entrance or exit.
- Drop off the children in specified loading/unloading zones. Wait until you see them go into school before leaving. Notify the teacher who will be picking up the children after school each day.

Sources: <https://kids.usa.gov/parents/get-involved/carpooling/index.shtml>
http://www.buckleupsc.com/safety_seat_law.asp