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National Walk Safely to School Day step in the right direction

Walking is Australia's number one physical activity, but Sport Australia CEO Kate Palmer says Aussie kids need to do more to help super-charge their health, wellbeing and learning.

Palmer describes 'National Walk Safely to School Day' on May 17 as a great initiative and shares the goal of event organisers, the Pedestrian Council of Australia, to make walking an everyday activity for children.

"Let's not hide from the fact Australia has an inactivity crisis, so it's vital for the health and future of our nation that we help our children find any opportunities to be more active," Palmer says.

"Data shows 81 per cent of children are not achieving the recommended physical activity guideline of one hour a day. A quarter of Australia children are obese and it will only get worse if we don't intervene now.

"Walking is a simple, accessible and effective way to get children active, but also to help super-charge their learning. It's well researched that sport and physical activity play a positive role in children's educational achievement, helping improve their cognitive development and attention at school."

Palmer is encouraging parents and grandparents to use National Walk Safely to School Day as an exercise to kick-start healthy habits in families.

"Every parent encourages their children to take their first step, let's keep that encouragement going as they continue to grow-up. Maybe consider walking to school together when you can.

"Escape the chaotic school drop-offs and spend some quality time walking with your kids or grandkids to and from school, or park the car a few blocks away and walk part of the way. It's good for children, parents and the environment."

Palmer says "it's critical that we keep growing sport and physical activity in schools too".

Sport Australia manages the national Sporting Schools program which provides free and fun activities for children.

"Sport Australia launched the Sporting Schools program almost four years ago and it has now funded almost 7300 schools, providing fun and free ways to get children moving.

"A child's development years are so influential. If we can introduce more children to sport and physical activity then we are putting them on the path to healthier, happier lives."

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