



Department of
Education



SmartSteps

A ROAD SAFETY PROGRAM FOR EDUCATORS
WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN THE EARLY YEARS

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Smart Steps: Making safer choices –
Taking smarter steps



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TRIM: D26/0522240

ISBN: 978 0 7307 4697 3

SCIS: 5575208

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These resources are delivered by the Department of Education under the School Drug Education and Road Aware (SDERA) program. The SDERA program is funded by the Road Safety Commission through the Road Trauma Trust Account and by the Mental Health Commission to deliver road safety and alcohol and other drug education across the Western Australian education sector and systems. The program is supported by Catholic Education Western Australia and the Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia.



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SMART STEPS: MAKING SAFER CHOICES – TAKING SMARTER STEPS

WHY TEACH PEDESTRIAN SAFETY?

It is important for children's health and fitness, and their ability to get around their community independently later in life. Being a pedestrian however can be dangerous, especially for children who have not yet developed the skills to navigate the road safely (Hobday & Meuleners, 2018).

Of children who died because of a road transport accident, 29% were pedestrians (AIHW, 2019). Driveway run-overs are a significant problem in child road injuries, particularly in younger children aged under five years old. Tragically one child, often a toddler, is run over in the driveway every week in Australia (CARRS-Q, 2011).

To navigate roads safely, pedestrians require a range of cognitive skills which are not fully developed in young children impacting their ability to:

- Focus attention on important cues, such as approaching vehicles
- Process information efficiently to make informed decisions
- Identify safe gaps in traffic
- Choose a safe location to cross (Hobday & Meuleners, 2018).

Additionally, their small stature can make it harder for oncoming vehicles to see young children between parked cars and shrubbery (Schwebel, Davis, & O'Neal, 2012).

ABOUT THE RESOURCE

Smart Steps explores:

- Child car restraints and general passenger safety
- Safe pedestrian practices
- Safe places to play
- Safety on wheels
- Strategies to embed road safety education into the curriculum.

Smart Steps aims to:

- Enhance educators' understanding of the developmental capabilities of young children in the traffic environment
- Focus on the key messages to teach children so that they can remain safe in the traffic environment
- Provide a range of teaching and learning strategies educators can use with children to build their road safety knowledge and skills.

The resource includes activities that are suitable for children in the early years. They can be used in a variety of environments including:

- Within a classroom environment
- In an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) centre with individual children or a small group of children
- As activities for a playgroup
- By parents and carers in the home.

The activities can be adapted for age-appropriateness and also to meet varying developmental needs.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2019). Australia's children: Injuries. Retrieved July 25, 2025, from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/australias-children/contents/health/injuries>

CARRS-Q. (2011). State of the road: Driveway runovers fact sheet. Retrieved from: <https://media.nrspp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/06022151/driveway-runovers-fs.pdf>

Hobday, M., & Meuleners, L. (2018). Child and adolescent pedestrians and cyclists in Western Australia: How safe are they? Curtin-Monash Accident Research Centre.

Schwebel, D. C., Davis, A. L., & O'Neal, E. E. (2012). Child pedestrian injury: A review of behavioral risks and preventive strategies. University of Alabama at Birmingham, Department of Psychology.



KEY MESSAGES AND LEARNING INTENTIONS

STOP, LOOK, LISTEN and THINK before crossing the road.

STOP – when a parent or adult calls out to stop. You **MUST** do this straight away.

LOOK – for traffic approaching from **ALL** directions. Look for the safest place to cross the road and **ONLY** cross when safe.

LISTEN – in **ALL** directions for sounds of approaching traffic.

THINK – is it safe to cross?

ALWAYS hold the hand of a trusted adult when on or near roads.

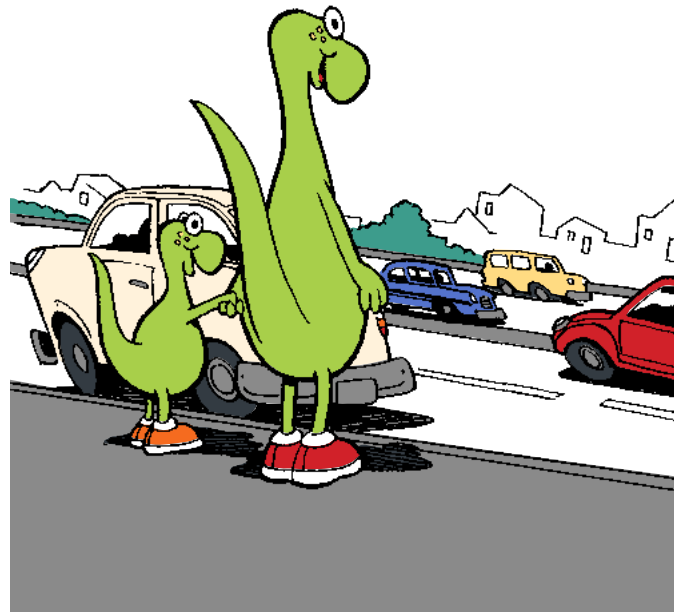
Use the safety spot when cars are moving in and out of the driveway.

Share pathways with others by keeping left.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

We are learning to:

- explain the importance of holding hands when we are on or near roads, in car parks or other traffic environments
- demonstrate STOP, LOOK, LISTEN and THINK
- identify safe places to cross the road
- explain what the safety spot is and identify safety spot locations
- demonstrate how to use a shared pathway safely with others by keeping left.





HOLDING HANDS

Activity

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

Walking rhyme

- Children gently 'walk' their fingers up their arm, over their head, and down their other arm.

Hand is walking

Hand is walking, (Children walk their fingers up their arm)

Hand is walking,

Walking up and over the top, (Children walk their fingers over their head)

Hand is walking, (Children walk their fingers back down their arm)

Hand is walking,

And now hand has to STOP! (Hold fingers still on their tummy.)

Songs about holding hands

- Children listen, move or sing to the Pedestrian safety song, *The hold my hand rap*.
- Encourage children to use body percussion and any movements suggested in the songs.
- If there's enough room, encourage children to move around the room holding hands while singing the following songs together.

Resources

Pedestrian safety song:

- The hold my hand rap (p.g. 15)
- Musical instruments for making noise



HOLDING HANDS

Activity

If you want to cross the road

(To the tune of *If you're happy and you know it*)

*If you want to cross the road hold my hand,
If you want to cross the road hold my hand,
If you want to cross the road,
Here's something you should know
If you want to cross the road hold my hand.*

Hold hands tightly

(To the tune of *Frère Jacques*)

*Hold hands tightly,
Hold hands tightly,
With your Mum (substitute other adults in following verses),
With your Mum,
When you go out walking,
When you go out walking,
Hold hands tight, yes that's right!*

INDOOR PLAY

Drawing

- Give children a range of drawing materials to create a picture of themselves crossing the road holding an adult's hand.
- When children have finished drawing, they can work independently or with support to write 'hands are for holding' on their picture.

Hand shapes

- Working independently or with support, children are to trace around their hand on a piece of paper. Discuss who can hold their hand in traffic and write the name of five adults on the hand outline – one on each finger and one on the thumb.
- Children can add colour or draw faces for each name.

Resources

- Drawing materials (e.g. paper, textas, crayons and pencils)
- Drawing materials (e.g. paper, textas, crayons and pencils)



HOLDING HANDS

Activity

OUTDOOR PLAY

Making a road

- Set up a road in a clear, flat area either by using a sheet of black plastic or laying down ropes or hoses.
- Children can practise crossing the road holding hands with an adult.
- Talk to children about other adults (known to the child) who can hold their hand and help them cross roads.
- Use this time to also practise Stop, Look, Listen and Think before crossing a road.

Questions to ask

*When we get to the edge of the road what do we need to do?
Why do we do this?*

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Picture talk

- Use *Discussion photo: Hands are for holding* to talk to children about the importance of always holding an adult's hand near roads.

Questions to ask

*Why do we need to hold an adult's hand when we are crossing the road, in a car park or walking on the footpath?
What could happen if we don't?
If we can't hold an adult's hand, what else could we hold?*

Izzy in the City

- Read the storybook, [Izzy in the City](#).
- Use the pictures to discuss the key messages from the book.
- Use the questions in the back of the book to discuss key road safety messages.

Izzy videos (all ages)

- Watch the Izzy videos that relate to your context and discuss key safety messages.
- [Izzy's guide to crossing the train tracks in a rural area](#)
- [Izzy's guide to crossing the train tracks in a metropolitan area](#)
- [Izzy's guide to crossing the road in a rural area](#)
- [Izzy's guide to crossing the road in a metropolitan area](#)

Resources

- Ropes, hoses or black plastic

- Discussion photo: Hands are for holding

- Izzy in the City – order through rsde.rfa@education.wa.edu.au

- Full list of Izzy videos available on [Education Resources](#)



STOP!

Activity

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

When the music stops

- Invite the children to move/dance around the space while the music is played.
- When the music or song stops, encourage the children to adopt a frozen position and to remain in that position until the music starts again.
- Continue to play while children's interest is maintained.

Stop right now

- Encourage children to sing the following song while moving around the room. Explain to children that they must stand still as soon as they hear the word 'stop'.

Stop right now

(To the tune of *Three blind mice*)

Stop right now, stop right now,
When you hear me call, when you hear me call,
At the side of the road or out on the street
Make sure you stop and don't move your feet
It keeps you safe so do as I say
And stop right now!

Questions to ask

Why do you need to *STOP* straight away when an adult tells you to?

Resources

- Any music that the children like



STOP!

Activity

INDOOR PLAY

Stop on the spot

- Mark out an area for children to move within.
- Ask children to walk or skip around inside the designated area until they hear the word STOP. Tell children that STOP means stand still as quickly as possible.
- Repeat the activity with children moving in different ways and speeds to enable them to understand why it is easier to stop when moving slowly.

Questions to ask

Show me what you look like when you have 'stopped'.

Is it hard to stop straight away when you are skipping very fast?

Why might adults ask you to stop when you are near cars, buses or trucks?

Is it a good idea to run along the footpath?

What about in car parks or across the road?

- Repeat the activity using a STOP sign. Tell children to skip around the area. When the STOP sign is held up high children must stop as quickly as possible. This encourages children to 'look' as well and 'think' and 'act' safely.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Picture talk

- Use *Discussion photo: Crossing the road* to talk with children about the importance of stopping back from the kerb when deciding if it is safe to cross the road.
- Remind children of the Stop, Look, Listen and Think process before crossing a road.
- Also ensure children understand that in the traffic environment they need to stop immediately when an adult says 'stop'.
- Use the questions on the back of the discussion photo to stimulate discussion.

Questions to ask

Why do we need to Stop, Look, Listen and Think before crossing the road?

When you stop at the side of the road, what are you looking for?

Who can help you cross the road safely?

Resources

- Markers (e.g. ice cream containers, beanbags, skipping ropes, witches hats)
- Traffic sign pack – order through rsde.rfa@education.wa.edu.au

OR

- Print a 'STOP' road sign

- Discussion photo: Crossing the road



STOP, LOOK, LISTEN, THINK BEFORE YOU CROSS THE ROAD

Activity

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

Crossing the road songs

- Listen to the Pedestrian safety song, *Before we cross the street*.
- Encourage the children to mime the actions for 'look all around', 'listen', 'hold on tight' and 'use our head'.

Traffic light songs and poems

- Hold up an image of a traffic light.
- Encourage children to point to the corresponding colours while singing the song or saying the poem.

Twinkle, twinkle, traffic light

(To the tune of *Twinkle, twinkle, little star*)

*Twinkle, twinkle traffic light,
Standing on the corner bright,
When it's green it's time to go,
When it's red it's stop you know.
Twinkle, twinkle, traffic light,
Standing on the corner bright.*

Traffic light

*Red says STOP.
Green says GO.
Amber says WAIT.
You'd better go slow.
When I reach a crossing place,
To the left and right I turn my face.
I walk, not run, across the street,
And use my head to guide my feet.*

Resources

- Pedestrian safety song: *Before we cross the street* (p.g. 16)
 - Traffic sign pack – order through rsde.rfa@education.wa.edu.au
- OR
- Print a 'traffic light' image



STOP, LOOK, LISTEN, THINK BEFORE YOU CROSS THE ROAD

Activity

INDOOR PLAY

Stop, Look, Listen and Think

- Give each child a copy of *Activity sheet 1: Stop, Look, Listen, Think*.
- Remind them of STOP, LOOK, LISTEN and THINK:
STOP – stand still
LOOK – turning head from left to right
LISTEN – hand to ear turning and looking left and right
THINK – finger to head.
- Ask children to find the matching picture for each step of the strategy as they are discussed and then copy the actions or create their own.
- Children can colour in the activity sheet.
- Create a poster or story using the four steps to safely cross the road and the images in Activity sheet 1.

Alternative activity

- Give each child a copy of *Activity sheet 2: STOP, LOOK, LISTEN, THINK before you cross the road*.
- Children can colour in the picture and tell the teacher who's hand they can hold when crossing the road.

Senses used when crossing the road

- Discuss the body parts and senses used in each of the steps when crossing roads. For example:
 - **feet**: stopping back from the edge of the road
 - **eyes (sight)**: looking and checking traffic
 - **ears (sound)**: listening and sensing traffic noises and direction
 - **brain**: thinking if it is safe to cross
 - **hands (touch)**: holding hands with an adult.
 - **feel**: what can you feel? e.g. vibrations.
- It may help to show *Activity sheet 1: Stop, Look, Listen, Think* (p.g. 17) when talking about the parts of the body.

Actions to do/questions to ask

Show me how you stop before you cross the road with an adult.

Show me how you turn your head to look for traffic.

If you can see a car coming is it safe to cross the road?

What do we use to listen for traffic?

Show me how you cross the road.

Why don't we skip or run across the road?

What do we do when we are crossing the road?

Resources

- Activity sheet 1: Stop, Look, Listen, Think (p.g. 17)
- Activity sheet 2: STOP, LOOK, LISTEN, THINK before you cross the road (p.g. 18)
- Drawing materials (e.g. textas, crayons and pencils)



STOP, LOOK, LISTEN, THINK BEFORE YOU CROSS THE ROAD

Activity

Where's the sound?

- Ask children to sit in a circle with their eyes closed.
- Move quietly around the outside of the circle and give a child a bell to ring.
- Children open their eyes and try to guess who was ringing the bell.
- Highlight the importance of listening to try to determine the direction of traffic (this is an underdeveloped skill in the birth to four year age group and is a development risk in traffic).

Traffic lights

- Hand out *Activity sheet 3: Traffic lights*.
- Point to each light as you read the rhyme from page 11.
- Explain that the red tells traffic to STOP, amber is asking the traffic to PREPARE to stop, and a green light tells the traffic to GO.
- Ask children to join in saying the rhyme.
- Encourage children to colour the lights in correctly. They can use crayons, textas, pencils or coloured cellophane.

Questions to ask

Why do you need to understand what the traffic lights are for?
Where do you see traffic lights?

OUTDOOR PLAY

Practising crossing the road

- Conduct an excursion in a 'real' traffic environment.
- Remember to follow ALL excursion policies and preparation requirements before the excursion begins.
- Remind children how to safely cross the street using the 'Stop, Look, Listen, Think' four steps.

Questions to ask

Where do we stop?
What are we looking and listening for?
What do we need to remember as we are crossing the road?
What are our hands for?

Resources

- Bell or a sound maker (sealed ice cream container filled with a cup of rice or two spoons to tap together)
- Activity sheet 3: Traffic lights (one per child) (p.g. 19)
- Crayons, textas and pencils – red, green and yellow
- Scissors, glue, sticky tape and cellophane



STOP, LOOK, LISTEN, THINK BEFORE YOU CROSS THE ROAD

Activity

Road signs

- Show children the road signs relevant to pedestrians (e.g. stop, children's crossing, pedestrian and don't walk/walk signs).
- Encourage them to tell you about the signs and what they might mean before giving them a simple explanation.
- Place the signs around the wheeled toy/trike track or pathways at the service or area where children can walk and ride safely.
- Encourage children to obey the signs while walking or riding on the paths.

Resources

- Traffic sign pack – order through rsde.rfa@education.wa.edu.au
- OR
- Western Australian road sign images





PEDESTRIAN SAFETY SONG: THE HOLD MY HAND RAP

The hold my hand rap

Words and music by
MELISSA PERRIN

Spoken in a rap style ♩ = 132

Hey, Mum-my, Dad-dy, got a mes-sage for you. If you want to cross the road you've got to know what to do. We stand on the kerb and see if traf-fic is there, and if it's all clear then we can cross with care. But wait! That's not all of my job for you. There's one im - por - tant thing left for you to do. It's real-ly ve-ry ea-sy when you have a go, and I'll sing it ve-ry loud so that you will know.

Chorus

(sung) I said hey! Hey! You've got to hold my hand. I said hey! Hey! Make sure you hold my hand. Now list - en all you grown-ups, I hope you un - der-stand, to cross the road with me you've got to hold my hand. I said hold my hand. To cross the road with me you've got to hold my hand. Yeah!

The hold my hand rap has been reproduced with the kind permission of Roads Corporation t/as VicRoads 2001 and Melissa Perrin.



PEDESTRIAN SAFETY SONG: BEFORE WE CROSS THE STREET

Before we cross the street

Words and music by
MELISSA PERRIN

Brightly $\text{♩} = 76$

F

Be - fore we cross the street, what do we need to use? Be -

Gm C7 Gm C7 F C7

fore we cross the street, we need to use our feet. Our feet will

F

stop at the kerb. Spoken: Stop. Stop. Stop at the kerb. Stop. Stop.

Gm C7 Gm C7 1 - 4 5.

Stop at the kerb. Stop. Stop. Our feet will stop at the kerb. Be - safe.

2. Before we cross the street,
What do we need to use?
Before we cross the street,
We need to use our eyes.
Our eyes will look around for traffic.
Look all around.
Look around for trucks.
Look all around.
Look around for bikes.
Look all around.
Our eyes will look around for cars.

3. Before we cross the street,
What do we need to use?
Before we cross the street,
We need to use our ears.
Our ears will listen for traffic.
Listen. Listen.
Listen for buses.
Listen. Listen.
Listen for vans.
Listen. Listen.
Our ears will listen for cars.

4. Before we cross the street,
What do we need to use?
Before we cross the street,
We need to use our hands.
Our hands will hold on tight
Yours. Mine.
Hold on tight.
Yours. Mine.
Hold on tight.
Yours. Mine.
Our hands will hold on tight.

5. Before we cross the street,
What do we need to use?
Before we cross the street,
We need to use our heads.
Our heads will check if it is safe.
Think. Think.
Is it far to cross?
Think. Think.
Is there time to cross?
Think. Think.
Our heads will check if it is safe.

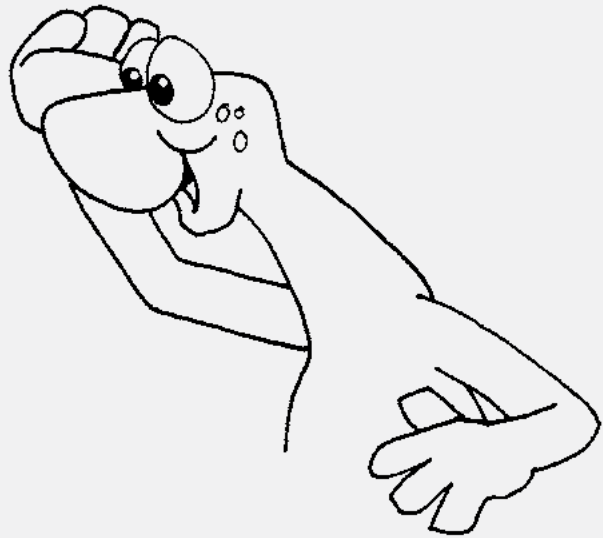
Before we cross the street has been reproduced with the kind permission of Roads Corporation t/as VicRoads 2001 and Melissa Perrin.



ACTIVITY SHEET 1: STOP, LOOK, LISTEN, THINK



Stop



Look



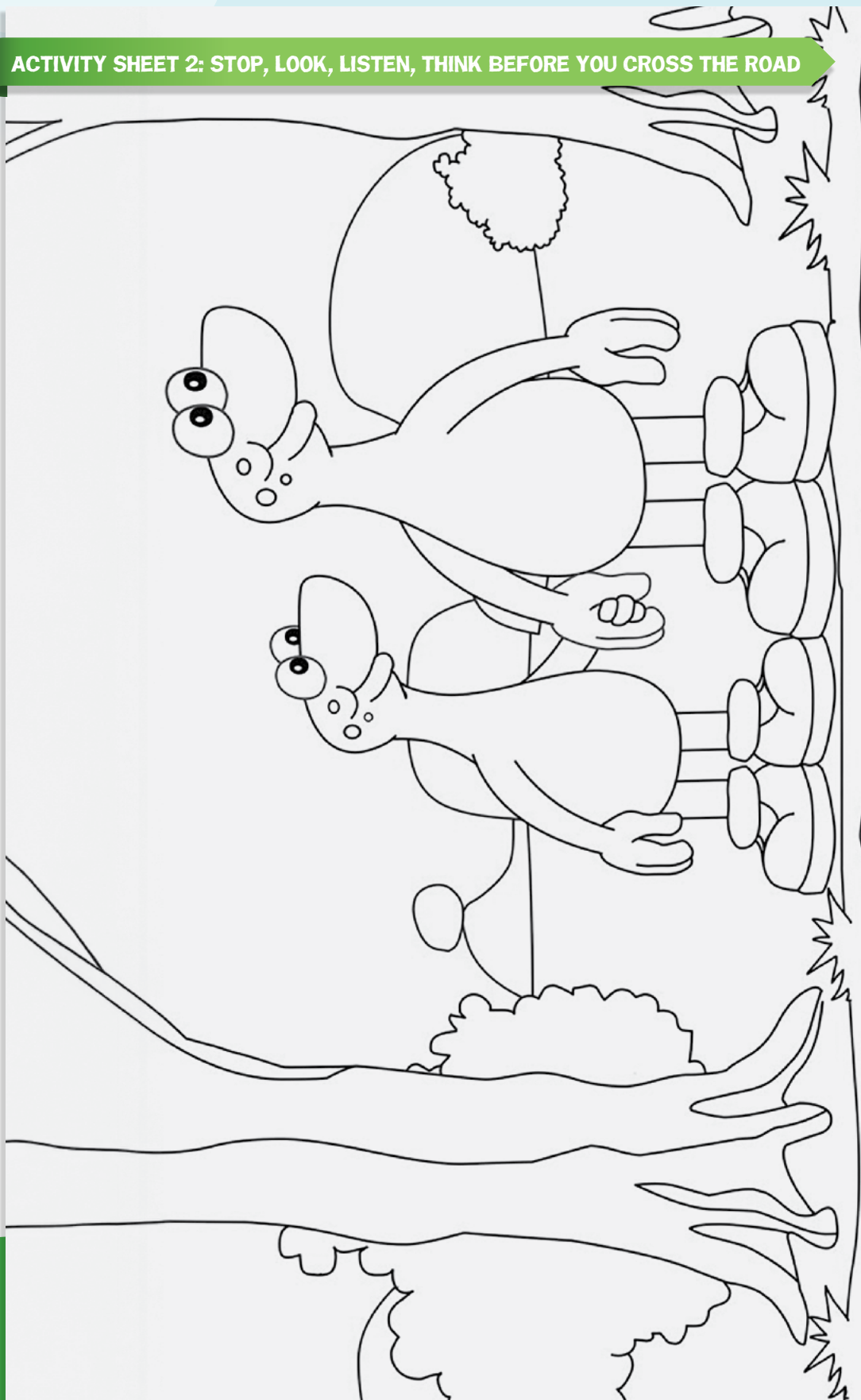
Listen



Think



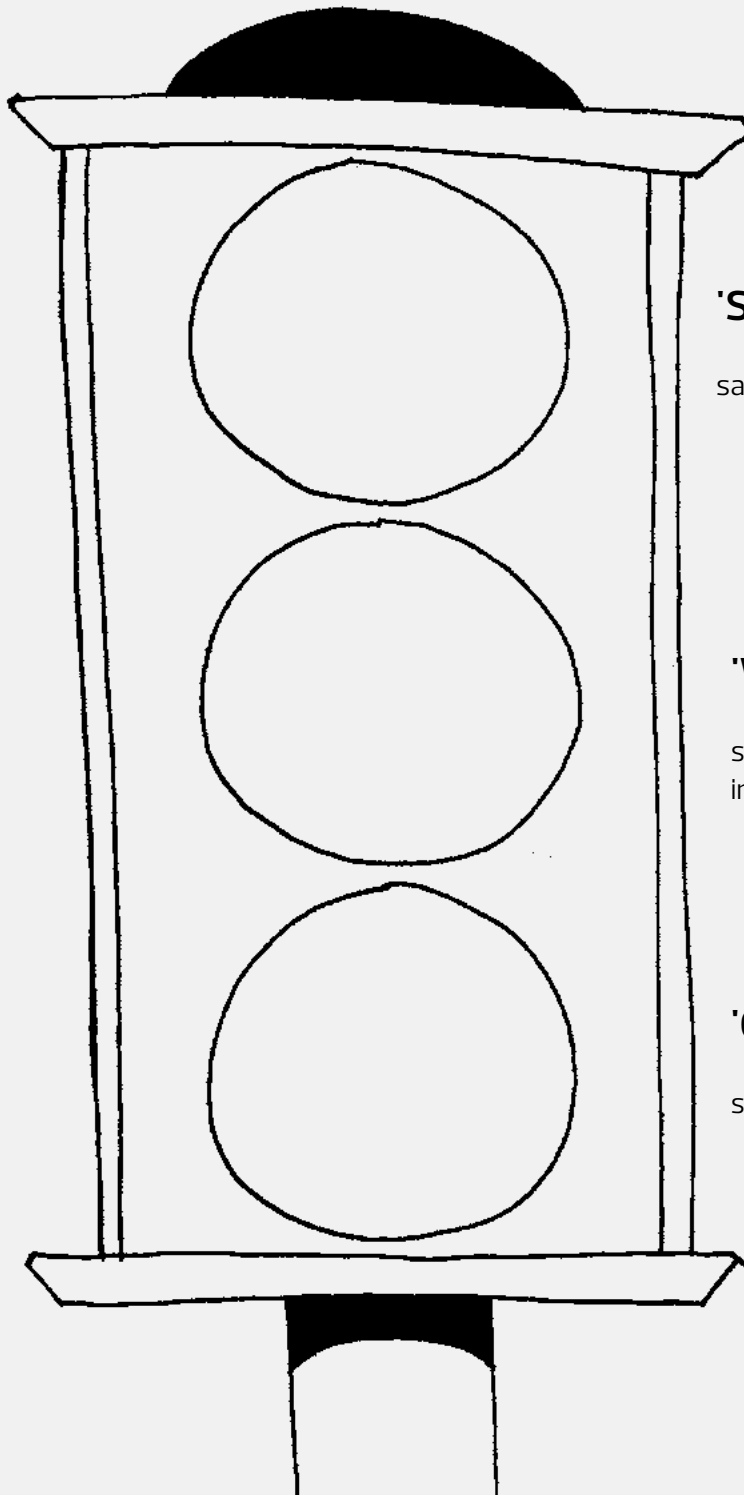
ACTIVITY SHEET 2: STOP, LOOK, LISTEN, THINK BEFORE YOU CROSS THE ROAD



STOP, LOOK, LISTEN, THINK
before you cross the road.



ACTIVITY SHEET 3: TRAFFIC LIGHTS



'Stop'

says the red light.

'Wait'

says the amber light, coming
in between.

'Go'

says the green light.

