



Title: **It'stime forschool, and being alert**
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It's time for school, and being alert

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Now that a new school year has started, the Illinois Insurance Association, a state property casualty trade organization, and its member companies, encourage motorists to drive carefully in the coming weeks.

Crashes involving children are most common between go-to-school and get-back-home hours. Use extra caution when driving between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. on school days.

Be alert to school buses. Children may need to cross the road when getting on or off the bus. Never pass a stopped school bus from either direction unless you are on the opposite side of a divided highway. Slow down in rural areas where higher speeds are often allowed. Watch for walkers and bicycle riders. Children are unpredictable and may dart into the roadway from

between parked vehicles. Reduce speed when children are nearby.

Keep an eye out for beginning motorists. Inexperienced drivers are vulnerable to making mistakes behind the wheel.

Commit to avoiding distractions each time you slide into the driver's seat. Illinois law prohibits the use of cellphones in school zones, but motorists lose focus for many other reasons. Keep hands on the steering wheel, eyes on the roadway, and concentrate only on the task at hand.

Other tips to avoid injuring children on their way to and from school: Obey the speed limit – especially in designated school zones; follow crossing guard instructions; never block crosswalks; respect school drop-off and pick-up rules for students.

Protect Illinois children by making school traffic safety a priority.

Note to readers: Kevin J. Martin is executive director at the Illinois Insurance Association.