

Children who commute to school unaccompanied have greater autonomy and decision-making ability

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The authors of the study at the facilities of the Faculty of Sport Science, University of Granada. From left to right: Emilio Villa, Manuel Herrador and Palma Chillón. Credit: University of Granada

Researchers from the University of Granada (UGR) have proven that children who actively commute to school (that is, walking or cycling) without adults accompanying them have better safety perceptions and autonomy. The research is fostered by an initiative from Granada's provincial government and its Department of Environment with the goal of promoting safe and healthy ways of going to school.

The results appear in a [scientific paper](#) published by Manuel Herrador Colmenero, Emilio Villa González and Palma Chillón, professors at the UGR Department of Physical Education and Sport and members of the research group PROFITH.

A total of 745 schoolchildren, whose ages ranged from six to 12 years, participated in this study by answering a questionnaire. They reported whether they went to school accompanied by an adult or not, how they traveled, and their perception about the safety of the route.

The research shows that children above 10 to 12 years are more likely to commute to school unaccompanied and in an active way. This not only improves their perception about the safety of the route, but also their autonomy, their self-confidence and their decision-making ability with respect to their way of commuting to school.

Moreover, [active commuting](#) is a source of [physical activity](#) for children and favors a healthier lifestyle. Researcher Manuel Herrador says, "This increases physical activity and cardiovascular health in children that commute actively, especially in those that go cycling." Another line of research is analysing the cognitive and academic performance improvement that active commuting may confer.

More information: Manuel Herrador-Colmenero et al, Children who commute to school unaccompanied have greater autonomy and perceptions of safety, *Acta Paediatrica* (2017). [DOI: 10.1111/apa.14047](https://doi.org/10.1111/apa.14047)

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