

## back-to-school safety tips

FROM MICHAEL T. GIBSON, P.A.

By Attorney Michael T. Gibson



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As summer draws to a close and children return to school, the roads can become a crowded place. It is important to share the road and drive safely year-round, but this time of year it is even more important to be aware of your surroundings in school zones and residential areas, where children may be present. Be patient. Sharing the road with school buses mean frequent stops and starts and increased traffic congestion. Whether your child walks to school, rides their bike, or takes the school bus, it is important they take the proper safety precautions.

At the law firm of Michael T. Gibson, we want your children to return to school safely and would like to provide the following back-to-school safety tips to help keep children and drivers safe.

#### Walkers:

- Always use crosswalks. One of the most important practices to instill in your children who are walking to school is to cross the street only at designated crosswalks.
- Stick to streets with sidewalks.
- Walk with a group of friends.
- Stay alert and avoid walking while talking on the phone, using headphones, or anything else that could be deemed a distraction.
- Before you cross the street, stop, and look left, right, and left again, to see if cars are coming.
- Make eye contact with drivers before crossing the street.
- Review your family's walking safety rules and practice walking to school with your child before the first day.

#### Bike Riders:

- Make sure your child wears a properly fitted helmet and bright clothing.
- Ride on the right side of the road, with traffic and in single file.
- Come to a complete stop before crossing the street; walk bikes across the crosswalk.
- Stay alert and never use electronics while riding- they are distracting.
- Teach your child the rules of the road and practice riding the bike route to school with your child before the first day.

#### Bus Riders:

Parents: Talk to your children about bus safety, and teach your child to play it SAFE.

- Stay five steps away from the curb.
- Always wait until the bus comes to a complete stop, and signals for you to board.
- Face forward after finding a seat on the bus.
- Exit the bus after it stops and look left, then right, then left for cars before crossing the street.

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## aniversario

Por Juan Jose Rodriguez, Abogado de Enlace

Este pasado 10 de julio del 2023, Dios me dio la oportunidad de cumplir 40 años en los Estados Unidos continentales. Además, en agosto del 2023, cumpliré 35 años de estar trabajando en bufetes de abogados.

Cuando llegue a esta nación tenía 24 años. Al no tener conocimiento de lenguaje legal en inglés, tuve que comenzar desde abajo, y le doy gracias a Dios que me permitió pasar por ese proceso. Mi primer trabajo fue en el restaurante Dennis, el que esta localizado cerca de Sea World en Orlando Florida. ¿Se podrían imaginar uno graduado de abogado y lavando platos y limpiando mesas?

Pero la realidad es que no comencé desde el tope, sino que tuve que esperar unos cinco años en lo que llegaba a ejercer lo que había estudiado. Pero mientras tanto fui conductor de camiones de carga, guardia de seguridad, empleado de ensamblaje, entre otros puestos. Pero en cada uno aprendí a hacer lo mejor, y siempre esforzarme a sobresalir en todo lo que tuve la oportunidad de hacer. Unos de los versículos bíblicos que siempre estaba en mi mente se encuentra en **Proverbios 9:10: Todo lo que viniere a la mano para hacer, hazlo según tus fuerzas, porque en el sepulcro adónde vas, no hay obra, ni industria, ni ciencia ni sabiduría.**

Lo irónico es que cuando se me concedió la oportunidad de trabajar en el campo legal, las experiencias de haber comenzado desde abajo me ayudaron a tener más compasión. Además, me instruyeron a identificarme con los sentimientos y episodios de dolor que nuestros clientes se enfrentan en situaciones difíciles. Les deseo recordar, que cuando alguien se contacta con un abogado no es para saludar o charlar sobre la vida, sino es debido a que han tenido un accidente, o se están divorciando, o lo están acusando de un crimen, o tienen problemas económicos y desean declararse en quiebra, en fin, cuando los clientes nos llaman usualmente esta pasando por momentos de crisis.

Pero cuan bueno es cuando uno trabaja en una profesión que le gusta. El estar 35 años en esta carrera me ha dado la oportunidad de ayudar al necesitado y de ayudar a hacer justicia. No se puede explicar el gozo y la satisfacción que uno siente cuando uno puede ayudar a personas en necesidad. Es un sentir inexplicable.

Uno no tiene que trabajar en un bufete o despacho de abogados para sentirse de esta manera. Les insto a trabajar en algo que le guste. Al levantarse en la mañana, en vez de lamentarse y dar vueltas en la cama sin deseos de ir a trabajar o no, por el contrario, uno amanece entusiasmado con la expectativa que va a vivir otro día con nuevas oportunidades de ayudar al prójimo, especialmente aquellos que están en necesidad.

Por último, reconozco que ya estoy llegando a una edad donde el retiro es requerido, pero puedo decir con satisfacción que estoy sumamente agradecido de Dios que me haya dado la oportunidad de poner mi granito de arena de servicio a la comunidad y que solo hice lo que tenía que hacer. **En Lucas 17:10 nos dice: Así también vosotros, cuando hayáis hecho todo lo que se os ha ordenado, decid: Siervos inútiles somos, hemos hecho solo lo que debimos haber hecho.**

Que Dios te continúe bendiciendo. ■

["Back-to-School Safety Tips from Michael T. Gibson, P.A." continued from page 1.](#)

Your child should arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. Florida school buses carry precious cargo—our children. Drivers should always be alert and drive with caution around school buses and in school zones, where children may be present.

As of **January 1, 2021**, the penalties for failure to stop for a school bus have doubled. The penalty for failure to stop for a school bus goes from a minimum \$100 to \$200 and if a second offense is committed in 5 years, the person's license will be suspended for up to 1 year. The penalty for passing a school bus on the side that children enter and exit when the school bus displays a stop signal goes from a minimum of \$200 to \$400 and if a second offense is committed in 5 years, the person's license can be suspended up to 2 years.

#### Driving Your Child to School:

- Obey school zone speed limits and crossing guards.
- Know and follow your school's drop-off procedure.
- Always make eye contact with children who are crossing the street.
- Never pass a bus loading or unloading children.
- The area 10 feet around a school bus is the most dangerous for children; stop far enough back to allow them to safely board and exit the school bus.
- Stay alert and avoid distracted driving. The Wireless Communications While Driving Law, which went into effect on October 1, 2019

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## congrats TO OUR TINY DANCER

By: Attorney Michael T. Gibson

#### From Michael T. Gibson:

This month, we wanted to congratulate our youngest, Emery, on her success in her first year of competitive dance. In our house, with as active as the kids are, Jen takes dance, and I take hockey. Getting the kids to practices, competitions, and games is like having a second full-time job. But it is important to us as parents, that they live their dreams, and do what they love. We are extremely proud of both of them, as they have balanced these activities, while both maintaining straight A grades. And as I said, Jen is the dance mom, so I thought I would let her words tell you about Eme's dance achievements.

#### From Jennifer Gibson:

Our little sunshine Emery has definitely shone bright this year. Emery along with Brady were kept home and in virtual school for 2 years. Poor girl missed 2-3 grade of in person school. She begged us to send her back, and missed interactions with her peers. I also worried daily about this munchkin, and how she'd do. Well Emery too had rave reviews from her two teachers and also made A's this year. She soared in reading this year and made "Rockstar Reader" earning her a pass to a special party at school.

Emery also asked to tryout for a competitive dance team at her dance studio. She made and joined company "N" as they call it. She has worked very, very hard all year, and even asked to sign up for a "solo" dance to perform at competitions. She and her dance team have all worked tirelessly, sometimes every day of the week for several hours at a time. We have finished 4 regional competitions and one National competition, where she placed 14th in the nation for her solo dance. They, as a team have won several categories, and Emery even won first place for her solo in one of the competitions (catching us totally by surprise) .....she is begging me to sign her up for even more dances this next dance season. .... And while I admit it is A LOT of work for this momma. .... How could I say no? I am also so freakin' proud of this girl! ■



["Back-to-School Safety Tips from Michael T. Gibson, P.A." continued from page 1.](#)

prohibits the use of a wireless communications device in a handheld manner while driving in a designated school crossing, school zone, or active work zone area.

Now that it's back-to-school time, kids will be walking, biking, driving, and waiting at bus stops. There will be more pedestrians to watch for and school buses to yield to. We all have a responsibility to prioritize children's safety. As parents, we can best prepare our children for the first day of school by reviewing and modeling the above safety protocols.

*At the Law Firm of Michael T. Gibson, P.A., we hope you and your children have a safe and happy school year!*

#### SOURCES:

- Back-to-School Safety Checklist 2023— National Safety Council (NSC)
- School Bus Safety— Florida Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV)
- Back-to-School: Keeping Children Safe- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) ■

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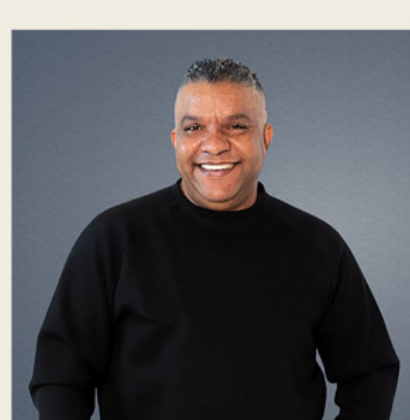


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## THE AUTO JUSTICE COMMUNITY Carlos Duran, M Ed

By: Attorney Michael T. Gibson



Carlos Duran is a Pastor, entrepreneur, teacher, and science coach. He was born in Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic. He studied in New York, where he earned a Bachelor of Science from Manhattan College with board certification in biology, nuclear medicine, and hospital administration. He also has a master's degree in Bilingual Education in Science and Mathematics from Long Island University.

Pastor Duran has over 25 years of experience as a teacher of Science courses, as a supervisor and a pastor. He has been selected teacher of the year twice in Florida. He has been a leader, science coach, pastor, Council President, and Co-founder of a few churches, including Nueva Vida, a congregation that he leads today with his wife, Pastor Maritza Duran for over 12 years. Together, they are the parents of Crystal and Daniel, and live in St. Cloud, Florida. Nueva Vida church feeds hundreds of people weekly and positively impacts the community.

For all that he does to make Central Florida a better place to live, we congratulate and salute Pastor Carlos Duran as our AutoJustice Community Hero of the Month. ■

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