

# How to Teach Your Child to Ride a Bike



You can teach your child to ride a bike, without using training wheels, surprisingly quickly, even if you don't ride. To get started, you'll make a few basic adjustments to your child's bike so they feel comfortable and confident while learning to balance. Then you'll help them gradually improve their balance while rolling, and eventually while pedaling. Your child will be riding in no time!

For a child, learning to ride a bike with the guidance of a parent or other close adult is a memory for a lifetime. Enjoy this special time together! Remain patient and encouraging, and let your child learn at their own pace.

## Fitting your Child's Helmet

It is very important for your child's safety that they always wear a helmet when on their bike, and it's also the law. Make sure it fits right!

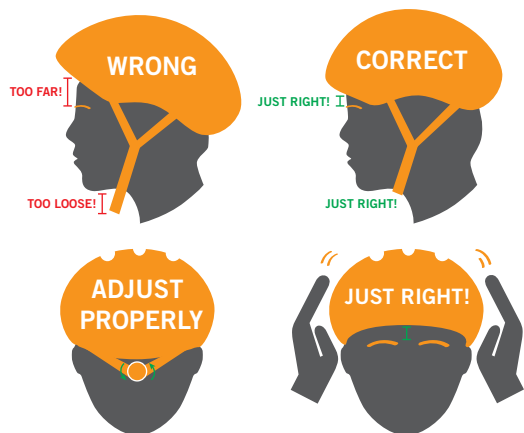
**Eyes:** Your child should be able to see the front edge of the helmet.

- » There should be two finger-widths between your child's eye-brows and the bottom of the helmet.

**Ears:** The intersection of the strap's "Y" should be just under your child's ear lobes.

**Mouth:** The chin strap should fit snugly enough that, when your child opens their mouth wide, the helmet will move.

- » Your child should be able to fit two fingers (and no more) between their chin and the strap.



## Preparing your Child's Bike

Adjust your child's bike so that it's comfortable and easy for them to find their balance!

**Remove training wheels:** Training wheels actually make it harder for your child to find their center of balance.

**Lower the seat height:** Your children should be able to sit on the bike seat with feet flat on the ground. This will help ease their fear of falling.

**Remove both pedals:** By removing the pedals, your child can push off the ground without the pedals interfering. If you do not have a tool to remove the pedals, a bike shop can help you.





## Teaching your Child to Ride

**Location:** Find a safe place near your neighborhood with smooth open pavement and no cars. A very slight slope is helpful for building momentum to glide.

### Step One: Practice Sitting on the Seat and Rolling.

- » Ask your child to put all of their weight on the seat.
- » Stand a few yards away from them and encourage them to roll to you, keeping their full weight on the seat.
- » They might take small steps at first. Encourage them to take bigger and bigger steps.
- » Remind them to look at you in front of them, not down at their bike.

### Step Two: Get familiar with using hand brakes.

- » Most kids will try and stop their bike with their feet before they learn how to use their brakes.
- » Help them break this habit by showing them how much faster you can stop with your brakes than with your feet. Then have them push with their feet and try it for themselves.

### Step Three: Practice the push and glide technique.

- » Once they feel comfortable pushing with a walking motion, have them push with both feet at the same time.
- » The goal is to get them to push and then glide with their feet off the ground for about 10 feet.
- » Encourage them to go faster and farther when it feels comfortable. Remind them to keep watching where they are going and not down at the bike.
- » Stay nearby, but resist holding your child upright while they are learning. It stops them from being able to discover how to balance. Wait until your child takes a break, and then hug them and celebrate.



### Step Four: Add pedals back in

- » Once they are more comfortable balancing, gliding, and stopping with their brakes, it's time to try pedals.
- » After putting the pedals back on, encourage your child to glide and find the pedals with their feet, without looking down. They should try to find the front pedal first.
- » When their feet are on the pedals, encourage them to keep pedaling and moving! Remind them when they want to stop to use their hand brakes.



### Step Five: Pedal Power Push

- » To start pedaling from a stopped position, first determine which foot they will want to start pushing on the pedal and which one they want to use to push off the ground. Usually, if they're left-handed, they'll want to put their left foot on the pedal, etc.
- » Start with the pedaling foot on the pedal at the top of its downward stroke, and the pushing foot on the ground.
- » Have them push off the ground and push down with the pedaling foot at the same time, giving them time to find the other pedal with the pushing foot.