



Explaining how to ride a bicycle

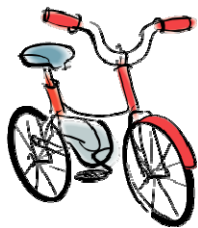
This information sheet aims to help you and your child to learn to ride a bike.

Skill	Teaching tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to put helmet on independently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice fastening the buckle before putting helmet on. • Start with longer strap initially to avoid catching the skin (but tighten this before cycling). • Use of a mirror may help to locate the buckle if this is hard when wearing the helmet.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to hold both handlebars and push bike in a straight line while walking beside it. • Standing on the left hand side (no chain this side). • Look ahead and around to check route is clear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is important in terms of safety for crossing roads. • It helps to start with this to learn how to handle the bike. • Children sometimes stand and walk too close to the bike and fall into it, so give hints to stand further away. • Emphasise the need to LOOK around and LISTEN for safety.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to hold handlebars and push bike round a corner while walking beside it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give guidance to run a large enough circle so that the bike does not lean excessively while turning the circle. • As children become more confident or if space is limited they may be able to hold under the saddle with one hand to lift the back wheel into position. • It is important in terms of safety to learn how to use the brakes before learning how to ride.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to mount bike. • Placing both hands on the handlebars and brakes if necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice getting on and off the bike from the left side holding both handlebars. Use the brakes if the bike moves or you are on a slope.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to dismount. • Keeping both hands on the handlebars, holding the brakes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take right leg over the back wheel, to end up standing on the left hand side.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to scoot on bike sitting on the saddle, not standing up, taking 'walking steps' (pedals removed). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing the pedals makes scooting easier (balance bikes can also be purchased). • This is the start of learning how to balance.

Adapted with kind permission from Northumberland PCT Children's Occupational Therapy Service

Hints on Bike Riding from the Dyspraxia Foundation

- Bumps and bruises can be minimised if the child wears long trousers and shirts with long sleeves.



- Practice at the weekends and during holidays when things are more relaxed and the child is less tired from school.
- Drop the saddle so that the child's feet can rest flat on the ground. This increases feelings of security for children with poor balance.
- It may help to take the pedals off at first, and let the child push the bike with their feet, while their balance and confidence improves. Encourage the child to lift their feet and move a short distance whilst holding their balance.
- It is a little easier for children to balance on bikes with wider tyres.
- If you are helping your child to learn to ride a bike by running along and holding the saddle, make sure you stand a little behind the child. They won't then notice when you let go.
- Stabilisers can be raised gradually. Teach the child to listen to the sound of the "trainer" wheels on the ground: when they can't hear this sound any more then don't need stabilisers.
- Alternatively, remove one trainer wheel until the child becomes confident enough to do without it.
- It is possible to buy special stabilisers to help improve riding balance. The trainer wheels are gradually moved in towards the main wheel so that the base for balancing on is reduced. These are available from Good Designs, 133 Morton Lane, East Morton, KEIGHLEY, West Yorkshire BD20 5RS, Tel: 01274 560400, email: info@gooddesigns.eu. Adjustabilisers can be purchased on their website at www.gooddesigns.eu
- Some families have reported that starting the child off on a gentle slope has helped. The child puts their feet on the pedals while the adult supports the bicycle. The child then "feels" the pedals moving round.

Alternatives to traditional bike riding include:

- Using a 3-wheeler
- Scooters
- Riding a tandem

The Hertfordshire Dyspraxia Foundation Support Group have previously organised bike riding lessons for their members.

<http://dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk/>

