

Riding a Bike

This information sheet provides guidance on how to learn to ride a bike and the skills required.



There are a number of skills that are required to successfully learn how to ride a bike. The two most common bikes for beginners tend to be tricycles and balance bikes. Tricycles provide stability and often come with a push handle that can be used by an adult if the child is not strong or coordinated enough to pedal. Balance bikes are two wheeled bikes that don't have pedals; these involve the child using their feet to scoot along the ground.

Balance bikes allow the child to experience the balance skills required and enable the child to learn at their own speed. **Stabilisers prohibit this 'feel of balance' and the postural adjustments you need to make to stay upright.**

Skill needed	Practical tips for teaching
Putting on and fastening helmet	<p>The child should start by practicing fastening and unfastening the buckle on the helmet when it is not on their head.</p> <p>Having a longer strap to start with will help so that it is not so close to the skin, an adult can help tighten it up before getting on to the bike.</p> <p>Consider using a mirror so the child can see what they are doing.</p>
Steering and braking	<p>Hold on to both handlebars whilst walking alongside bike. Push the bike in a straight line and then around in a corner and other obstacles. This will be easier with a balance bike so the pedals do not get in the way.</p> <p>Start with a large corner so that the bike does not lean too much when turning, this will build the child's confidence in handling the bike. Move onto sharp corners and weaving in and out of obstacles e.g. cones.</p> <p>Encourage the child to find the brake levers and put brakes on and off. Try to create situations where the child may need to use their breaks e.g. walk in front of their path or give the verbal command to break suddenly.</p>
Getting on and off the bike safely	<p>Adjust the height of the seat so that the child is able to put both feet flat on the floor, this is what gives the child confidence. The seat can be raised when the child is ready.</p> <p>Practice getting on and off the bike. Firstly help the child stabilize the bike and then encourage the child to squeeze the breaks as they get on so the bike does not move.</p>

<p>Getting moving using alternate feet and then moving onto scooting while sitting down.</p>	<p>Use an area where the ground is flat and open and encourage the child to push the bike along using alternate feet whilst straddling the bike or sitting on the seat.</p> <p>Encourage the child to use the brakes to get the feeling for stopping.</p> <p>Encourage the child to sit down on the saddle and begin to scoot using both feet at the same time – removing pedals if in situ will make scooting easier. This gives opportunity to ‘feel’ the balance of the bike.</p> <p>Start at the top of a gentle incline. Practice using brakes so that they can build confidence and know that they can stop.</p>
<p>Pedaling</p>	<p>Replace the pedals. Practice pushing the pedals round (stabilisers may be useful at this point to help initially).</p> <p>It may also help to get the child to lay on the floor on their back and practice the pedaling action with their feet in the air so they understand the action required.</p> <p>Start at the top of a slight incline to help gain some momentum, pedaling along a straight or uphill requires more strength and may be difficult initially.</p>
<p>Riding a bike</p>	<p>Now that all the elements have been practiced they can all be put together. If any element is still tricky go back and repeat the relevant stage above.</p>