

Teach A Kid To Ride A Bike



WHY SHOULD KIDS LEARN TO RIDE A BIKE?

Bike riding promotes physical activity, builds confidence, and makes getting to school more fun. Plus, it's commonly reported that teaching a child to ride a bike is one of the most memorable bonding experiences as a parent or caretaker.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO BEFORE WE START?

To get started, you make a few basic adjustments to your child's bike, and make your child feel confident and comfortable while learning to balance.



PREPARING YOUR CHILD'S BIKE

Make your child's bike comfortable and convenient for learning how to balance.

1. Remove training wheels.

Without training wheels, your child can find her/his center of balance.

2. Adjust seat height. Keep it low.

Your child should be able to sit on the bike seat with feet flat on the ground, which lends confidence to kids who are scared of falling over.

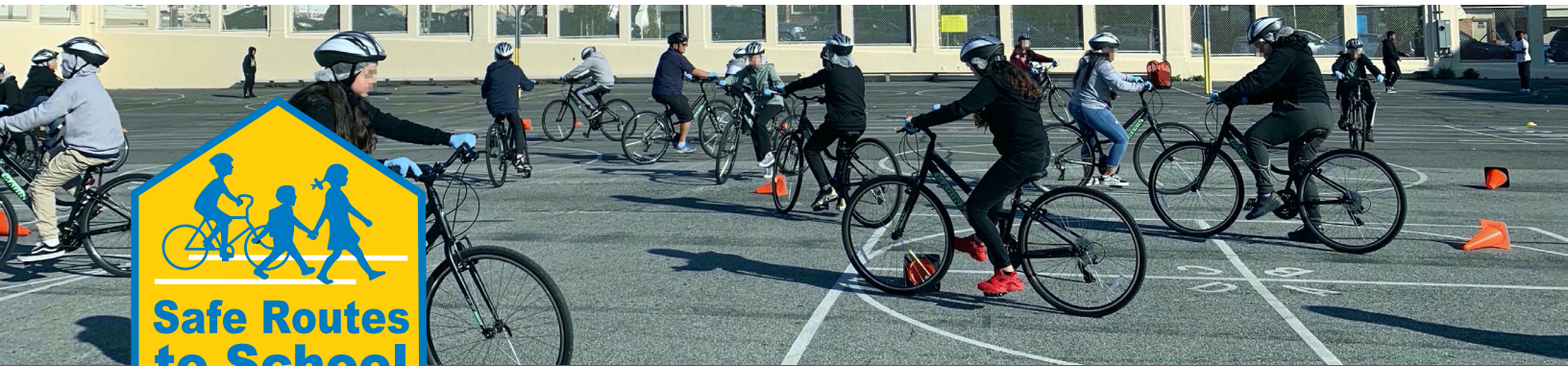
3. Remove pedals (at first).

By removing the pedals, your child will be free to roll the bike without any pedal interference. Once your child is comfortable rolling without pedals, they're ready to learn how to ride.

FITTING YOUR CHILD'S HELMET

It is very important for your child's safety that they always wear a helmet when on their bike. It's also the law. To be sure it fits properly, consider these adjustments:

- **Eyes:** The child should be able to see the front edge of the helmet. To be sure, put 2 fingers between the child's eyebrows and the front edge of the helmet.
- **Ears:** The sliders should be moved up to just under the ear lobes.
- **Mouth:** The chin strap should fit snugly enough that opening the mouth widely will move the helmet. Here again you can use your fingers as a guide—two finger widths should be left between the chin and the strap.



Safe Routes
to School

SAN FRANCISCO



HOW DO I TEACH MY KID?

1. Find the perfect location.



You'll need to find a safe, open place in your neighborhood for your child to practice.



You want a location with smooth pavement and no cars.



An area with a very slight slope is ideal as it's helpful for gliding.

2. Practice Sitting on the Seat and Rolling.

Ask your child to put all of their weight on the seat, then stand a few yards away from them and encourage them to roll to you, keeping their full weight on the seat. Some children take small steps at first, taking bigger steps as they become more comfortable. Remind them to look at you — not down at their bike.

3. 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. One way to break them of this habit is to show 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.

4. Practice the push and glide technique.

It is key to have your child push with both feet at the same time and not in a walking motion, otherwise they will just "walk" around on their bike. The goal is to get them to push and then glide with their feet off the ground for about 10 feet.

5. Find the pedals.

After your child is a bit more comfortable balancing, gliding and stopping with their brakes, it's time to try pedals. Let kids go at their own pace and celebrate their progress. The key is to get them to glide and "find" the pedals with their feet, which means encouraging them to not look down.

6. Add some power.

To start pedaling from a stopped position, first determine which foot they want to put on the pedal and which one they want to push off with. Start with the "pedaling" foot 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.

7. Enjoy it!

No matter how busy your life, never complain about the time it takes to teach them. Be patient. Be understanding. Remember what a big challenge this can be from them. Afterwards, celebrate their accomplishments with a little treat or reward.

A TIP ON FINDING BALANCE:

Learning to balance is an important skill for any child. Second only to learning to walk, it's a key moment for parents and caretakers to learn to "let go." Stay nearby, but resist holding onto the child while they are learning. We naturally want to hold children up to keep them safe, but holding your child prevents them from being able to learn the "feel" of balancing.

