

## Learn to ride a bike

### ► Strategies to support bike skill development/ progression

When the child has achieved a step, tick and move on to the next step. Skip a step if not necessary to practice that step. Learning to ride a bike does take lots of practice but is great fun!

- Make sure your child has a well-fitting helmet, teach them how to put it on independently (it helps to first practice fastening and unfastening the buckle before putting it on).



- Teach them 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). Emphasis the need to look ahead and around to check route is clear/ safe. Children sometimes stand and walk too close to the bike and fall into it, so give hints to stand further away
- When child can walk safely beside the bike, teach them to use both brakes to the bike suddenly on command.



- Whilst still walking beside the bike, teach your child how to turn corners (using plenty of space). Give guidance to turn a large enough circle so that the bike does not lean excessively while turning the circle – allows the child to feel how the weight of the bike is distributed and managed.
- 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. Take right leg over the back wheel, to end up standing on the left-hand side.
- Teach your child to pick the bike up when it is lying on the ground. This helps them to learn how to manage the bike's weight.
- Rather than using stabilisers, it is recommended that you remove pedals (and stabilisers) from the bike so your child can learn to balance by scooting along using their feet to push against the ground. Later, learning to manage this over uneven ground will be good practice.
- Adjust the seat height to ensure their feet are flat on the ground when seated.

- Whilst scooting along and building balance skills, repeat the same stages of learning as before when learning to walk beside the bike – first learn to go in a straight lines and to use the brakes well, and then to turn corners.



- When your child is confidently managing all this, it is time to put the pedals back on.
- Teach your child to prepare pedal position ready to push off. Your child will probably choose the foot that feels easiest for them to use to push off. Explain or demonstrate how to lift the pedal into position by placing toes underneath the pedal. Making sure the opposite leg is not blocking the pedals from turning.
- When practicing 'push off' and moving your child may require you to hold the bike underneath the back of the saddle to help keep bike upright. Some help may be needed initially to steer, by placing a hand on the handlebars briefly.



- Support child to balance as they pedal bike. Encourage the child to stop if they are leaning over too far or losing control, otherwise they will start to rely too much on help to balance
- Ensure your child can stop bike safely using both brakes and placing both feet down if losing control.
- As balance and steering improves and if your child is reliably stopping when overbalancing or losing control, start to let go of the saddle briefly.
- At this stage it may help if you move up from holding the saddle to hold your child's trunk on either side. This way you can help them to feel how to adjust their posture if the bike starts to lean.
- Repeat the same stages of learning – go in straight lines and to use brakes. To go around corners.
- You will gradually feel your child managing to balance without you help.