



# Teaching your child to ride

Getting their first bike can be very exciting for your child but there are a lot of things to learn and practise before they can ride safely on their own. Here are some tips to help you and your child.



Photo courtesy of Cycling WA

## **SAFETY TIP 1: ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET**

Bike helmets should be worn every time your child gets on their bike – especially when they are first learning to ride. Wearing gloves and knee and elbow pads to protect ‘knock zones’ can also be a good idea especially in warm weather when your child might be wearing a T-shirt and shorts that exposes skin areas. Wear your helmet too – your child is watching.

## **SAFETY TIP 2: BIKE PARTS**

As well as learning how to ride, your child needs to learn what each part of their bike does. Point out the brakes, handlebars, chain, tyres, spokes and lights and explain what each one does. Show your child how to care for their bike.

## **SAFETY TIP 3: FIND A SAFE PLACE TO PRACTISE**

At first your child will not have the skills to keep the bike straight and stop safely. Find an area with a smooth surface and away from traffic where your child can practise. Watch them closely and never allow your child to coast or freewheel down a steep embankment. Tell your child they are allowed to ride on the footpath until they turn 12.

## **SAFETY TIP 4: STOP AND BALANCE**

Take the pedals off your child’s bike and get them to practise balancing, steering and stopping. When they can do this put the pedals back on and see how they go. Once your child is able to stay up with ease and use the brakes without trouble, you can go out together in a safe area.

## **SAFETY TIP 5: STARTING TO RIDE**

The ‘running method’ is simple and one that many parents use. Once your child is on their bike you run along next to them giving simple instructions. Some parents hold onto the seat of their child’s bike and run alongside which will let you correct the lean of the bike. Another way is to hold your child gently by their shoulders.

## **SAFETY TIP 6: SUPERVISE AND KEEP YOUR CHILD CLOSE**

Either walk or ride behind your child so you can see them at all times and they are within earshot. Make sure your child is in the habit of listening to your instructions and knows to follow warnings just in case you need to get them to stop in a hurry.

Thank you for playing a vital role in your child’s road safety education.