

Teaching your child to cycle



1. The Bike

Safety - Always wear a helmet when on the bike!! Learning to balance on the bike is the first big step so it is best to start with a balance bike. If you do not have a balance bike or if your child is too big for one you can use an ordinary bike with the pedals removed. Therefore, this technique can be used with children of all ages. The bike saddle should be at a level that when they clear the it they have to bend their knees to sit. A slightly smaller bike is best to start with as it is easier to control.



2. Getting onto the bike

Hold both handles. It is important to ensure that the thumbs are under the handles and fingers over the top. Swing the inner leg over the back of the bike and saddle (not through the bike at the crossbar spot). For dismount the technique is reversed. Face forwards and **“look ahead and sit”** on the saddle.

3. Learning to STOP

Before starting to move it is important to practice using the brakes (If they have brakes) when you say **“Stop”**. This is a really important skill for when your child starts scooting well. Don't say “Pull the brakes” use simple language such as “Stop”.



4. Moving in a straight line

Now your child should sit on the saddle and start to walk. Initially children tend to stand and walk so it is important to keep encouraging your child to sit. Do not hold the bike yourself as it is important that your child learns to control the bike. If your child is looking for physical support you can place a hand at their back for reassurance. As your child's confidence increases they will start to sit and stride on the bike and begin to balance independently for a few seconds. Continue to practice using the words **"Look ahead", "Sit", "Walk", "Stop"**.

5. Turning

While your child is practicing these skills introduce turning and going around obstacles. This will help them learn to control the bike well. In order to turn, we lean in the direction of the turn.

6. When to add the pedals

Don't rush into putting the pedals on the bike. Let your child enjoy scooting and really build up their confidence with the bike. Scooting itself is a real achievement and a great balance activity.

Once your child can balance independently for 5-10 seconds while scooting they might be ready for the pedals. Raise the saddle on the bike by 2-3 cm and put the pedals on.

When your child is on the bike set the pedals so one is up at 2 o'clock position. Ask your child to push the pedal to get moving. Continue to use the word **"Push"** as a prompt as each leg comes into the position to push.

This time, to stop, the child will have to pull the brakes and put their foot down so say **"Stop and foot down"**.



Have fun and enjoy!