

Children's Centre, Damers Road, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 2LB
Tel: No: (01305) 254744

Supporting Your Child to Ride Their Bike



Learning to ride a bike is a significant developmental milestone that builds confidence and brings a sense of mastery and achievement. It involves many motor skills including balance, trunk control and core strength, bilateral co-ordination and motor planning. It also involves body awareness, visual tracking and scanning skills and attentional control.

Many children benefit from starting to learn to ride using a balance bike or with a standard bike with the pedals removed. Ensure the bike is in good working order.

STAGES OF BIKE RIDING	TEACHING TIPS
Able to put helmet on and off independently	Practice fastening the buckle before putting the helmet on. Start with longer strap initially to avoid catching the skin (but tighten up before cycling) Use of a mirror may help to locate the buckle if this is hard when wearing the helmet.
PEDALS OFF	
Able to hold both handlebars and push bike <i>in a straight line</i> while walking beside it. Standing on the left-hand side (no chain this side). Looking ahead and around to check route is clear.	This is important in terms of safety for crossing roads. It helps to start with this learn to handle the bike. Children sometimes stand & walk too close to the bike and fall into it, so give hints to stand further away. Emphasise the need to LOOK around and listen for safety.
Able to hold handlebars and push bike <i>round a corner</i> while walking beside it.	Give guidance to turn a large enough circle so that the bike does not lean excessively while turning the circle. As children become more confident, or if space is limited they may be able to hold under the saddle with one hand to lift the back wheel into position.
Able to stop bike using both brakes (walking beside it) to sudden verbal command.	It is important in terms of safety to learn how to use the brakes before learning how to ride
Able to mount bike. Placing both hands on the handlebars and brakes if necessary.	Practice getting on and off the bike from the left side, holding both handle bars. Use the brakes if the bike moves or you are on a slope.
Able to dismount, keeping both hands on the handlebars holding the brakes.	Take a right leg over the back wheel, to end up standing on the left hand side
Able to scoot on bike sitting on the saddle not standing up, taking 'walking steps', pedals removed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a straight line 	Removing the pedals makes scooting easier. This is the start of learning how to balance on a bike. Encourage sitting on the saddle (not

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round a corner 	standing) while scooting. Continue to encourage safe stopping as above
Able to scoot on bike, lifting 2 feet together, to balance briefly (pedals removed).	Encourage LOOKING ahead just in front of the wheel, but also checking if the route is safe and clear
Able to scoot on bike lifting 2 feet together, gaining speed by tapping one or other foot to the ground (pedals removed)	Continue to promote safe stopping
Able to stop bike safely if starting to lose control while scooting. Both brakes on Both feet down	Prompt child with - <i>what do you do if you wobble?</i> Adult wobbles the bike by holding the bar in the middle of the bike. Child has to keep the bike steady and still and keep feet on floor and hands on handlebars.
PEDALS ON	
Able 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.
Push off with pedals independently.	Adult should hold the bike underneath the back of the saddle & will need to keep the bike upright. Some help may be needed initially to steer, by placing a hand on the handlebars briefly.
Pedal bike forward with adult assistance. Looking ahead to check route is clear before initiating movement and at all times whilst moving.	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.
Able to place both feet onto pedals once pushed off and stop by placing both down again using brakes at same time.	As balance & steering improves and your child is reliably stopping when over balancing 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.
Able to ride bike forwards and round a corner with assistance.	Start with large gentle corners where visibility is good. Keep encouraging looking ahead & up
Able to ride bike forwards in straight line with minimal support	Encourage child to look in front of wheel & up. Focusing vision will help with balance and steering
Able to ride bike independently	
Able to cycle between a visual marker e.g. two poles or flat lines on the floor	This will help to develop looking & steering and increased control of the bike
Able to cycle with awareness of others avoiding obstacles or stopping suddenly if necessary	
Able to ride bike on different surfaces and up an incline	