

Bike Safety Tips for Children

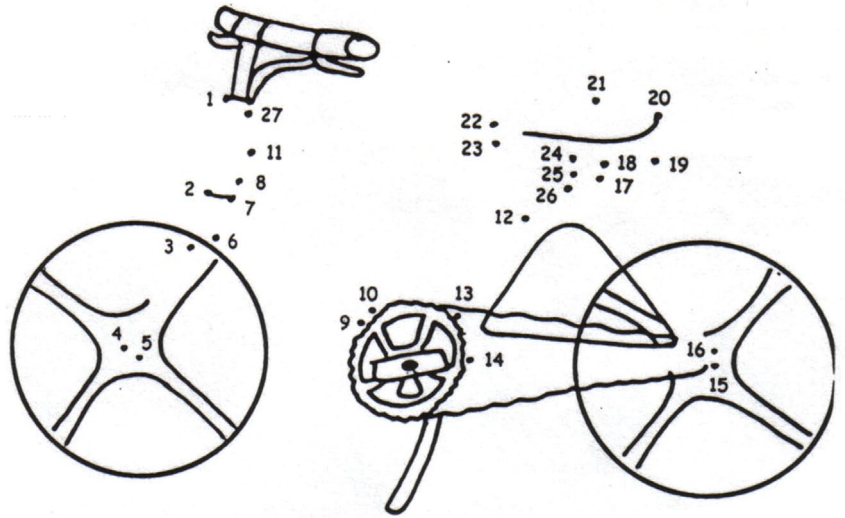
Ride Illinois wants you to have fun and to be safe when riding your bike!

True or False?

1. **T F** I should ride my bike on the sidewalk until a grown-up I live with says I can ride in the street.
2. **T F** I should stop before crossing a street and look left, right, and left again for moving cars.
3. **T F** I don't need to be careful near driveways or stop if I see a moving car.
4. **T F** When I ride in the street, I should ride on the right side – the same as cars.
5. **T F** I should only wear my helmet when I ride my bike with adults.
6. **T F** I should not have fun when I ride my bike.

The answers are at the bottom of the page.

Wear Your Helmet!



If your helmet is loose, it can move around and not protect your head. Use the following words to fill in the blank spaces below: **chin, ears, mouth, eyes**. The answers are at the bottom of the page.

- ✓ When you open your _____ wide the helmet should tug a bit.
- ✓ You should see the front edge of your helmet when you look up with your _____.
- ✓ The straps should meet under your _____ to make a Y or V shape.
- ✓ The _____ strap should be snug under your chin.

Note for Adults



This activity sheet contains information relevant to children age 8 and younger. To learn more, visit rideillinois.org/safety and use our Child Bicyclist quiz at BikeSafetyQuiz.com. Contact Ride Illinois at info@rideillinois.org or 630-216-9282 with questions. Thanks!

True or False: 1-T 2-T 3-F 4-T 5-F 6-F. Wear your helmet correctly: 1-mouth, 2-eyes, 3-ears, 4-chin

Learn more at BikeSafetyQuiz.com

Tips for Adults Teaching Children



Riding a bike is a great way for children (and adults) to have fun, go places, and stay active! Bicycling is an activity and mode of transportation that has many benefits. A child who bikes regularly can become more independent and aware. Adults feel more confident when a child has the skills and knowledge to ride their bike safely. Ride Illinois is happy to offer some tips and suggestions for adults to use when teaching bike safety to children.

First and foremost, set a good example by riding on the right side of the street or trail. Follow traffic laws – many of which apply to people on bikes just as they do motorists. Also, don't forget to fit and wear your helmet properly!

Make sure the child has a bike that is in good working condition and fits properly. **Demonstrate the ABC Quick Check:** **A**ir (firm tires), **B**reaks (stopping and not rubbing), **C**hain (lubed and moving freely), and **Q**uick release levers (tight and closed). If a bike needs some maintenance or repairs, bring it to your local bike shop.

Children are not simply small adults. They have a narrower field of vision, lack the ability to judge speed or distance, and may be impatient and impulsive. It's important to teach them some skills they need to avoid the most common causes of crashes. Learning these skills takes time and practice – that's where you come in!

| Cause of Crash | Ways to Avoid a Crash |
|--|---|
| Failure to yield when exiting a driveway | Teach the child to look left, right, and left again. Only enter the roadway when no vehicles are coming. |
| Failure to stop at stop sign | Stop at stop signs. Bike with the child and explain how to look for traffic and communicate with other road users. |
| Sudden left swerve into traffic | Practice riding straight while turning their head to look back to look for approaching vehicles. This is called scanning. |
| Riding against traffic | Ride on the right in the same direction as traffic. It's safer and it's the law! |
| Riding at night or in bad weather | Use a white front headlight and red rear reflector or tail light when biking at night. Wear bright-colored clothing too. |

Generally, a young child should begin riding their bike on the sidewalk. Teach the child to:

- Be extra careful at intersections! Look left, right, and left again and wait for vehicles to travel through the intersection. Then, take their turn while paying attention to nearby vehicles.
- Remember that motorists might turn into a driveway. A motorist may not see a child on a bike on the sidewalk.
- Look for clues that a vehicle may exit a driveway: engine noise, lights on, exhaust, person in car, garage opening.
- Announce "passing" or "passing left" or sound a bell before passing someone on a sidewalk or trail.

As a child grows and rides faster on the sidewalk, conflicts with vehicles increase. It is more difficult for motorists to see faster-moving bicyclists on a sidewalk than on the right side of the road. Also, studies have shown that riding a bike against traffic results in many more car-bike crashes than bicyclists who travel in the same direction as traffic. Very few bicyclists are hit from behind and many car-bike crashes occur at intersections. As children get stronger and ride faster, biking on the road is typically safer than on the sidewalk.

When the child is ready and you are comfortable, practice riding together on the road. Teach skills such as riding defensively, scanning for traffic, looking back (and listening) for cars, proper lane position (especially when turning), using hand signals, and identifying safe places to ride.

To learn more visit rideillinois.org/safety and complete our Child Bicyclist, Adult Bicyclist and Motorist quizzes at BikeSafetyQuiz.com. Contact Ride Illinois at info@rideillinois.org or 630-216-9282 with questions. Thanks!

Learn more at rideillinois.org