

To teach your child how to scan behind him/her without swerving, take him/her to a playground to practice riding in a straight line while quickly looking behind. Stand alongside and hold up fingers after your child rides by. Have him/her tell you how many fingers you were holding up until he/she can do it without swerving.

Children often forget about cars they can't see, think that cars will stop faster than they really can, or assume adults will look out for them. You can teach your child to walk his/her bike across streets until he/she has more experience on a bicycle. Let your child know which streets are unsafe or off-limits.

Also, teach your child to make his/her own decisions instead of relying on peers. Help him/her recognize that even if his/her friend runs a STOP sign, it is not worth the risk to follow the friend. Lastly, children should not bicycle in the dark. Bicyclists with proper equipment and skills can do it safely, but it is 20 times riskier than day riding. If your child is stuck somewhere after dark, be sure he/she knows to call you (collect from a pay phone if necessary) for a ride home.

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City Of San Leandro

Engineering & Transportation Department

## Parent's Guide to Child Bicycle Safety



Tel: 510-577-3428



# Parent's Guide to Child Bicycle Safety

## Child Bike Safety

For children, bicycling is a fun and important step in growing up. Having their own transportation gives them mobility and independence. However, without proper training, a child can get into serious trouble on a bicycle. This brochure will aid you in teaching your child the attitudes and skills that will make him/her a safer bike rider throughout his/her lifetime.

Children learn to ride bikes at varying ages, and it may take some children longer than others to learn how to ride a bike safely. Younger children should always ride under direct adult supervision, even when on sidewalks. Even sidewalks can be hazardous since motorists exiting driveways may not be looking for, nor be able to see, bicyclists.

Few children younger than age 10 can fully understand traffic, and have difficulty judging vehicle speeds and determining who has the right-of-way. Help them to understand that a bicycle is a vehicle too, and they will need to become familiar with these types of traffic rules. Older children should also learn how to make sure their bike is in the property condition before riding it. Show them how to identify a loose chain, broken spoke, or worn brakes.

## Proper Equipment

Be sure your child rides a bike that fits; one that can be straddled with both feet flat on the ground. A larger bike to "grow into" is hard for children to control. Children under the age of 18 are required by California State Law to wear a helmet. Three out of four bicyclists killed in crashes die of head injuries. Most of these deaths could be prevented by hard shell helmet use. Purchase a helmet that meets ANSI (American National Standards Institute) standards. Also be aware that children riding in trailers or bicycle carriers must wear an approved and properly fitted helmet. Most bike shops can fit your child (and you, to set a good example) with a properly fitted helmet.



## Proper Way to Enter a Roadway

Always stop before entering the street, especially from a sidewalk or driveway. Explain the reason for stopping before entering a street to your child. Take your child to the driveway and practice stopping, moving out to see around objects, scanning left-right-left, and if there's no traffic, then proceeding into the road. Do not allow your child to play in the road. Help your child identify other places where it is safe to practice riding a bicycle, such as a park.

## Ride With the Flow of Traffic

Bicycling on the left side of the road against traffic is one of the most dangerous violations a bicyclist can make and is against the law in all 50 states. Most adults were taught as children to ride facing traffic based on the myth that their greatest danger is being struck from behind. However, nearly all car-bike crashes occur at intersections, including driveways, and involve turning or crossing motorists. By riding against traffic, the bicyclist is approaching the intersection and driveway from an unexpected direction. The bicyclist is outside of the motorist's normal viewing area and is essentially invisible. Additionally, 90% of car-bike collisions are caused by conditions in front of the cyclist. **Bicyclists are never safe riding against traffic.**

## Rules of the Road



Bicyclists are required to obey the same traffic rules as cars; this includes stop signs and traffic signals. Explain to your child the reasons for traffic rules and why traffic works as well as it does when people know and follow the rules. Practice with your child identifying different traffic signs, stopping at STOP signs, and looking before entering an intersection. Teach your child to be aware of traffic, even when he/she has the right-of-way.

Be predictable when traveling in traffic by not making sudden movements. Teach your child to scan for traffic, particularly cars behind them, and use hand signals to make turns.

