



Cycling with children

They're free range too



cycling with children

children love bikes and love to ride



Child seats



Trailers



Tag-along trailer bikes



Training wheels

transporting young children on two wheels

It's now easier than ever for you to ride with young children.

Child seats: approx. six months to five years (one child). Once a baby can support its own head (usually 6–12 months) they can be carried in a child seat. Seats are fitted mainly to the rear of the bike.



Tips

- Good foot support makes the journey much more comfortable for children, and good padding protects young bottoms from bumps;
- Straps and padded headrests are essential because children will sometimes fall asleep on a ride;
- Look for seats that can grow with your child and are compatible with panniers.

Trailers: babies to five years (up to two children). Trailers are great eco-friendly solutions for travelling with more than one young child - be it on a family day out or the school run. Young babies can be strapped into their car seat and carried in a trailer, and older children can be strapped in and protected from the wind and rain.

Tag-along trailer bikes: approx. four to nine years. Tag-alongs (the back half of a child's bike attached to the back of an adult one) allow a child to be towed. They're great as your child can add some of their own pedal power, or just freewheel and enjoy the ride. You can attach these to any bike, including a tandem.



Balance bikes

cycling helps kids grow up fit and healthy,

Tow bar: approx. four to eight years.

A tow bar converts a standard child's bike to a trailer bike by lifting their front wheel from the ground to prevent them from steering, while enabling them to pedal independently. When you reach a safe place, the tow bar can be detached and their bike freed.

teaching your child to ride

Get a child on a bike and it's hard to get them off! It's fast, fun, gives them a sense of freedom and independence, and is good for their health and the environment.

There are lots of ways for children to develop and gain confidence before they head out on their own.

Tricycles or trikes have their own balance and stability and are available for children from ten months to five years old. They have pedals so they can have all the fun of getting around under their own steam.

Balance bikes are like normal bikes but without the pedals. This means children learn to balance, steer and gain confidence on two wheels while being able to place their feet firmly on the ground.

Training wheels. Stabilisers give support to the rear of the bike and are the easiest way to learn to ride but potentially the slowest.

Children can enjoy their independence, learning how to pedal and brake, but without the added complication of mastering their balance. Stabilisers can then be gradually lifted off the ground to provide less and less support so the child develops their balance.



Tip



Bikes with stabilisers should lean a little. If the bike doesn't lean, the rear wheel isn't on the ground and the brakes will be ineffective.



and introduces them to the wider world and

Going it alone. Every child develops differently and they may be ready to learn to ride between the ages of three and seven. When children do progress onto their own bike, emphasising the fun aspect will help them take the tumbles in their stride and encouragement and praise are important to help them persevere. Remember, scuffed knees are part of growing up!

Traffic-free paths and local green spaces are a great place to learn to cycle in safety. A third of the National Cycle Network is traffic-free and 75% of the population live within two miles of it.

Find out more about local traffic-free bike paths from Sustrans at www.sustrans.org.uk or phone 0845 113 00 65.

Bikeability cycle training may be on offer at your child's school to teach them how to ride on the roads safely, confidently and courteously. If your school doesn't already offer it, pester them!

and the adventure it holds.





top tips for your family trips

- When on a family bike ride, don't forget to take snacks and drinks to keep their energy and spirit levels up!
- Don't be too ambitious. It's much better that everyone wants to go out again, than all coming home exhausted, tearful and permanently put off.
- Keep the cycling trips packed with interest for your little ones; plan your trip around interesting stops and sights along the way. Don't make journey times longer than they're happy to sit and play at home.
- Keep them warm. When a child is sitting still, they won't be generating heat like the person doing all the pedalling! Even on a fine day, take extra clothes and waterproofs - just in case.
- Be careful not to pinch their skin when putting their helmet on. It's easily done and often ends in tears. Just place your forefinger between the clip and the chin.
- Ride in a line with the children in the middle of the adults. If there's only one of you, the adult should be at the rear, keeping an eye on all the children in front.



buying the right bike for your child

Children's bikes generally fall into age categories based on the average size of a child of a specific age.

But there are no hard and fast rules, as long as your child isn't stretched and can reach the brakes safely and change gear easily, there is nothing to prevent you buying a bigger bike from a bigger age category.

-  12" wheel cycles – suitable for ages 2½ to 4
-  14" wheel cycles – suitable for ages 3 to 5
-  16" wheel cycles – suitable for ages 5 to 7
-  20" wheel cycles – suitable for ages 7 to 9
-  24" wheel cycles – suitable for ages 9 to 11
-  26"+ wheel cycles – suitable for ages 11+
(These are classed as adult bikes.)



Tip

Ask your local bike shop for advice and take your child along to try out different sizes. Buy your child a bike which fits them, rather than one they can grow into. To find a specialist cycle retailer near you visit www.thecyclingexperts.co.uk



Smileage.



Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity.

Our vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. We work on practical, innovative solutions to the transport challenges facing us all. Sustrans is the charity behind the award winning National Cycle Network, Safe Routes to Schools, Bike It, TravelSmart, Active Travel, Connect2 and Liveable Neighbourhoods, all projects that are changing our world one mile at a time.

To find out more visit or call:
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