

CARE & LEARNING SERVICE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ADVICE FOR

BICYCLE RIDING

SAFETY FIRST

Space:

Find a large area that is free from cars and obstacles. Ideally there would be a flat area and a gentle slope.

Road Safety:

It is never too early to start teaching road safety skills. You could work on this without a bicycle to start off with to focus on one thing at a time.

Helmet:

Make sure your child is able to do this up independently. If this is difficult, use a mirror or practice with it in front of your child so they can see the fastening.



STAGED APPROACH

It can be very daunting for a child to jump straight onto a bicycle and have a go. Work through these steps to increase confidence and practice skills.

- Walking next to a scooter
- On a scooter
- Walking next to a bicycle
- On a bicycle:
 - With pedals off (if you are unsure, ask at a local bicycle shop/Halfords)
 - Seat lowered so feet are flat on the floor
- On a bicycle
 - With pedals on
 - Seat at the correct height

COMMON MISTAKES

Do not use the one-stabiliser method. It does not teach balance and tends to encourage leaning

- Avoid the hold-the-back-of-the-seat/run-beside-the-bike technique. It can create a false sense of balance or be a source of anxiety
- Do not expect (or promise) the learning process will be crash free
- Do not rush through the stages and skills



STEP-BY-STEP BREAKDOWN

You do not necessarily have to work through these in the order given below, but it is good to work on each skill separately.

- Getting on and off
- Using the brakes (bicycle only)
 - Back brake only
 - Both brakes together
- Going in a straight line
- Steering:
 - In the intended direction
 - Around corners
 - Around obstacles
- Scooting: pushing the scooter or bicycle along with your foot
- Freewheeling: with both feet off the floor, the scooter or bicycle is moving forward with you balanced on it
 - Try practicing this on a gentle slope as it helps with balance
- Pedalling:
 - Going down a slope
 - Along the flat
 - Going from stop to start



TOP TIPS

- Allow plenty of time for practice
- Give lots of praise and encouragement
- If a child is struggling, go back a stage to increase confidence
- Using a smaller bicycle can be easier to learn on
- Demonstrate and explain each of the skills/stages
- If a child is still having difficulty, try to pinpoint which stage or skill this is with
- Then use other people/video/photos to help to come up with ideas of how to approach it (make sure you include your child)

