

## LEARNING TO RIDE A BIKE

Learning to ride a bike is a great way for your child to develop their strength, balance and coordination skills. This can be more difficult for some children to achieve than for others depending on their overall gross motor development.

Knowing that your child is ready to learn to ride a two-wheeled bike is an important first step:

- Can they walk independently without support?
- Can they side step to either side to avoid falling?
- Do they have the safety awareness to recognize signs of danger? (ie: oncoming cars, pedestrians)

The first thing you will want to teach your child is how to balance on two wheels. You can do this by taking off the pedals or by having them learn to ride a balance bike.



What to look for in a beginner bike:

- The style of bike and the handle bar height allows your child to sit upright, not leaning forward.
- Your child should be able to get on/off the bike without any assistance and their feet should be flat on the ground when straddling the seat.
- The bike should be lightweight enough to allow your child to handle it independently.
- Hand brakes are generally preferred over coaster brakes; make sure their hands can fit over the brake comfortably.
- Avoid brakes with gears.

Here are some tips to try when learning to ride a two-wheeled bike:

- Remove the pedals to practice learning to balance on the bike with their feet on the ground.
- Encourage your child to sit on the seat and take some steps forward while holding their body upright.
- Have them gradually increase their speed until the bike starts to glide short distances at a time.
- Try having them roll down a slight incline/grassy hill to help them gain speed while balancing on the bike.
- Encourage them to practice steering in both directions once they are able to glide forward on their own.

Once your child has learned to balance and steer on its own, try putting the pedals back on:

- Encourage your child to push off the ground using both feet together (ie: frog jumps) in order to gain momentum.
- Make sure the pedal is in a flat position then have them place their feet on the pedals.
- You can try using double-sided tape on the pedals, sticky side up, to help keep their feet in place.
- Encourage them to increase their speed when pedalling; this will make it easier to maintain their balance.
- A training handle can be attached to the seat to allow you to help your child learn to balance.



If your child continues to struggle with the motion of pedaling, try having them practice on a small stationary bike or use a “bike trainer” which raises the back wheel off the ground. This will allow them to practice pedaling without having to worry about balancing, steering, starting or stopping.



Remember to be patient with your child to make learning to ride their bike a fun activity! With a lot of practice and positive encouragement, your child will lose their training wheels and learn to become an independent rider.