



PREPARING FOR YOUR RIDE

Before you start, make sure you and the child have:

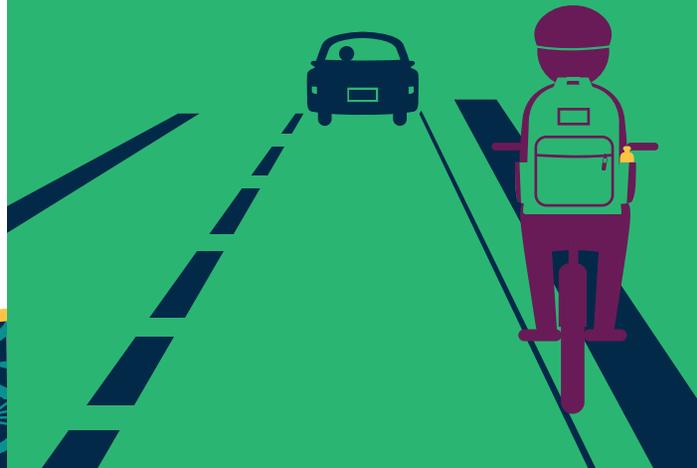
- **A bike that fits.** Having a bike that fits makes cycling easier, safer, and more fun.
- **A bike that works.** A working bike is a safe bike. Check the air, brakes, and chain (ABC) of your bike.
- **A helmet that fits.** It's the law for kids under 12 to wear a helmet. Helmets should be comfortably snug.
- **Lights, reflectors, bright clothing, and flags.** These help drivers see small children, especially if it's dark outside!

Use the 2-V-1 rule to check the fit – two fingers should fit on your forehead above the eyebrows, the straps should make a “V” shape around the ears, and one finger should fit under the fastened chin strap!



LOOKING FOR MORE RESOURCES ABOUT BICYCLE SAFETY FOR KIDS?

Visit us at
phila.gov/safe-routes-philly

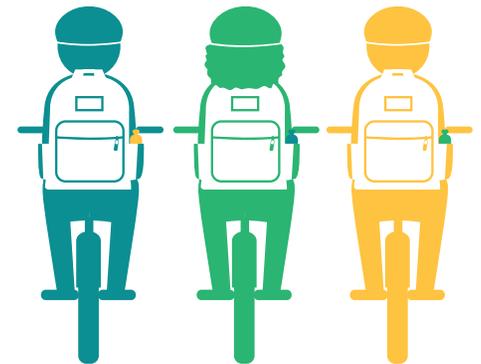


SAFE ROUTES PHILLY

STEP UP | RIDE ALONG

BIKING WITH KIDS

Biking can be a fun way to get outside, stay active, and explore Philadelphia. Use this guide to learn more about how to safely bike with kids!



phila.gov/safe-routes-philly

WHERE TO PRACTICE

Where a child should ride depends on their age and ability. **Sidewalks, trails, or places with low traffic** are great for skills practice before they start riding on the street. Get creative and use chalk to draw out routes and obstacles to help simulate bike lanes or stopping lines!

HOW TO PRACTICE

Before riding on the street, kids should master basic bicycling skills. **This includes:**

- Balancing
- Riding in a straight line
- Braking
- Taking direction from adults to slow down and stop
- Signaling

Some bikes have hand brakes, while others have coaster brakes. Hand brakes are found on the handle bars at the top of the bike, and coaster brakes require “pedaling backwards” to stop. Make sure you know which brakes the bike has and make sure kids practice breaking in a safe place away from cars first!

RIDING IN THE CITY

IS YOUR KID UNDER 12?

In Philadelphia, children under age 12 are allowed to ride on the sidewalk. They should be encouraged to do so in areas with heavy traffic or high speeds.

When biking on the sidewalk, it's important to remember:

- **Take extra caution near driveways**, since drivers may not expect to see bicyclists there.
- **Stop and look both ways at alleys and intersections before crossing.** Depending on the child's age, they should wait for an adult to tell them it's safe to cross.
- **Bike in the same direction as traffic.** This makes the child more predictable to people driving.

If your child is still learning how to bike and is moving slowly, walk or run beside them on the sidewalk. **If your child is a confident rider**, hop on your own bike and ride alongside them on the street. It's okay if you are separated by a lane of parked cars—this is still the safest way to ride together!

Bike slightly ahead of the child, but close enough so that you can communicate.

This allows you to spot any intersections, driveways, or other issues ahead of time.



IS YOUR KID OVER 12?

If the child is over 12 or a skilled rider, they should ride on streets, in bike lanes, or on trails.

When biking on the street, it's important to remember:

- **Start on streets with less traffic.** If you are less stressed, the ride will be more fun for everybody.
- **Know where to ride.** Ride in bike lanes or in the middle of the travel lane on shared roadways. Don't ride too close to parked cars—someone may open their door without looking.
- **Ride in the same direction of other traffic on the road.**
- **Know what street signs and traffic signals mean.**
- **Ride predictably in straight lines and use hand signals.**
- **On the street, ride behind kids to be more visible to cars.** If there are two adults, one can be in front of the child and the other behind. Stay close enough to easily communicate in advance about approaching intersections, driveways, etc.

RIDING ON TRAILS AND PATHS

Trails are great places to bike with kids of all ages and abilities. **Keep these tips in mind when riding on a trail or multiuse path.**

- Keep right and pass on the left.
- Say “On your left!” or ring your bell before passing other trail users. Pedestrians can't see you when you're riding behind them.
- Yield to other users on the trails. Remember, people walking and on horses have the right of way.
- Control your speed. Paths often have many types of users. Slower speeds allow a more enjoyable and safer ride for everybody.
- Obey traffic rules and signs. Be especially cautious in areas where the path crosses roadways.
- When stopping, move off the trail or as far to the side as possible.

Ride behind your child, or to the left if there is room on the trail. This will help them remember to stay to the right to allow people to pass.



DID YOU KNOW?

Children are still developing the cognitive and physical abilities to ride safely. They need adult supervision as they grow and learn more complex biking skills.