



Walk Bike Bus

»»» SPOKANE, WASH. «««



Family Biking Guide



A how-to manual for all stages of family biking

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Biking While Pregnant



PeopleForBikes, a coalition and foundation uniting to make better bike riding for everyone, says biking during pregnancy can help curb nausea, improve energy levels and help maintain an active lifestyle. Of course, every pregnancy and every woman is different. Here are tips to consider when biking while expecting:

◆ **CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR**

Make sure you and your doctor are on the same page specific to biking while pregnant and that it's a healthy choice for you.

◆ **CONSIDER YOUR ROUTE**

Does your route generally stick to lower-traffic streets and/or bike lanes? Or are you riding with rush hour traffic? Consider re-routing to streets with fewer cars and fewer busy intersections to reduce stress.

◆ **CONSIDER YOUR COMFORT**

It might be time to invest in an upright bike or make adjustments to your current bike as your body changes for a more comfortable, confident ride.

◆ **LISTEN UP**

You know your body best. Listen to it. Adding the bus to your route is an option.

◆ **STAY HYDRATED**

Eight to 12 glasses of water are recommended daily to prevent dehydration.

Kids on Your Bike



0-12 MONTHS*

Children under one year of age should not ride in a trailer or bike seat. Babies do not have sufficient neck strength to support the weight of a helmet or control head movements during a sudden stop. Do not carry infants in backpacks or frontpacks on a bike.

1-4 YEARS

Children old enough (1 to 4 years old) to sit unsupported and whose necks are strong enough to support a lightweight helmet may be carried in a child trailer or rear-mounted seat.

Setup Options

Front-Mounted Seats

These seats allow you to see what your kid is up to while riding. The seat can attach to your bike stem or frame. Kids love seeing where you're going and watching people. The weight limit is typically no more than 35 pounds.



Rear-Mounted Seats

These seats are most common, affordable, and easy to put on a bike. Make sure to check how the seat attaches to your bike. Conversations with your child are still possible, but you lose the ability to see what your child is up to while you ride.



*Information recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and Cascade Bicycle Club

What to look for in a bike-mounted seat

- ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) safety standards sticker
- A high back that comes up around and supports the child's head/neck for those times he or she falls asleep
- Sides that wrap around the child
- Straps similar to seatbelts secure shoulders, waist, and buckle between legs
- Straps for the feet in the foot rest (so happy feet don't get caught in the wheel or brakes)

Cargo Box/Dutch Bikes

After your baby sits unsupported (usually after 12 months) he or she might be ready to ride in a seated position in a cargo bike. Shorter legs may require props under the feet for support. Cargo box bikes have plenty of room for family, gear, and grocery trips. Bonus—cargo bikes offer rain/element covers and other accessories, perfect for spring adventures!



Enclosed Trailers

Trailers easily attach to your bike and don't demand much change to your current setup. While it's not as easy to chat with your child while riding, your bike buddy is covered from the elements and can nap easily. There's also room for extra cargo, snacks, and, sometimes, a second kid.



What to look for in a trailer

- ASTM safety standards sticker
- A full metal roll-cage with a sturdy, supported seat
- 20-inch wheels with inflatable tires and metal rims--they roll on uneven surfaces more easily
- A rotating hitch that allows the trailer to remain upright even if the bicycle falls or is laid on its side
- A safety flag and reflectors
- Seatbelt/harness

Test Your Setup

Take a test ride, without your child, to make sure you feel comfortable with the added weight and can ensure everything is properly balanced and attached. Test rides are a good time to check your knee clearance with front-mounted seats and to practice mounting and dismounting your bike. The more comfortable you are on your own, the more confident you'll be with your child.

What To Expect From Your Child

Depending on your child's temperament, it might take some time getting used to biking. Be patient! Your child might be reluctant to wear a helmet, but your child will get used to it while the bike is moving. Eventually, wearing a helmet will become a habit. Fair warning, your child might start reminding you to always wear one!

Children nearing age 3 are usually ready to try riding a bike. See page 5.

Kids on Their Bikes



3-5 YEARS

If you're using a front-mounted seat, consider installing a rear-mounted seat—trailers and cargo box bikes are suitable travel options with toddlers (see Section 1-3 years). As they surpass age 3 or 40 pounds, consider toddler setup options.

Toddler Setup Options

To advance to the following toddler options, your child will need to stay awake for the whole ride and sit safely on a bike without restraints. Keep your first rides short so everyone can get used to the new setup.



Tag-Alongs or Trailer Cycles

Tow your child on a one-wheeled bike that attaches to your bike's seat post. It gives your child the option of pedaling or just coasting along for the ride.

Bike Tow Bar

Tow your child and a full, two-wheeled bicycle behind yours with a tow bar. This gives you the opportunity to unhook and let your child ride by herself.



Long Bikes

Rear-mounted seats, back rests and handlebars can all be attached on this bike's back extension for multiple children and cargo carrying options.

Tandems

There are multiple styles of family tandems available, with possibilities for children to pedal in front or back, and in upright or reclined seating positions.



Riding with Two or More Children

Here's where you can get creative. Look around online or ask your local bike shop about the possibilities of riding with multiple children. Chances are you have some experience in riding with one child and have a good idea of what works best for your family. Combinations of many products already mentioned should do the trick.

Your Child's First Wheels

Toddlers around 3 years are often ready to begin biking on their own. Keep in mind each child is different. Start your child on a balance bike or a tricycle to build confidence and practice balancing before working on pedaling.

Balance Bikes

Small bikes without pedals or training wheels are meant to teach the fundamentals of balancing and steering a bike. Sitting upright with feet flat on the ground helps your child feel more comfortable and steady while learning to balance on two wheels.



Design your own kid's balance bike: on a traditional bike, lower the seat, then remove the pedals so feet are flat on the ground, and voila! You created your own balance bike. Visit a local bike shop if you don't have the tools.

Training Wheels

Training wheels help a bicycle stay upright while your child learns to pedal and maintain balance. Gradually raise the training wheels as your child becomes more proficient at riding. Remove them once he or she has the hang of it. Make it a game where she rides as far as she can without the training wheels.



Riding Practice



Try out new riding skills in car-free places like neighborhood parks, multi-use paths or events like Summer Parkways. Practice safety skills early by staying to the right and teaching awareness of other path users.

- Remove training wheels once your child balances consistently between the raised training wheels.
- Play a game to build confidence and encourage your child to ride further.
- Make sure your child knows where and how to use the brakes on the bike! Test the brakes by playing Red-Light/Green-Light.

Biking To School or Child Care



Making the shift from casual riding to commuting with children can seem complex and intimidating, but it's fairly straightforward once you practice and create your own routine. Biking to school is an excellent way to quickly get to school then work while spending quality outdoor time with your children.

Before you begin the week, practice your route on a weekend morning when there's lighter traffic. This helps gauge your travel time and how well your child is prepared for riding in the streets. Remember, the route you drive in a car may not be the best for riding a bike. Practice without your child first.

KIDS ON YOUR BIKE

When commuting with kids on your bike, consider these tips to simplify your trip.

Plan Ahead

Dropping your child off and continuing on to work usually includes figuring out where to leave a helmet, how to haul gear, and where to park. Planning ahead and surveying the drop-off scene at school is helpful. Turning this plan into a routine makes mornings less stressful.

Be Prepared

Similar to traveling with your child by any other mode, be prepared for weather conditions and consider apparel and accessories. Have snacks on hand when you show up after child care or school for a more enjoyable ride.

Teach Street Safety Skills

Riding together is an opportunity to talk about what stop signs, road markings, or other traffic controls mean when riding a bike. This will make your job easier later on when teaching your child to walk or bike independently.

KIDS RIDING INDEPENDENTLY

The recommended age for kids to ride functionally and independently is 10 years old (*Journal of Safety Research* 2012). Maturing from riding with ease (braking, turning, navigating hills) and being confident with street rules takes practice and diligence. When practicing on quiet streets, walk or ride alongside your child and talk about street rules with an emphasis on safety.

Five important skills to make sure everyone is riding confidently

- Skill #1:** Street and traffic safety, especially around crossings and driveways; this includes watching for cars, understanding right-of-way, and more
- Skill #2:** Riding predictably in a straight line
- Skill #3:** Looking back without swerving
- Skill #4:** Stopping and speed control
- Skill #5:** Riding on uneven and varied surfaces, especially gravel

Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School offers encouragement programs and bike safety education to help support walking and rolling to school. Participate in International Walk+Bike to School Day every October where students and families worldwide celebrate getting to school in an active, healthy way!





Biking Place to Place



SIDEWALK RIDING

Riding on neighborhood sidewalks can be a great place for younger children to learn and practice bike skills, and can often seem safer than riding in the street. However, driveways and intersection crossings can be dangerous.

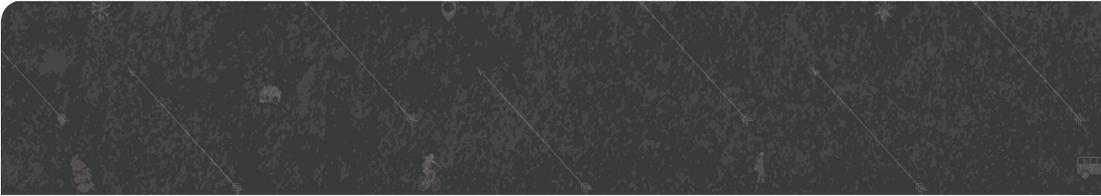
Here are a few things you can do to teach your child to improve safety on the sidewalk.

Go SLOW: A slower pace is a safer pace.

Check every intersection and driveway: Drivers might not stop to look for people riding or walking on the sidewalk or in the intersection. Small people are particularly difficult to see due to visual barriers such as bushes, fences and other vehicles.

Only cross the street at crosswalks: Just like a pedestrian, cross where cars expect to see someone. When your child is using a crosswalk, he or she must dismount, wait for traffic to clear, and walk the bike through the intersection. When your child is ready to cross an intersection, they should remain on the bike.

Yield to pedestrians: Be courteous, friendly, and say “hello!” when passing. Let the walker know you’re coming.



THE LAWS

Riding on the Road - When riding on a roadway, a cyclist has all the rights and responsibilities of a vehicle driver (RCW 46.61.755). Cyclists who violate traffic laws may be ticketed (RCW 46.61.750).

Children Bicycling - Parents or guardians may not knowingly permit bicycle traffic violations by their ward (RCW 46.61.700).

Share Sidewalks - Cyclists must yield to all pedestrians on sidewalks and in marked or unmarked crosswalks. Give a warning (use a bell or your voice) before overtaking pedestrians from behind. Riding on sidewalks in the designated retail zone of downtown Spokane is prohibited. For boundaries, go to:

my.spokanecity.org/smc/?Section=16A.04.010

Bicycle Helmets - Currently, there is no state law requiring helmet use. However, in the city of Spokane, it's the law to wear a helmet when doing any wheeled sport (including bicycling). In unincorporated Spokane County, children between ages 3 and 16 are required by law to wear helmets when riding anything with wheels—bikes, scooters, skateboards, etc.

HELMETS

Helmets only work when worn correctly. Avoid these common mistakes when fitting your child's helmet.



EYES: The helmet should be level on the head, not tilted, about a two finger-width above the eyebrows.



MOUTH: Straps should be snug against the chin, with just enough space available for one or two fingers to fit.



EARS: Adjust the buckles on the side straps so they form a “v” underneath the ears.

Give it a shake test: Does your child's helmet move with a head shake? If so, try one or more of the following.

- Re-adjust the chin and side straps.
- Tighten with an internal adjuster sometimes found at the back of the helmet.
- Attach the extra foam pads packaged with a new helmet for a snug fit.

When to replace a helmet: After any crash involving the helmet, replace the helmet (SNELL Memorial Foundation). If the helmet's over 5 years old or has any visible damage, replace it! Cracks in the styrofoam or missing bits of styrofoam? Replace it!

- Visually inspect your helmet for cracks every so often.
- Think, “One crash, and it's trash.” Your brain is worth protecting.
- Set an expectation early: whenever wheels are involved, wear a helmet.

Adults can set a good example by always wearing a helmet when biking.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says to encourage the child to ride safely and also:



Obey all regulatory signs and traffic lights.



Never ride against traffic. When a bicycle and car are moving toward each other, there is much less time to take corrective action. Ride with traffic to avoid potential collisions.



Be predictable! Use hand signals to tell motorists your intentions and where you're going.



Ride in a straight line to the right of traffic (on two-way streets) and a little more than a car-door width away from parked cars.



Always wear a helmet and never ride with headphones. Helmets dramatically reduce the risk of head injury in a bicycle crash.



Use lights and reflectors at night and when visibility is poor.



Don't pass on the right. Motorists may not look for, or see, a bicycle passing on the right.



Dress for the weather. Dress in layers so you can adjust to the temperature and always wear bright clothing.



Keep your bike in good repair. Check brakes and tires regularly.

Notes



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Notes



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FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT



Walk Bike Bus

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Walk Bike Bus Spokane is a program of:



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