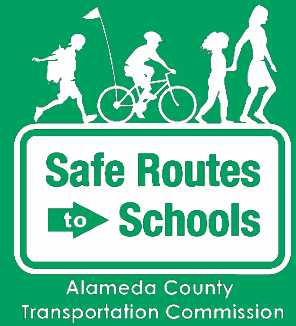




HELPFUL HINTS

For learning how to ride a bicycle

Learn more at alamedacountysr2s.org



1. **Lower the seat so they can sit on it and touch the ground flat-footed.** This will help them as they get started and lend confidence to kids (or adults) who are scared of falling over.
2. **Get them familiar with using hand brakes.** Most kids will instinctively try and stop their bike with their feet before they learn how to use their brakes. One way to break them of this habit is to demonstrate for them how much faster you can stop with your brakes than with your feet, then have them push with their feet (while seated on the bike) and try it for themselves.
3. **Find a gently sloping hill to practice the push and glide technique.** It is key to have them push with both feet at the same time (frog hops) and not in a walking motion, otherwise they will just “walk” around on their bike. The goal is to get them to push and then glide with their feet off the ground for about 10 feet. Keep telling them that they are doing a great job. Remind them that they should keep their eyes up and look where they are going and not down at the bike (you can even walk in front to provide something to look at).
4. **Time to try pedaling.** Once they have gotten a bit more comfortable balancing, gliding and stopping with their brakes, it's time to try pedals. Most kids will not want to try the pedals the first time you ask -- just let them go at their own pace and keep on encouraging and celebrating their success. The key here is to get them to glide and then have them “find” the pedals with their feet, which means encouraging them to not look down.
5. **Show them the “pedal power push”** Determine which foot they will want to start with on the pedal and which one they want to push off with. Start with the “pedaling” foot on the pedal at the top of its downward stroke, and the “pushing” foot on the ground. Have them push off the ground and push down with the “pedaling” foot at the same time, giving them time to find the other pedal with the “pushing” foot.

With these steps, you should be able to teach most kids to ride a bike. Remember that there is no time frame when they “should” have the skill down. Some kids learn in 5 minutes, while some take weeks.

We do not recommend holding the new rider up while they pedal the bike. This is not only uncomfortable for you but actually will make it harder for the child to learn, as it does not teach the valuable skill of balance on the bike.

Above all, have fun and keep it positive!

Thank you to Eugene-Springfield Safe Routes to School for originally creating this fact sheet.



METROPOLITAN
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