



Bike Safety

Carrying Small Children as Passengers

- Only adult cyclists should carry young passengers.
- Preferably ride with passengers in parks, on bike paths, or on quiet streets. Avoid busy thoroughfares and bad weather, and ride with maximum caution and at a reduced speed.
- Infants younger than 12 months are too young to sit in a rear bike seat and should not be carried on a bicycle. Do not carry infants in backpacks or frontpacks on a bike.
- Children who are old enough (12 months to 4 years) to sit well unsupported and whose necks are strong enough to support a lightweight helmet may be carried in a child-trailer or rear-mounted seat.
- A rear-mounted seat must
 - Be securely attached over the rear wheel
 - Have spoke guards to prevent feet and hands from being caught in the wheels
 - Have a high back and a sturdy shoulder harness and lap belt that will support a sleeping child
- A lightweight infant bike helmet should always be worn by a young passenger to prevent or minimize head injury. Small styrofoam helmets that meet Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standards are available.
- The child must be strapped into the bike seat with a sturdy harness.
- Remember, the risk of serious injury still exists when you carry a young child on your bicycle.

Bicycle trailers are recommended over bicycle-mounted seats. Here are three major reasons why:

--It's lower to the ground. Trailers, which have two bicycle-type wheels and a long hitching arm that fastens to a bicycle from behind and ride low to the ground, are potentially safer in an accident. That's because a child would fall about three feet from a mounted bike seat compared with a fall of about 6 inches from a trailer. A mounted bike seat, which can transport one child age 1 to 5, is positioned behind or in front of a cyclist's seat. (In either case, your child faces forward.)

--A bicycle trailer may be easier to maneuver. With the added weight of a little passenger at the back or front, a bicycle with a mounted seat might be harder to handle, which can be unnerving or just annoying, depending on how experienced you are as a cyclist. Getting on and off a bike with a baby in a mounted seat can also be difficult.

--It's less risky. A bicycle trailer provides some protection to passengers since kids are seated, strapped in, and usually enclosed in a zippered compartment. Trailers have a rigid frame enclosed in durable fabric, which offers some protection for young passengers if the unit rolls over. Some designs have a hitching arm that allows the bike to fall without tipping the trailer. But kids still must wear a bike helmet.



Bike Helmets

- A helmet protects your child from serious injury, and should always be worn. And remember, wearing a helmet at all times helps children develop the helmet habit.
- Your child needs to wear a helmet on every bike ride, no matter how short or how close to home. Many injuries happen in driveways, on sidewalks, and on bike paths, not just on streets. Children learn best by observing you. Set the example: Whenever you ride, put on your helmet.
- When purchasing a helmet, look for a label or sticker that says the helmet meets the CPSC safety standard.
- A helmet should be worn so that it is level on the head and covers the forehead, not tipped forward or backwards. The strap should be securely fastened with about 2 fingers able to fit between chin and strap. The helmet should be snug on the head, but not overly tight. Skin should move with the helmet when moved side to side. If needed, the helmet's sizing pads can help improve the fit.
- Do not push your child to ride a 2-wheeled bike without training wheels until he or she is ready. Consider the child's coordination and desire to learn to ride. Stick with coaster (foot) brakes until your child is older and more experienced for hand brakes. Consider a balance bike with no pedals for young children to learn riding skills.
- Take your child with you when you shop for the bike, so that he or she can try it out. The value of a properly fitted bike far outweighs the value of surprising your child with a new one. Buy a bike that is the right size, not one your child has to "grow into." Oversized bikes are especially dangerous.

(from aap.org, healthychildren.org, and consumerreports.org)