

KIDS ON YOUR BIKE

When commuting with kids on your bike, there are a few things to think about to make your trip a little easier.

Plan Ahead

Dropping your child off and continuing on to work usually includes figuring where to leave their helmet, how to haul your gear, and more. Planning ahead and surveying the drop-off scene at school can be helpful. Turning this plan into a regular routine can also make mornings less stressful.

Be Prepared (psst...bring snacks!)

Similar to traveling with your child by any other mode, be prepared for whatever the weather might bring when considering apparel and accessories. Having snacks on hand when you show up after day-care or school can make the ride home more enjoyable.

Teach Street Safety Skills

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

YOUR CHILD'S FIRST WHEELS

Toddlers around two years and older are often ready to be introduced to a balance bike or trike on their own. Starting your child on a balance bike or trike will build confidence before they start pedaling on two wheels independently, with or without training wheels, around age three.



Balance Bikes

Small bikes without pedals or training wheels 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 as they begin learning to balance.

Training wheels

Training wheels help a bicycle stay upright while your child learns to pedal and begin maintaining balance. Gradually raise the training wheels as your child becomes more proficient at riding then remove them once they've gotten the hang of it. Consider playing a game where your child rides as far as they can without the training wheels touching the ground. Some children who have mastered balance bikes will skip the training wheel stage.

Riding Practice

Try out new riding skills in car-free places like parks or school playgrounds. Practice safety skills early by staying to the right and teaching awareness of other path users.

TEST YOUR SET-UP

Be sure to try out whatever option you choose without your child to make sure you feel comfortable with the added weight and can ensure everything is properly attached. As the parent rider, test rides are good places to check your knee clearance with front-mounted seats and to practice mounting and dismounting.



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The Family Biking Guide

BIKING WHILE PREGNANT

Biking during pregnancy can be a great way to help curb nausea, improve energy levels, and maintain an active lifestyle. Of course, every pregnancy and woman is different. Here are a few things to keep in mind if you're considering biking during pregnancy:

Check with your doctor

Make sure biking during pregnancy is a healthy choice for you, and that your doctor is on the same page.

Consider your route

Does your commute generally stay on lower-traffic streets or have bike lanes? Re-routing your ride to streets with fewer cars and busy intersections could reduce ride stress.

Consider your comfort

It might be time to invest in an upright bike or make adjustments to your current ride to increase your comfort and riding confidence as your body changes. You know your body best, so be sure to listen to it. Today might be a better day to take the bus or EmX.

BIKING WITH BABIES 0-12 months

There are few standards available on biking with a baby 9 months or younger. If you are ready to give it a try, we suggest looking up online options and advice about carrying a young child or asking friends and families already riding with infants. Here are a few things to be aware of before you start:

Neck Strength

Until your baby is able to hold their head up on their own, they shouldn't be carried in an upright bike seat. Adequate neck strength usually won't occur until 9 months or later.



Helmets

There are no infant-sized helmets currently available on the market, and wearing a helmet during this stage of growth while in a car seat can be damaging to an infant's neck and spine. That said, Oregon law states any child under 16 must be wearing a helmet while on a bicycle (ORS 814.485).

BIKING WITH TODDLER 1-3 years

Once your baby can sit up without falling, hold their head up on their own, and fit into a helmet, your baby is most likely ready to ride in a front- or rear-mounted bike seat, cargo box bike or trailer.

Front-mounted seats

Front-mounted seats typically have lower weight limits so these work best as an option up to age three. Allows you to see what your baby is up to while riding. Can attach to your bike stem or frame.

Rear-mounted seats

Typically have higher weight limits so you can use them longer than a front-mounted version. Conversations with your child are possible, but you lose the ability to see what your child is doing. Attaching a rear rack on your bike is necessary before attaching a rear-mounted seat.

Cargo Box Bikes

After your baby can sit well (usually after 12 months) they may be ready to ride in a seated position in the box of a cargo bike. Cargo box bikes have lots of extra room for your family gear and also offer rain/element covers and other accessories.



Trailers

Trailers are easily attached to your bike and don't demand much change to your current set-up. It is not as easy to chat with your child while riding, but they will have good coverage from the elements and can nap easily. There's also lots of room for extra cargo.

Un/Loading Your Bike

Never leave your bike unattended with your child in a bike seat! A double-sided kickstand can assist in stabilizing during loading and unloading, but always keep a hand on the bike during the process.

Head Support

Bike rides tend to lull children to sleep. Make sure the head and neck have enough support if they nod off.

Accessories

Various brands offer accessories for seats like rain covers, handlebars, head rests, adjustable foot rests and more.

BIKING WITH CHILDREN 3-5 years

If you're using a front-mounted seat, it will probably be time to move to a rear-mounted seat, assuming your child is near the weight limit. Rear-mounted seats, trailers and cargo box bikes are still good travel options with toddlers but as they move past age three there are additional set-ups to consider.

In order to advance to any of 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 shorter so everyone can get used to the new set-up.

Tag-alongs or Trailer cycles

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

Bike Tow Bar/Follow-me Tandem

Tow your child and their full, two-wheeled bicycle behind yours, then unhook and let your child ride independently when confident to ride on their own.

Longtail Bikes

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

Tandems

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

RIDING WITH MULTIPLE 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 if you already 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.

