



BICYCLE SAFETY

When is it safe to ride without an adult?

Cycling is a fun and healthy way for children to travel, but it is important that they develop safe riding habits to reduce the risk of injury. Bike safety is more than just learning how to ride - it means wearing a properly fitted helmet, following traffic laws, checking for traffic, and making sure they are visible to others.

Parents, carers and schools play a vital role in teaching and reinforcing these practices. With the right guidance and support, children can build the skills and confidence needed for safe and enjoyable cycling.

When is it safe to ride without an adult?

Children under 10 should always ride with an adult. At this age, most children are not ready to ride safely on roads by themselves. They are still learning how to make good choices when riding.

From age 10 and older, some children may be ready to ride on their own. To do this safely, they need to be confident riders, know the road rules, wear a helmet, wear bright clothes so others can see them, and ride on footpaths or shared paths instead of busy roads.

In all states and territories, children under 12 are allowed to ride on footpaths. In most places, older riders can too!



REMEMBER

Sit with your child and choose the safest way to get where they are going. Pick quiet streets or paths, stay away from busy roads and crossings, and remind them to ride safely - especially if they are riding without an adult.



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Choosing the correct helmet and adjusting it to fit

Choosing a helmet

While laws vary slightly by jurisdiction, all states and territories in Australia require cyclists to wear a helmet. There are a variety of helmet types and styles available to children, and many are specifically designed to suit the type of riding they are doing.

Whether you choose a skateboard helmet, mountain bike helmet, or road bike helmet, the helmet should display an Australian Standards sticker, to show that the helmet has been tested and approved (**AS/NZS 2063**).

Try to avoid buying second-hand helmets and replace your child's helmet every 3-5 years, if they have outgrown it, or if the helmet has sustained an impact.



While a skateboard helmet might look cool, it may not provide the best protection for a child riding their bicycle (for example). Be sure to choose the correct helmet type for the best protection. If you are unsure, speak to your local bike shop

Helmet fit

To be effective, a helmet must be well-fitting and used correctly! Helmets should be worn at all times when using bicycles, scooters and other small-wheeled devices.

Measure the child's head before purchasing a helmet in order to select the correct size.

The helmet should fit firmly on the head with the chinstrap securely fastened.

i Check out the *Roadsafe Rangers Early Education Bicycles fact sheet* for more detailed information on helmet selection and adjustment.





i Perform regular bike safety checks

1. **Brakes** - make sure brake blocks are not worn and are fitted and working properly.
2. **Chain** - the chain should be frequently oiled and properly fitted.
3. **Tyres** - look for bald spots, bulges and cuts. Make sure they are pumped up to the correct tyre pressure.
4. **Pedals** - pedals should spin freely.
5. **Bell or horn** - bells or horns should be loud enough for others to hear.
6. **Lights and reflectors** - make sure lights and reflectors are secure, properly aligned, clean and in good working order.
7. **Seat** - the height of the seat should be correctly adjusted so that the rider can sit on the seat with their toes able to reach the ground.
8. **Handle bar grips** - handle bar ends must be covered with intact grips. This reduces the risk of your child being impaled onto the handle bar ends if they fall.



Make sure that the bike is the right size

A bike that is too big or too small is a safety hazard.

Get your child to sit on the bike; their toes should touch the ground on both sides.



Building your child's confidence on their bike

Children are often very excited to ride their bike, especially when they have a new or bigger one. It is important that they first practice in a safe place, away from roads, driveways, and slopes.

When riding, children should keep left, watch out for others, and remember that people walking always come first. Families can also look for safe areas for riding small bikes, scooters, or skateboards - local councils often have skate parks or shared spaces that are designed for this purpose.

School-based bicycle education programs

Bicycle education programs for primary school students are run by schools in most states and territories. While not every school across Australia has a compulsory bicycle education program, the Australian Government's Sporting Schools program provides funding for primary schools to deliver a national bike education.

These programs help the students build confidence and competence as safe bike riders by:

- Learning about roads, traffic environments and road laws
- Developing physical and cognitive skills
- Practising responsible behaviours, attitudes and decision-making skills.

Contact your local school to find out more!