

supposed to yield to you, be sure you are seen. Set a good example when you ride with your child.

Challenges for young cyclists--

1. Children are shorter and can't always see over parked cars, bushes and other objects.
2. Their hearing and eyesight aren't fully developed until the age of nine or ten.
3. It takes experience to develop the ability to judge the speed of an approaching vehicle.
4. It takes experience to develop a sense of one's abilities.
5. It takes experience to learn how to be patient--such as when waiting to cross a street.
6. It takes experience to learn to recognize common crash risks.
7. It takes experience to develop good habits for avoiding common crash risks.
8. Children often expect adults to watch out for them and to know what they are going to do.
9. Children have difficulty sizing up complicated situations and paying attention to more than one thing at a time.



A cyclist should protect his assets

Head injuries account for over 60 percent of cyclist fatalities and about one third of hospital emergency room visits for bicycle-related injuries. Bicycle helmets, properly fitted and secured, have been found effective in reducing the incidence and severity of head, brain, and upper facial injury.

In Florida, the law requires a cyclist under the age of 16 to wear a properly fitted helmet. A young person's life is mostly ahead of him, so he has more to lose. But adults should not be careless either.

Set an example by wearing your own helmet when riding.

A cyclist should be visible

A cyclist should help other drivers see him, by riding in the expected direction of traffic--on the right, and by wearing light or brightly colored clothes.

Doing more

To really teach your child to ride

proficiently, you must do more than give a few lessons. Take your child out on the street. Skills can be mastered only through practice.

Practice turns and stops. Deal with all the hazards. Each problem you encounter is a lesson to learn.

If, for example, an unleashed dog comes out of a driveway, deal with it, then when you are safely away, pull over and review loose-dog technique.

If you feel you don't know enough about cycling to teach your own child, ask about traffic safety training in your local schools. Many schools have adopted the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program curriculum.

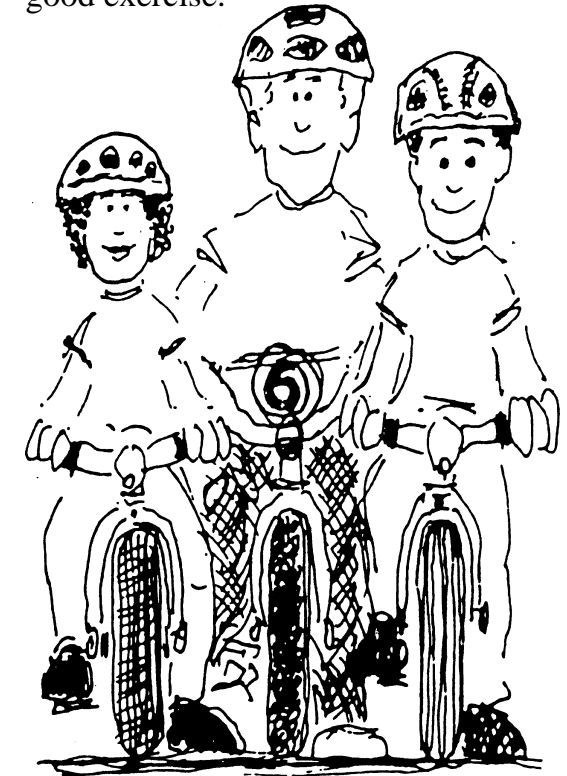
For more information, please contact:

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605 Suwannee Street MS 82
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Street skills for young cyclists: the essentials

Learning to ride a bicycle is a major step in growing up. Cycling helps develop balance, reflexes, traffic skills and sense of place (knowing where you are), and it's good exercise.



You can help a child become a proficient cyclist by:

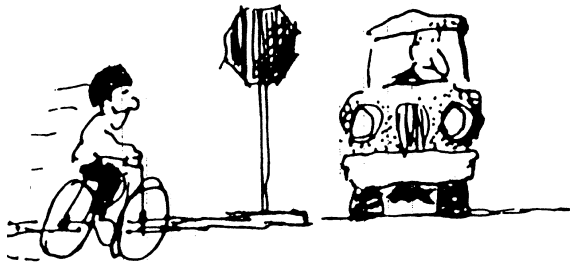
- practicing the essential skills together;
- making sure your child's bicycle is fit to ride (tire pressure, brakes, wheels securely fastened, etc.);
- modeling good traffic behavior.

Basic traffic skills

1. A cyclist on the street rides on the right, with traffic

Riding against traffic is the most common cause of car-bicycle crashes. Some people ride this way to “see the traffic coming,” like a pedestrian.

The problem is that a cyclist moving faster than a pedestrian may not be noticed in time by a driver. A driver coming from a side street or driveway



glances right to check for pedestrians on the sidewalk but concentrates on traffic approaching from his left.

The number of cyclists hit because they were riding the wrong way is approximately twice the number hit from behind by overtaking cars.

2. A driver (cyclist or motorist) yields the right of way to traffic already in a street before entering it.

About a fifth of young riders involved in crashes are hit when they ride into a street without looking or yielding. They are hit by passing cars.

This can happen on a quiet neighborhood street near the child's home. A

parked car, shrubbery or fence often blocks the motorist's view of a driveway.

The driveway drill:

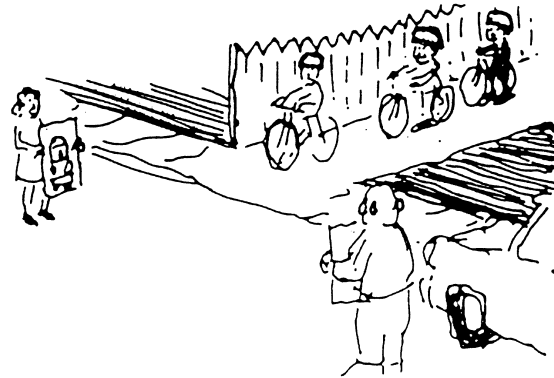
Teach your child the proper way to enter a street:

1. Stop at the end of the driveway.
2. Look left, right, left for traffic.
3. When the way is clear, proceed.

Driveway training

Draw two cartoon cars, using pieces of scrap cardboard (about two feet by two feet square). Recruit a partner. Stand in the street near your driveway (if this is practical), facing each other, like two approaching drivers (see illustration below).

Ask your child to ride out to the end of the driveway and stop. Explain that if you hold a “car” up, it means a



driver is approaching from your side. If you hold the “car” aside, the way is clear on your side.

Scoring: if a trainee cyclist enters the roadway when one of the “cars” is displayed, the cars get a point. If the cyclist waits until the way is clear, the cyclist gets a point.

Then start the game. Be sure that both the “cars” and the cyclist(s) also keep an eye out for real cars.

Once a child has the basic idea, gradually make the game more challenging. Turn a “car” aside, then turn it back. Pretend there is a lot of traffic coming from either direction.

3. A driver yields before moving laterally

Moving left without yielding to a driver already in this line of travel is another common cause of bicycle crashes. While riding down the street, an incompetent rider darts left in front of an overtaking car without warning.

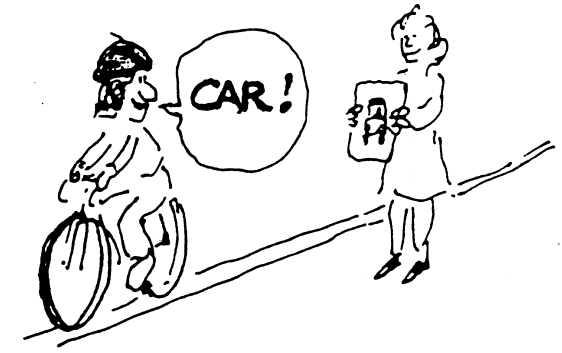
Over-shoulder scanning drill

Ride with your child to a quiet parking lot. Take along a couple of large colored flash cards, or one of the cardboard cars from lesson two.

Find a straight painted line and stand just to the left of it. Explain the objective: while riding forward along the line, cyclist must be able to look back over his shoulder to check for traffic

Procedure: cyclist rides forward along the line and passes you. When cyclist is about ten to 20 feet beyond you, you shout “LOOK!” Cyclist looks back.

Scoring: if cyclist correctly identifies



the color of the card you are holding (or whether you're holding up the “car” or not), cyclist gets a point. Otherwise, you get the point.

The rider should look back and shout what he or she sees. Practice this lesson until the rider can look back and ride in a straight line.

4. A driver yields the right of way when required to STOP or YIELD

Over 40 percent of car-bicycle crashes occur at intersections. In the majority of such crashes, either the cyclist or the motorist failed to yield the right of way to the other party.

The rule: a driver stops at a STOP sign, then *yields* to conflicting traffic. He proceeds when the way is clear. At a YIELD sign, a driver prepares to yield, and yields to any traffic already in (or approaching) his way.

Basic skill: Scan for any conflicting traffic at a STOP or YIELD sign, then yield to any conflicting traffic, then be sure way is clear before proceeding. If another driver is