



BIKE SAFETY



TARGET AUDIENCE:
Children in Grades K-5 and their families.

CYCLING SKILLS CLINIC



Cycling skills clinics are a great way for children and their parents to learn about and practice biking safety. Participants develop skills that will help them become better cyclists and avoid situations that commonly lead to crashes.



LOCATION:

Outdoors, in a large, flat, open area such as a parking lot. You will need enough room to create up to six stations. Several (up to three) stations will have “mini roads” where children and their families ride and practice skills.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

Safe Kids coalitions have experience conducting cycling skills clinic activities in a variety of settings. Partnering with a local coalition is the easiest way to ensure you have access to the expertise, equipment and resources needed to host a successful event.

Consider inviting a local bike shop to send staff to help with helmet checks, bike fitting and instruction in maintenance or simple repairs.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Tables and chairs for each station
- Poster board and markers for signs
- Heavy-duty masking tape, traffic cones and/or sidewalk chalk to mark mini-road obstacle courses for practice
- Cardboard box “cars,” cones and/or large sponges to serve as “obstacles”
- Reflective materials and lights(not required to complete activity).

PREPARATION:

- Identify an area where stations can be set up. Make sure identified area is taped or roped off from any potential traffic or moving cars.
- Encourage children to bring their own bikes and helmets. Parents can bring their bikes and helmets, too!
- Set up as many as six stations (see descriptions below).
- For as many as three of the stations, set up “mini roads” using masking tape, traffic cones and/or sidewalk chalk.



BIKE SAFETY



ACTIVITY INSTRUCTION

- Station 1: Helmet Check.** Every person who wants to participate in the riding activities at other stations must have a properly fitting helmet. As families arrive, check to be sure each rider has a helmet that fits properly and meets the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC's) standards (indicated by the presence of a CPSC label). Check with your local Safe Kids Coalition or bike shop about the possibility of providing free or low-cost helmets to children who do not have one.
- Station 2: Bike Fit.** Adjust bikes if necessary so that children can sit on the seat and touch both feet to the ground. As children develop more confidence, the seat can be raised so that just the toes of both feet (or one foot at a time) touch the ground.
- Station 3: Wheel Shop.** At this station, work with bike shop representatives (if available) to teach children and their families how to adjust their bicycles and perform simple maintenance/repair tasks such as filling tires, tightening spokes, adjusting their handlebars and seat, securing the chain, etc.
- Station 4: Following Rules.** At this station, teach children about basic traffic rules, road signs and hand signals. Quiz them orally, and/or have cyclists ride through a mini road course while other children call out directions from common road signs. Riders should practice following all directions while remembering to use their hand signals.
- Station 5: Ride Right.** At this station, children learn how to balance, start and stop, ride straight, ride slowly and scan and signal. Set up a mini-road and have each child practice these skills on the road. Some activities might include asking cyclists to practice riding through a zigzag pattern, having "slow races" (whoever rides the slowest without touching a foot to the ground wins) or having riders trace an outlined figure 8 on their bikes.
- Station 6: Safe Places to Wheel.** This station teaches families about common types of hazards that cyclists need to watch for: moving (cars, pedestrians), stationary (fire hydrants, fences), surface (potholes, rocks) and visual hazards (bushes and other things that block the rider's view). Set up a narrow course with some of these "obstacles" (created from soft sponges for safety), and teach children how to steer around them at the last minute. Add retro reflective materials and lights to bikes and clothing to make the rider more visible to other cyclists, cars and pedestrians.



BIKE SAFETY



KEY MESSAGES

When you conduct any bike safety activity for families, incorporate the following key messages:

- 1. Wear a helmet.**
 - A.** Make sure that the helmet fits on top of your head, not tipped back or forward.
 - B.** Try the Eyes, Ears and Mouth Test
 - **EYES** Check: Position the helmet on your head. Look up and you should see the bottom rim of the helmet. The rim should be one to two finger-widths above the eyebrows.
 - **EARS** Check: Make sure the straps of the helmet form a “V” under your ears when buckled. The strap should be snug but comfortable.
 - **MOUTH** check: Open your mouth as wide as you can. Do you feel the helmet hug your head? If not, tighten those straps and make sure the buckle is flat against your skin.
 - C.** After a crash or any impact that affects your helmet, visibly or not, replace it immediately.
- 2. Follow the rules of the road.**
 - A.** Ride with traffic and obey the same laws as motorists.
 - B.** Use the rightmost lane that heads in the direction that you are traveling.
 - C.** Obey all traffic control devices, such as stop signs, lights and lane markings.
 - D.** Always look back and use hand-and-arm signals to indicate your intention to stop, merge, or turn.
 - E.** Cycling should be restricted to off roads(e.g. sidewalks and paths) until age 10.
- 3. Be visible.**
 - A.** Ride where drivers can see you.
 - B.** Wear brightly colored clothing at all times.
 - C.** At night, use a white front light and red rear light or reflector. Wear reflective tape or clothing.
- 4. Be predictable.**
 - A.** Ride in a straight line and don't swerve between parked cars.
 - B.** Make eye contact with motorists to let them know you are there.
- 5. Anticipate conflicts.**
 - A.** Be aware of traffic around you and be prepared to take evasive action.
 - B.** Learn braking and turning techniques to avoid crashes.
 - C.** Be extra alert at intersections.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

A detailed description of all cycling skills clinic stations, including more information about helmet and bike fit, can be found on the Safe Kids Worldwide website: www.safekids.org