



10 Top Tips for Parents & Educators TEACHING CYCLE SAFETY

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators TEACHING CYCLE SAFETY

Cycling is an amazing way to spend quality time together as a family, as well as keeping everyone healthy and active – and it's an excellent exercise, whatever the age of your children. Getting started can sometimes be daunting, and there are obvious safety concerns over youngsters who are still getting used to a bike – so follow our top tips to help you ride with confidence.

- #### 1 CONSIDER CYCLE TRAINING

Courses like *Bikeability* are extremely useful, and training in general has come a long way since cycling proficiency began, there are *Bikeability* courses for adults, too. Cycle training teaches invaluable skills (such as good road positioning, signaling and visibility), and can help both parents and children feel more at ease on busy streets.
- #### 2 USE A SUITABLE BIKE

Find a bike of an appropriate size for its rider and resist the temptation to have children 'grow into' theirs by buying one too large for them. A bigger bike will be heavier and more difficult to control, making accidents more likely and potentially putting youngsters at cycling heaven. If your child has any specific physical needs, or has dyspraxia, then try out a trike, handcycle or other adaptive cycle to see what works best.
- #### 3 TRY A CARGO BIKE

Cargo bikes, particularly the box-bike style, are ideal for transporting small children around. Depending on the type of bike chosen – as well as the size and age of the children – it can be possible to transport up to four little ones in this way, with additional space for other cargo as well.
- #### 4 INSPECT YOUR CYCLE

It's a good idea to do some routine checks on any bike before going for a ride to make sure everything's working correctly. The 'M check' is particularly useful: assessing the condition and position of the bike's wheels, handlebars, brakes, pedals, chain and saddle, working from front to back. Online tutorial videos can also teach you how to carry out basic repairs if needed. For more complicated fixes, head to your local bike shop.
- #### 5 BRING SUITABLE GEAR

Ensure whatever you're wearing, and any attachments for your bike, are suitable for the ride. A waterproof jacket will let you cycle safely in almost any weather. Make sure any helmets are fitted correctly. If you're riding after dark, remember to fit your bikes with a white front light, a red rear light and a red rear reflector. These are required by law.
- #### 6 STICK TO FLAT TERRAIN

Take a smooth, flat route if possible, so it's more suitable for younger cyclists. You might be surprised by how many quiet roads or back streets there may be in your area. Don't be put off by an indirect but easier path as opposed to a shorter, busier one. Look out for the National Cycle Network, canal towpaths and even parks that you can cut through.
- #### 7 STAY ALERT AND IN SAFE FORMATIONS

For maximum protection and visibility, ride in a line with children in the middle and adults at either end. If you're the only adult present, take up a position at the rear to ensure all children remain in your sight. Don't be tempted to hug the kerb if cycling on the road – riding approximately a metre out will make you more noticeable to other road users, and you'll also stay clear of any debris in the gutter.
- #### 8 AVOID PARKED CARS

When riding past parked cars, try to stay at least a metre away. Just in case anyone makes a door unexpectedly or the vehicle itself starts to move. This precaution will also deter anyone driving behind from trying to squeeze past you when there isn't enough space, so don't be afraid to ride in a prominent position.
- #### 9 START A 'BIKE BUS'

Cycling to school with other families is a potentially fun experience – one which comes with the added benefit of safety in numbers. In case anything goes wrong along the way. Team up with other parents, carers and educators and pick a day to cycle to school together. Who knows – maybe, in time, you'll have other kids asking to join you!
- #### 10 HAVE FUN!

Keep in mind that cycling should be fun! A good bike ride can be really enjoyable for adults and children alike, while also being a superb form of exercise. Ease children into the hobby by starting them off with shorter journeys – such as a trip to the park – and build them up to longer, more complicated outings. Some children may get bored on a longer ride, so try to keep a conversation going with them.

Meet Our Expert
Sophie Gordon is the campaigns manager at Cycling UK, a charity which inspires and enables people to start cycling. She has spent six years campaigning for safer roads and more protected cycle paths, while supporting communities to call for better cycling conditions where they live.

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/teaching-cycle-safety>

@wake_up_weds | www.thenationalcollege | @wake.up.wednesday | @wake.up.weds

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 13.11.2024

Figures from Cycling UK tell us that only 2.2% of UK schoolchildren currently cycle to school despite the majority owning a bike. Encouraging young people to get into this hobby can be a great way to keep them active and cut down on their screen time – while potentially providing them with a healthy and convenient way of travelling to and from school or getting around in general.

Of course, it's imperative that children and young people know how to keep themselves safe while riding from A to B, if we want to avoid the risk of injury or other unpleasant experiences that could discourage them from continuing with the hobby

□ That's why we've put together this free guide – ready for Road Safety week, starting on 17/11 – providing you with expert advice on teaching cycle safety to children and young people.

Please [click here](#) to download the guide.