

Teaching your kids to ride a bike



Who doesn't remember the elation that comes with mastering the art of riding a bicycle for the first time? Let's face it, learning to ride is one of those rituals that marks a change in your status, gives you boasting rights at school (or kindy) and opens up a whole new world of adventure.

The question is, of course, how to learn quickly, with as little personal injury as possible. Follow these tips and you'll be well on your way to big grins and family rides in no time.

- **Don't force it.** You can introduce your kids to riding as soon as you want to, but if they're not interested, they won't learn. Remember to stay positive and upbeat.
- **Safety first.** Always put a helmet on your child's head before they ride.
- **And those trainer wheels?** They won't help much when it comes to balancing. Either take the trainer wheels off, or even better, start them on a push-along bike

like the Avanti Lil' Ripper that has no pedals. With this option, you can start at the age of 2 with no problems.

- **Climbing aboard.** Show them how to mount the bike and manage the handlebars. Remind them they only need to turn the bars a small amount to change direction. Adjust the seat to the right height. Remind them to look straight ahead while riding (not at you).
- **Get them moving.** You can either get them to push along with their feet (works best if you take the pedals off a normal bike or use a push-along bike) so they glide along. Or, hold the back of the seat

with one hand and their shoulder with the other and push gently until they get enough speed to remain upright. Keep running along beside them.

- **Introduce pedalling.** Once they've mastered balance, get them to start off with one pedal at a two o'clock position, push down to take off and glide along. Maintaining momentum will help them with balance.

Eventually you'll be able to let go completely as they balance and pedal on their own. Bask in the glow of their huge grin. You've both done well!