

GET CYCLING

kids edition

Cycling with kids and learning to ride...STEP BY STEP!



ROTORUA
LAKES COUNCIL

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Bike riding is great for kids. It’s fun, builds confidence and coordination.

As they progress, they gain risk assessment skills, road safety awareness and independence. The exercise boosts health and emotional wellbeing.

Bike riding is an awesome family pastime and something kids can do with friends for fun, or for travel to school and around the neighbourhood.

This booklet is a step by step guide for getting kids riding.

Once they have learnt to ride, there are many places around Rotorua where tamariki can build confidence, practice skills and burn off some energy.

GET READY

what to wear

pōtae mārō
helmet

You don't need any fancy gear, just your usual clothes.

Nothing too baggy, keep loose bits tucked in, and you're good to go!

**Always wear a helmet,
it helps protect your head!**

- Get a new helmet if the inside of your helmet is cracked or broken.
- Closed-in shoes will keep your feet safe.



GET READY

helmets

As well as being the law in New Zealand, it's a great idea for everyone to wear an undamaged, well fitting helmet.

Kids bike helmets are not cute accessories, the helmet must be a certified bike helmet.

- Check the helmet is in good condition.
- Hold the helmet so the inside face is up.
- Work your way around the edges, gently trying to pull it apart to see if any cracks appear.
- If you have a crash and the helmet has an impact, check it before wearing it again.
- If it is cracked, it will need to be replaced.

2

Only 2 fingers between the helmet and your eyebrows.



Place the helmet so that it sits flat with a two finger width gap between the eyebrows and the helmet rim. If the helmet has an adjustable cage at the back, tighten it so that the helmet is snug.

V

The sidestraps make a V around the ear.



Adjust the side straps, checking that there is no fraying or twists. On each side there is a buckle which should sit right beneath the earlobe, forming a 'Y' shape on each side.

2

Only 2 fingers fit between the chinstrap and the chin.



Tighten up the chin strap.

GET READY

how to carry kids by bike

So you want to ride your bike with your baby or child, but aren't sure what is the best way to bring the kids along for the ride?

There are a lot of options to carry your baby, toddler or child on your bike or towed behind you. The method best for your family will depend a lot on your child's age, how many kids you are transporting, and the type of riding you'll be doing.

Each option has benefits, but they all have one thing in common – they enable your family biking adventures to begin far before a child can ride for long distances on their own.

Here are some different methods to bring young kids along for the ride. These are not the only ways to carry a child, but they are the most popular methods.

BIKE CARRIER TYPE		BEST AGE
Bike trailer	➡	12 mths - 5 yrs
Bike Seat - BACK	➡	12 mths - 4 yrs (max 20kg)
Bike Seat - FRONT	➡	12 mths - 3 yrs
Cargo Bike	➡	12 mths - adult
Tag along Bike	➡	2 yrs - 8 yrs

Bike trailer

Kids are out of the elements, you can carry extra things and most are fitted with seat belts. If you want to tackle a hilly path, you might want an eBike or a bike with lots of gears.



Bike Seat - FRONT / BACK



Kids get a great view. A compact option that is easy to attach on and off. Different styles from full seat to sit-on-only seats. Can affect how the bike handles and for front seat versions the rider needs to be able to see over the child. *(Usually max weight of 20kg)*

Tag along Bike

Great for kids that aren't able to ride alone, or can ride but get tired easily. The bike has a towing arm. This can either have no front wheel or attach to the child's own bike. Some styles feel quite unbalanced or wobbly.



Cargo Bike



A cargo bike will carry you, the kids and your stuff. Most cargo bikes are electric and come with a range of accessory options. While pricier, these are a real option as a car replacement for around town. There are front and rear cargo options.

Your child's first bike will depend on their size, age and confidence.

Bikes with the same wheel size can vary in overall size, so you may want to try a few out. It's important to get the seat height right to ensure a good fit.

GET READY

choosing a bike

ADAPTIVE BIKES: Adaptive bikes come in a wide range of options and allow children with various disabilities the opportunity to have fun and stay active. With such a variety of choices available, there's likely a perfect fit for every child.



Use this chart as a starting point for choosing what size bike to buy:

SIZE	HEIGHT	AGE
Balance Bike	85-110cm	2-5 years
12 Inch Wheel	85-100cm	2-4 years
16 Inch Wheel	100-120cm	4-7 years
20 Inch Wheel	115-135cm	5-9 years
24 Inch Wheel	130-145cm	7-11 years
26/27.5 Inch Wheel	145cm +	11+ years

TO CHECK A BIKE FOR SIZE:

- Make sure your child can comfortably reach the handlebars and safely operate the brakes.
- They should be able to stand over the frame without actually touching it.



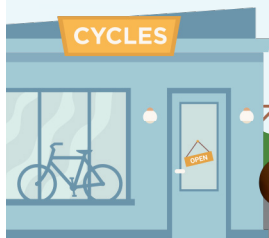
Beginner Rider
- Feet flat



Experienced Rider
- Heels just off ground

It's important to choose a bike your child likes, feels comfortable and confident on and wants to ride! Here are some good things to look for when choosing a bike:

- Light weight - aim for less than 30% of your child's weight
- Easy to use handbrakes - short-reach, easy-pull brakes
- Child-friendly geometry - narrow frames for small bodies
- Quality, replaceable components - fixable at a bike shop



paihikara
bike

GET READY

bike ready

A quick check each day, and a small amount of regular maintenance will make sure your bike is safe and always ready to pedal!

A

AIR: Tyres should be pumped and spin freely without wobbling. Tyres should feel firm like an orange when you squeeze them. Replace tyres that have no tread or bald patches.

B

BRAKES: Check each brake is working by rolling the bike forward and squeezing them one at a time. Check the pads are not too worn (thin or squeaky) and that the brake lever is adjusted correctly and does not pull all the way into the handle bar.

‘ABCD’

Check your bike before you ride!

wira
wheel

whakatū
brakes

D

DROP TEST: Drop your bike gently onto its tyres from a height of about 10cm. Listen for unusual rattles or creaks. Remove or tighten parts where required.

tīni
chain

C

CONTROL: Chain, cranks and handlebars. Check the chain moves freely and the cranks (the bit the pedals are attached to) don't move from side to side. Check the handlebars are tight by 'parking' the front wheel between your legs, then turning the handlebars firmly. The handlebars should only move with the wheel.



GET RIDING

*learn to ride
- balance bike*

A balance bike, also known as a strider bike, glider bike, running bike, or toddler push bike, is a pedal-less bicycle with two wheels.

Balance bikes are designed to teach children the art of balancing on two wheels and steering. Your child can ride a balance bike as soon as they are walking confidently and are keen to try.

Just like pedal bikes, there are different sizes and types of balance bikes, so have a look around in your local bike shops.

**taurite
balance**



Your child may ride a balance bike from 1 year till as late as 6 years of age. Balance bikes are so much fun to ride, and are a far better experience than a pedal bike with training wheels. While some kids need a little instruction, most kids intuitively move through the stages below on their own. So you don't really "teach" a child to ride a balance bike. These stages simply help parents to understand what this process might look like.



STAGES OF LEARNING TO USE A BALANCE BIKE:

Stand and walk

Sit and walk

Sit and run

Run, glide and explore!

GET RIDING

You can get your child riding confidently with a bit of patience and time.

learn to ride
– pedal bike

If your child has never used a balance bike, the fastest, easiest, and most effective way to teach your child is simply taking the pedals off their bike so they can focus on balancing. Once they have mastered this, then give pedaling a go.

SIGNS YOUR LITTLE ONE MAY BE READY TO GET PEDALLING:

- They're a balance bike ninja
- They are physically ready to ride
- They're eager to get pedaling



kia taurite tō noho
balance yourself

- 1 Find an open, flat, safe space without too many obstacles
- 2 If it is on a slight slope even better!



If you fall, dust yourself off and give it another go!



GET RIDING

Getting started is the hardest bit!

1

First, run on the bike like they did without the pedals. They will need to place their feet behind the pedals to do this. This is usually easier on a slight decline.

hikina ō wawawae
lift your feet



Get gliding, lift feet up and onto the pedals. Push down to pedal and keep going.

2

Kaua e titiro ki te papa
don't look at the ground

3

A bike is more stable at higher speeds. If a child is slowing down too much (often due to stopping to look at their feet to figure out pedaling), encourage them to 'pedal faster' or 'keep pedaling'



STOPPING: Don't forget to teach them how to stop! Especially if they have only just started using brakes. Squeeze brakes gently to stop and put one foot down. Practice this on a slight slope several times before going anywhere steeper.

4

GET RIDING

the next step:
starting from a standstill

- 1 Put one foot on the pedal and one foot on the ground.



- 2 Make sure the pedal is in this position. This is called: **'PEDAL READY'**
It will enable you to get going with enough momentum.



- 3 Push down hard with your lead foot and off you go!



TRAINING WHEELS: Training wheels can be fitted to most 12" and 16" bikes. For some kids, they are a good part of the learning to ride process. However training wheels often slow down learning the skill of balance. If you do use training wheels, they should be set off the ground. Ensure the rear wheel brake works properly.



GET RIDING

Top Tips

HAVING TROUBLE? HERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT MIGHT HELP:

Guide them with a hand centered on the shoulders or lower back. Give a gentle push when needed to keep going.

If your child can't figure out the pedaling motion, this is normal! They will pick up pedalling faster if they have used a 3 wheel bike with pedals before.

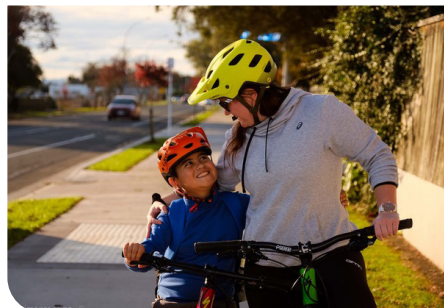
Encourage your child to push down really hard with their pedal foot as this will give them momentum to get the bike moving.

Encourage your child to look up and look where they are going (not down).

Me aro atu
ki mua
Look ahead

It's okay if your first teaching effort wasn't 100% successful!

Once your child has learnt to ride by themselves, they will still need support and lots of practice. It is good to get them practising how to ride at different speeds, coasting, stopping on a given target such as a line on the ground, slowing down without having to put their foot down and looking around while riding without wobbling or losing control.



GET EXPLORING

bikes in schools

In Rotorua we have several schools that have 'Bikes in Schools' programme facilities.

These schools have asphalt bike tracks that are a great place to practice skills in a safe, traffic-free environment.

Great for:

- Stand and watch
- Skills practice
- Pump tracks

where you can find

bikes in schools

- AORANGI SCHOOL
- ROTOKAWA SCHOOL
- ROTORUA PRIMARY SCHOOL
- SUNSET SCHOOL
- MAMAKU SCHOOL

Mamaku School



Sunset School

GET EXPLORING

shared paths - off road

Off-road shared paths are great places to practice skills before going into situations nearer to traffic.

Ensure that children are comfortable on the bike and no longer wobble as they ride.

They need to listen and be able to control their speed.

Kia āta haere, tēnā,
kia tere ake
Just go slowly, now,
speed up.

SKILLS TO PRACTICE:

- Be aware of surroundings
- Stopping on demand
- Stopping to the side of the path
- Looking all around (and staying in control)
- Taking one hand off handlebars
- Pedal ready starts
- Cycling at different speeds

You want be sure your child can do what you ask, when you ask, before graduating to shared paths beside traffic.

where you can find

shared paths

- MANGAKĀKAHI/LINTON PARK
- UTUHINA STREAM
- NGONGOTAHĀ TRAIL
- REEME ST RESERVE
- TAHUNA A PUKEKO/HAMURANA LAKEFRONT RESERVE
- TE ARIKIROA/SANATORIUM PATH



GET EXPLORING

Rotorua has a growing network of shared paths, enabling people to get around the rohe/ area safely and easily by bike.

shared paths
- beside the road

These paths are a great way to teach your child road safety rules so they can become independent riders in the future.

SKILLS TO PRACTICE:

- Crossings are the safest place to cross. Dismount, stop and look before you cross. Walk when crossing the road.
- Basic hand signals like 'Left turn' - left arm straight out..
- Share the path - give way and slow down for people walking.



When riding as one adult with children, our suggestion is that the children ride at the front of the group. This allows the adult behind to continually talk to the child about what is coming up, what they should be looking out for and where they should stop.

Riding with the child in front does require trust in their skills and listening ability but it also allows the adult to continually watch them.

Riding with the child behind the adult means the child may unintentionally get left behind, or they could become distracted without the adult realising.

When riding with multiple adults, having one at the front and one at the back of the group is ideal.



You can download the cycling map with all our shared paths on the Rotorua Lakes Council website.

rotorualakescouncil.nz/our-services/maps

Cycling Superstar CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that

.....

Has the skills to:

(✓ Tick each milestone you complete)

Stop a pedal bike using the hand and/or pedal brakes

Start from stationary

Ride one-handed for a little way and stay in control

Look behind and stay in control

Ride around obstacles at different speeds

Ride on their own

Get off a bike to cross the road

Stop and look before crossing

Welcome to the club, you're a cycling superstar now!



HOW TO BE A road crossing star

**For all types of crossings
the rules for our children are
always the same.**



Teach your child to 'Stop and Look' for vehicles, if there are cars coming, look at the driver and wait for them to stop before crossing.

If cars do not stop, wait for the road to be clear before you cross. Continue to look for traffic as you cross.

CROSS LIKE A SUPERSTAR:

- Stop one step back from the kerb.
- Dismount to walk if on a bike or scooter.
- Stop and Look for traffic coming from all directions.
- If there is traffic coming, wait until it stops or has passed. Look again. When the road is clear or the traffic stops, walk quickly and straight across the road.
- Continue to be alert as you cross.



GET CYCLING

kids edition

Find out more:



rotorualakescouncil.nz/safeandsustainablejourneys

