



## CARE & LEARNING SERVICE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ADVICE FOR

### BIKE RIDING

#### SAFETY FIRST

##### Space:

Find a large area that is free from cars and obstacles. Ideally there would be a flat area and a gentle slope.

##### Road Safety:

It is never too early to start teaching road safety skills. You could work on this without a bicycle to start off with to focus on one thing at a time.

##### Helmet:

Make sure your child is able to do this up independently. If this is difficult, use a mirror or practice with it in front of your child so they can see the fastening.



#### STAGED APPROACH

It can be very daunting for a child to jump straight onto a bicycle and have a go. Work through these steps to increase confidence and practice skills.

- Walking next to a scooter
- On a scooter
- Walking next to a bicycle
- On a bicycle:
  - With pedals off (if you are unsure, ask at a local bicycle shop / Halfords)
  - Seat lowered so feet are flat on the floor
- On a bicycle:
  - With pedals on
  - Seat at the correct height

#### COMMON MISTAKES

Do not use the one-stabiliser method. It does not teach balance and tends to encourage leaning

- Avoid the “hold the back of the seat” “run beside the bike” technique. It can create a false sense of balance or be a source of anxiety
- Do not expect (or promise) the learning process will be crash free
- Do not rush through the stages and skills



## STEP-BY-STEP BREAKDOWN

You do not necessarily have to work through these in the order given below, but it is good to work on each skill separately.

- Getting on and off
- Using the brakes (bicycle only)
  - Back brake only
  - Both brakes together
- Going in a straight line
- Steering:
  - In the intended direction
  - Around corners
  - Around obstacles
- Scooting: pushing the scooter or bicycle along with your foot
- Freewheeling: with both feet off the floor, the scooter or bicycle is moving forward with you balanced on it
  - Try practicing this on a gentle slope as it helps with balance
- Pedalling:
  - Going down a slope
  - Along the flat
  - Going from stop to start



## TOP TIPS

- Allow plenty of time for practice
- Give lots of praise and encouragement
- If a child is struggling, go back a stage to increase confidence
- Using a smaller bicycle can be easier to learn on
- Demonstrate and explain each of the skills / stages
- If a child is still having difficulty, try to pinpoint which stage or skill this is with
- Then use other people / video / photos to help to come up with ideas of how to approach it (make sure you include your child)



## **BIKE RIDING**

I can...

- ☐ Get on and off my bike

### **Brakes**

- ☐ Using my back brake
- ☐ Use my front brake
- ☐ Use both brakes together

### **Steering**

- ☐ I can go in a straight line
- ☐ I can go the way I want to go
- ☐ I can go around corners
- ☐ I can go around obstacles

### **Moving**

- ☐ I can scoot along using my feet
- ☐ I can free-wheel (move along with both feet off the floor)

### **Peddalling**

- ☐ I can pedal down a slope
- ☐ I can pedal on the flat
- ☐ I can pedal from a stand-still
- ☐ I can pedal up a hill