

# Tips for Getting Your Kids to Wear Bicycle Helmets

## From the American Academy of Pediatrics



**Establish the helmet habit early.** Have your children wear helmets as soon as they start to ride bikes—even if they are passengers on the back of adults' bikes. If they learn to wear helmets whenever they ride bikes, it will become a habit for a lifetime. It's never too late, however, to get your children into helmets.

**Wear a helmet yourself.** Kids learn best by observing you. Whenever you ride your bike, put on your helmet. Plan bicycle outings during which all family members wear their helmets to further reinforce the message. The most important

factor influencing children to wear helmets is riding with an adult who wears a helmet.

**Talk to your kids about why you want them to protect their heads.** There are many things you can tell your children to convince them of the importance of helmet use: 1. Bikes are vehicles, not toys. 2. You love and value them and their intelligence. 3. They can hurt their heads permanently or even die from head injuries.

Most professional athletes use helmets when participating in sports. Bicycle racers are now required to use them when racing in the United States and in the Olympics.

**Reward your kids for wearing helmets.** Praise them; give them special treats or privileges when they wear their helmets without having to be told to.

**Don't let children ride their bikes unless they wear their helmets.** Be consistent. If you allow your children to ride occasionally without their helmets, they won't believe that helmet use really is important. Tell your kids they have to find another way to play, or must walk or take a bus to get somewhere, if they don't want to use their helmets.



**Encourage your children's friends to wear helmets.** Peer pressure can be used in a positive way if several families in the neighborhood start making helmet use a regular habit at the same time.

**REMEMBER:** Accidents causing head injuries can occur on sidewalks, driveways, bike paths, and parks as well as on streets. You and your children cannot predict when a fall from a bike will occur. It's important to wear a helmet on every ride, no matter how short.

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