



CYCLABILITIES

Staying Safe: Pedestrian and Cycling Safety

Cyclabilities, Cycling and children with additional needs

According to the Road Safety Trust, the ACT has the highest cycling participation rate in Australia, however, anecdotally we know children with additional needs (and by extension their families) often miss out.

While there is very little published around the cycling participation of children with additional needs in Australia we have found many factors can negatively impact their involvement. One of the most significant is the inability of existing mainstream teaching methods and resources to address the cycling and road safety needs of these children.

Despite these barriers, cycling can provide many benefits for children with additional needs. This can include increased physical activity, improved gross motor skills, balance and coordination. In addition to these tangible skills, participants in the Cyclabilities pilot program have shown increased confidence, independence and social skills, as well as cognitive development and increased visual perception. The ability to cycle independently allows for a new means of transport and a lifelong skill.

Cyclabilities has developed to address this gap, as a *road safety* and *learn to ride* program for children with additional needs. The program draws on a multidisciplinary therapy team to provide a holistic approach to learning. Recognizing that each student is different, the program works to provide a personalised, student centred model of learning responsive to the needs in individual participants.

This manual has been developed to support the development of pedestrian and cycling safety skills. It is divided into two sections: Pedestrian Safety; and Cycling Safety. Each section explores the basic skills children need to begin to develop, and identifies strategies to support the provision of this instruction to children with additional needs.

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Pedestrian Safety

Learning how to be a safe pedestrian opens up a world of outdoor activity. Walking or running outside can improve fitness and coordination, lowers stress levels, provide a sensory retreat, not to mention hours of enjoyment. While pedestrian safety may not seem directly related to cycling it should underpin your child's learning to ride journey. In learning how to be safe around roads as a pedestrian your child is building their safety skills, developing appropriate levels of confidence, and broadening their understanding of how all it all fits together.

Pedestrian Safety Statistics

Think about this. Between 2005-2014 there were 1877 pedestrian fatalities in, representing approximately 13% of all road fatalities nation-wide Australia (Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, 2015a). Breaking it down a little further, 174 (9.3%) of these fatalities were children aged 0-16 years.

While shocking on their own, it's important to remember that these numbers reflect only *fatalities* and not serious injuries or hospitalisations. As such, they significantly underrepresent the level of pedestrian injury in Australia. Some slightly older research looking at serious pedestrian injury is a little more telling. In the eight-year period between 2002-03 to 2009-10 some 5216 children aged 0-14 years suffered serious injury as a result of a motor vehicle accident in Australia (Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, 2012). Wow.

Understanding a little about these accidents is also useful. While most occurred on the road, a significant number also happened around the home or in other 'non-traffic locations' such as car parks, sporting grounds and schools (Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, 2012). There goes the comfortable illusion that kids will be safe away from the road! Additionally, it isn't always four wheeled vehicles that are involved in these types of accidents. While cars, trucks and 4x4's contribute to vast majority of these fatalities and injuries others result from accidents with motorcycles, three wheeled vehicles and bicycles (Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, 2012).

In our research, we found nothing that specifically looks at pedestrian and road safety for children (or adults) with additional needs. What we do know though, is that kids with additional needs are more vulnerable and at higher risk than developmentally typical kids. The development of pedestrian and road safety skills relies of the interaction of a child's cognitive, social/emotional and physical development. Children who experience delays in one or more of these areas may struggle to understand and to demonstrate safe behavior. Delayed processing time and reaction times will also have an impact on a child's ability to respond to danger similar to typically developing children. Behavioral regulation, difficulties in maintaining attention, sensory issues, physical impairment or disability. All of these will place a child with additional needs at greater risk.

Supporting your child to become a safe pedestrian

At Cyclabilities, we have identified some clear strategies you can use to support the development of your child's pedestrian safety skills. It's likely that these will seem common sense, however breaking them down and understanding how these strategies can support your child will allow you to reflect on how you can incorporate these into your everyday life.

Modelling and sending consistent messages

Yep. This bit comes down to you! What you *say* and what you *do*... and essentially making sure they're the same. The research very clearly shows that parents are the key source of road and pedestrian safety knowledge for children. From the outset make sure you are teaching your child that roads can be dangerous and are not a safe place to play. Ensure that your messages are consistent and repeated often. This manual covers some of the basic messages you should be passing along.

But, of course, there's a catch. It can't just be about what you *say*. You also have to *practice* what you preach! You have to demonstrate the behaviours you want to teach your child. Children are much (much, much) more likely to adopt safety behaviours if these behaviours are consistently role modelled by parents. This is clearly demonstrated in an American study looking at road safety behaviours. The study found that while 78% of parents indicated their child wearing a helmet was 'extremely or very important', only 25% of the parents wore one themselves. As a result, only 40% of children indicated that they regularly wore a helmet (News for parents).

While this study focused on developmentally typical children, we feel these findings are absolutely transferable to children with additional needs. In fact, at Cyclabilities, we don't think we can overstate the importance positive role modelling! Particularly for children who struggle with attention and behavioral regulation, consistently demonstrating positive safety behaviours is a key way you can support your child to develop their pedestrian and road safety skills. For children with these particular issues, repetition and consistency are vital for skill consolidation.

Talking Traffic

'Talking traffic with kids' or 'commentary walking' is a concept used by the *Kids and Traffic* group at Macquarie University (<http://www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au>). We love it. It essentially brings together a lot of the best practice elements of teaching kids road safety. Pretty much, the concept focuses on adults talking to kids about all the things they do to keep safe while in a traffic environment as they're doing them.

This practical process allows you to explain a skill and clearly demonstrate it in context. Your child then has a concrete example of how to stay safe. They get to see each of the skills you are working on teaching them. You can break the skill down into chunks that suit your child's developmental stage and learning style. You can make these components digestible and relatable. The more examples of each skill they can file away, the more likely they are to develop a good understanding of both the skill and the context in which it should be applied.

There are endless things 'talk traffic' about with your child. We suggest starting by walking around your local area together. Because the setting is familiar, this will give your child the chance to focus their attention on the things you're doing, and allow you to reflect on some of the things you take for granted.

Maybe start by looking at some of these:

- Roads. Which are the busy road? How can you tell the difference?
- What are the signs on the road? What do these signs tell drivers and pedestrians?
- Driveways, foot paths, alleyways. Label and explore these concepts with your child.
- Why it's important to hold and adults hand?
- Why it is important to stop at the edge of the driveway, road, curb or crossing?
- The difference between moving and parked cars?
- Directionality. Identifying the direction of the traffic.
- Steps you take before crossing a driveway, road or car park (stop, look, listen, think).

Your safety skills are so ingrained you take them for granted. It's easy to forget that you have had years (years and years) to master these skills. It's important to remember road and pedestrian safety is made up of a complex set of skills and judgements that we make largely invisibly and unconsciously (Kids and Traffic). If we don't talk to children about the things we do to keep safe it is very difficult for them to learn these skills.

It is also important to remember that while kids speak the same language as us they can often have a different understanding of words and concepts. This can be a particular problem for children with additional needs who often see and experience with world in slightly different ways. Be consistent and repetitive. Also, work on developing strategies to check your child is both *hearing* and *understanding* the message you're trying to deliver.

Holding Hands

Another really simple one. Hold your child's hand. Just holding your child's hand will dramatically increase their safety. The consistent messages from child safety groups are as follows:

- Children should hold an adults hand on the footpath, crossing roads, around driveways and in car parks (pretty much anywhere there are traffic safety hazards) until they are at least 8 years old. It's important to remember that these guidelines really focus on developmentally typical kids. Children with additional needs may need a much long period of physical support to keep them safe.
- If they can't hold an adult's hand they should hold onto a pram, stroller, bag, trolley or the adults clothing.

Pedestrian Safety Skills

At Cyclabilites we focus on a couple key pedestrian skills: safe crossings and driveway safety. TO follow we will go through them both and look at how to approach them with your child.

Safe Crossing

In terms of pedestrian safety, crossing a road presents an especially high-risk activity. When crossing over, the pedestrian comes in direct contact with traffic and must bring together a whole suite of skills to negotiate a safe cross-over. The risks are higher still for children. The road is comparatively much wider to cross, which places extra demands on visual timing skills and other perceptual and motor skills including distance perception, speed estimation and the ability to judge acceleration. Not forgetting of course, that children are easily distracted and often have limited attention. This reality is further complicated for children with additional needs, many of whom struggle with any or all of these skills, placing them at higher risk still.

Crossing the Road

Given these risks, a safe and consistent process to support your child in learning to cross a road safely is vital. At Cyclabilities, we draw on the *Stop, Look, Listen, Think, Hold Hands, Wait for GO* (SLLTHG) approach. Under this training method children are taught to:

- **STOP** one step back from the curb or shoulder of the road if there is no footpath.
- **LOOK** in all directions for approaching traffic (think back to left, right, left).
- **LISTEN** for traffic approaching from all directions.
- **THINK** about whether it is safe to cross the road. This brings together the above look and listen. Is the road clear or all traffic has stopped?
- **HOLD** an adult's hand.
- **WAIT** until an adult says it is safe to cross. At this point consistency is really important. We encourage use of the consistent verbal cue "**GO**" when it is safe to cross the road.
- Continue to **HOLD** an adult's hand and walk straight across the road. Keep **LOOKING** and **LISTENING** for traffic while crossing.

It is important that you discuss each element of this process with your child as you execute it. Talk them through what you are doing and why you are doing. Make sure your messages are clear, consistent and repeated regularly. If your child struggles with process or integrating steps maybe try working on one element at a time in a safe practice space, perhaps create a 'road' at home to support this learning. Try visuals or a visual schedule of steps if you think this may work for your child.

Where to cross a road

The SLLTHG approach should be supported with clear messages about choosing a safe place to cross a road in the first instance. In line with child safety groups, we suggest if possible you should always cross a road at:

- **A pedestrian crossing.** Teach your children to identify the zebra stripes and understand what they mean. Teach them to only cross when cars have stopped for them.
- **Pedestrian traffic lights.** Clearly explain how these traffic signals work and what each colour means. Teach children they are only to cross when they can see the 'green man' or the green WALK sign, and to never cross when they can see a 'red man' or the red DON'T WALK sign.

If there are no crossings available, explain to your child that they need to choose a place where they can see traffic in all directions and where drivers can see them. Discuss the need to:

- **Walk straight across** the road. Remain focused on getting to the other side. Take the most direct route and don't jay-walk.
- **Keep checking** in both directions to ensure traffic conditions haven't changed.
- **Choose a clear space** away from parked cars or trees and bushes to ensure they can be seen.
- **Don't cross near a bend or a hill** on the road, as both can make it hard to see traffic and for traffic to see them.

In addition to the skills outlined above we also recommend giving your child some grounded experience. We suggest really focusing on your local area, and the spaces your child spends a lot of time. Even if your child is nowhere near ready to cross a road by themselves, starting early gives them plenty of time to understand and naturalize the process.

Other considerations

Safe road crossing needs both focus and concentration. In order to look and listen effectively, it's important for your child to be free from distractions. I know, this will probably make you unpopular but it is really important to ensure your child's safety. Some common distractions to eliminate include:

- **Headphones and listening to music.** Music or audio-books mask traffic noise and provide something else for the child to focus on. This is likely to impair their judgement.
- **Phones and other devices.** We know that looking at phones (whether it be Facebook, Texting, YouTube, Instagram) presents a significant distraction. It inhibits spatial awareness so that users may not see what is in front of them, let alone to the left or right. Using devices around roads will significantly compromise your child's ability to make decisions about their safety.
- **Clothing** choices will also influence your child's safety crossing roads. Dressing children in bright colours will ensure they are able to be seen more clearly by road users, particularly in low light.

Driveway safety

On average, more than five children are killed and 47 seriously injured in driveways each year across Australia (Transport for New South Wales). It seems strange that this environment, where people are driving so slowly, could pose such a risk to our kids right?

Driveways are risky for a couple of reasons. First, vehicles are most often reversing which limits visibility. Second, children (especially little ones) are often not tall enough to be visible to the driver. These factors are often compounded because road safety education focuses so much on roads and car parks that children and drivers are often not as cautious or watchful around in this setting.

Not forgetting of course that children are easily distracted and often struggle with situational awareness, judging speed and distance, and predicting the directionality of sound. Of course, as developmentally typical children grow older they tend to attain some of these skills. Children with additional needs for often take much longer, and may never process environmental input in the same ways as their developmentally typical peers. This makes them a particular risk in these environments.

The NSW Centre for Road Safety outlines three steps to help keep your children (developmentally typical or otherwise) safe in driveways: Supervise, separate and see (Transport for New South Wales).

Supervise

Quite simply, supervise your kids in the driveway, particularly when there are moving vehicles. According to Choice, in 85% of driveway run-overs “the driver doesn't even know that the child is near the vehicle – they're under the impression the child is being looked after elsewhere” (Choice).

When children are around driveways with moving vehicles they should be *actively supervised* by an adult who is holding their hand. If you're moving a vehicle clearly hand over supervision responsibility to another adult. If you're the only adult around and need to move the car, put the kids in the car and strap them in first.

Separate

Separate the spaces your children play in from driveways and parking garages. Treat the driveway like a road or car park. Don't let your children use the driveway as a play area. Ever. If possible physically separate play spaces from garages and driveways. This might involve using fences, high handles on garage doors and self-closing doors or gates. For a child with additional needs this may be as simple as drawing a chalk 'do not cross line'. Explain this separation to your children so they also start to think of the driveway as a potentially unsafe place.

See

This comes down to you, as the driver, ensuring the driveway is clear and safe before moving a vehicle. Children are fast. Their behavior can be unpredictable and they are often oblivious to the potential risks around them, particularly children with additional needs. It's essential that we, as drivers, are constantly aware of children when reversing or moving vehicles.

This should involve more than just looking in your mirrors. All vehicles have blind spots, and while reversing sensors and cameras can reduce the risk, it can be very difficult to notice a small child until it is too late. It is important not to become complacent. Before entering the vehicle, make sure there are no children behind the car and check for children and other pedestrians nearby. Make sure there is nothing obstructing a clear vision through mirrors and the rear window before reversing. Always reverse very slowly and look both ways so all areas of potential danger are visible.

Skills to practice

To support the development of pedestrian safety skills set up some activities and practice with your child. Think about each of the following.

- Hold hands with your child whilst walking on the footpath, or upon exiting the car.
- Talk traffic all the time. Talk about your surroundings. Point out roads, curbs, driveways, pedestrian crossings.
- Practicing walking, stopping, waiting, listening and thinking.
- Practice selecting the best place to cross a road.
- Practicing getting out of the car on the curb side.
- Practice using traffic lights. Work on identifying what the different colours mean.

Cycling Safety

Let's move on to cycling safety. The whole of the Cyclabilities program is premised on how wonderful cycling is. It's fast and it's fun, and provides a sense of freedom and independence, as well as a great opportunity for family time. There are lots of physical benefits, which are often extra important for children with additional needs. Cycling increases physical activity levels, it can improve gross motor skills, balance and coordination. At Cyclabilities we have also seen several psychological benefits, such as increased confidence, independence and social skills, as well as cognitive development and increased visual perception.

Despite all of these benefits, however, we also know that cyclists are particularly vulnerable road users. Sound cycling safety skills are vital to ensure your child can safely and appropriately ride their bike.

Cycling Safety Statistics

We know cyclists as vulnerable road users but what does this mean exactly? Let look at the numbers. Between 2010 and 2014, 200 cyclists were killed on Australian roads (Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, 2015b). This represents 3% of all road fatalities in Australia.

However, as with the statistics looking at pedestrian safety, these numbers reflect only *fatalities* and not serious injuries or hospitalisations, and as such significantly underrepresent cycling injury. When we look more specifically at hospitalisations, we see that each year over 5000 cyclists are hospitalized in Australia (Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, 2015b). This accounts for approximately 15% of all road hospitalisations. Frighteningly, for all states and territories except Tasmania, the proportion of total cycling hospitalisations has increased over time (Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, 2015b).

Breaking it down a little further, children aged 0–16 years have the highest rate of cycling hospitalisations. In 2012, a total of 1030 children were hospitalised as a result of a cycling injury (Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, 2015b). Of note, boys were approximately four times more likely than girls to be hospitalised following a cycling crash (Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics, 2015b).

As with pedestrian safety, we found nothing that specifically looks at cycling safety for children (or adults) with additional needs in our research. We do know however, that kids with additional needs are more vulnerable and at higher risk than developmentally typical kids. Like pedestrian skills, cycling safety skills relies of the integration of cognitive, social/emotional and physical development in a child. Children who experience delays in one or more of these areas may struggle to understand and demonstrate safe behavior. Delayed processing time and reaction times will have an impact on a child's ability to respond to danger similar to typically developing children. Behavioral regulation, difficulties in maintaining attention, sensory issues, physical impairment or disability will all place a child with additional needs at greater risk.

Supporting your child to become a safe cyclist

At Cyclabilities, we work with some clear strategies you can use to support the development of your child's cycling safety skills. Like those we identified for pedestrian safety, some will seem common sense, but we find in breaking it down we can look at how these strategies can support your child and allow you to reflect on how they can be incorporated into your everyday life.

Wear a helmet

We have gone over this before. If you're riding a bike you need to wear a helmet. It is law in the ACT yes, but it is also smart. A major international study of bike helmet use around the world recently found helmets reduce the risks of a serious head injury by nearly 70% (Farrell, 2016). Ensure that the helmet you select has the *Australian Standards* logo sticker inside the helmet.

Our *Before you Start* manual goes into depth about how to ensure a helmet is fitted properly. Refer back and make sure your helmet, and the helmet your child is wearing are fitting properly. Wearing a helmet may present a challenge for some children with additional needs, they are meant to be relatively firm fitting and buckle under the chin. If you think this may be the case for your child, spend some time working on wearing a helmet before you look at bikes at all. Make this comfortable and familiar before introducing any other tasks.

Be visible (and noisy)

Making sure both the bike and the rider are clearly visible is an important safety measure. Visibility is affected by weather and time of day and the awareness of other road users. Make your child stand out as much as you can.

When it comes to the bike itself make sure it is fitted with reflective strips. As many as you can fit on there. These can be purchased cheaply from bike shops and will make the bike much easier to see. Also consider bike lights. This can include a headlight type set up or flashing lights to increase the visibility of the bike. While these are more expensive they go a long way to ensure the bike is visible.

Dressing for visibility is also a really easy way to ensure the bike and rider are visible. When riding, make sure your child is dressed in highly visible, bright, light coloured or reflective clothes. It may even be worth investing in a reflective vest.

While not about visibility, it is important to also make sure your child's bike has a bell or a horn. Having the ability to make noise is a really important tool to let other road users know you're there (if they missed the bright clothing, reflective strips and flashing lights!).

Choose where to ride and plan routes

One of the key ways to keep your child safe on their bike is to carefully choose where you go riding and to plan your route. This is particularly important for children with additional needs, as it allows you to tailor the ride to meet their particular needs as well as their skill level. If they're averse to crowds or lots of noise, you can find a quiet space, away from busy roads. If they need extra support to stay safe around water or traffic, you can avoid getting too close to bodies of water or busy roads. This planning

will significantly impact whether the experience is positive or negative for your child, and ultimately the success of their learning to ride journey.

Certainly, while your child is becoming a proficient and safe cyclist choose quiet space like quiet bike paths, local parks, or other safe and open spaces. Children under 12 years and adults accompanying them are allowed to ride on footpaths, so this may also be a good option, particularly around your local area. This will give your child the chance to focus on their riding and reduce the potential risk. As they become more competent and grow in confidence consider progressing to busier bike paths. Here they will need to adhere to road rules, understand and obey signs and potentially interact with other cyclists. For children with sensory issues, this will also provide an opportunity to integrate their riding skills and they management of sensory input.

Eventually, they may be ready to move onto roads. Avoid busy roads, instead choosing back roads with less traffic. Consider routes that involve left-hand turns (rather than right-hand turns), and fewer traffic hazards, crossings or lights. Here your child will be interacting with cars and other road traffic, as well as other cyclists and potentially pedestrians. In these environments, they will need to signal, competently check traffic around them and move through intersections. This may be very challenging for some children with additional needs, and may *never* be something they feel safe and comfortable doing. It's important for us to remember if this is the case that's ok. Recognizing their limits is an important skill both for them and for you as their carer.

Main roads are by far the most dangerous and stressful place to ride. Traffic levels are often high, there are lots of intersections and cross traffic and bucket loads of distractions. Where possible avoid them altogether. Don't attempt these with your child until you are absolutely confident in their skill level (as well as yours), as well as their ability to behave appropriately in order to maintain their safety. Again, your child may not develop their skills and confidence to master this riding environment, and that is ok!

There are lots of cycling maps available online, and the ACT transport website has lots of local information (<http://www.transport.act.gov.au/getting-around/active-travel/active-travel-for-the-community/cycling>). Otherwise, you may want to get out and scout the route beforehand.

Tips for planning a family ride

At Cyclabilities we have identified a few tips and tricks to take into consideration when planning your family rides. While these are largely common sense it can be easy to get carried away.

- **Keep it short and let the slowest cyclist set the pace.** If it is too long or too hard everyone will fatigue and will likely become ratty. It's better that everyone enjoys themselves and comes home keen for the next ride. Be realistic about how far you can get.
- **Make it interesting.** Kids get bored so plan plenty of breaks and ride 'somewhere' (a park or playground, duck pond or lunch). Make up games, like a 'spotto' list of things they can look for.
- **Take a friend.** Your child will probably enjoy the ride more if they have a friend along, and they are likely to try a little harder. It is important to make sure the two are at roughly the same skill level.
- **Dress for the weather.** Be sensible. If it's hot, wear sun cream and light, sun smart clothes. Stay hydrated and don't set out in the hottest part of the day. If it's cold, dress your kids in layers they can shed as they warm up.
- **Feed the workers.** Take snacks and drinks, it's important to keep their energy and spirit levels up.

Become Hazard Aware

While you can't control all the hazards in your child's cycling environment, developing an awareness and understanding of road hazards with your child will allow them to take steps to minimize any risk. We suggest the best way to teach your children about these hazards is to make it interactive and fun. Set up a fake road with their toys, run through some scenarios and clearly explain the potential risks. Similar to the *Talking Traffic* philosophy outlined in the pedestrian safety section, discuss safety issues when riding or walking with your child. We have identified some key hazards below you might like to focus on.

Other road users

It's important that your child understands they are sharing the bike path or road with other road users. This may include vehicles, other bikes, pedestrians, small children, larger groups and pets. Work to develop your child's understanding of how each of these may present a risk to them, as well as their responsibilities to respect other road users.

Condition of the cycling surface

The state of the road or path presents a potential hazard to all cyclists. Discuss with your child what they should be watchful for: rocks, potholes, cracks in the road, painted road markings, crumbling edges and wet or slippery roads.

Opening car doors

One of the biggest risks to bike riders on roads is car doors being opened into their path. The risk here is twofold, the cyclist may swerve out further into the road or collide with the car door. There are a few things you can do to minimize this risk. If safe to do so, cycle one meter from parked cars to provide clearance. Check for drivers in parked vehicles. Ensure the bike is visible and noisy. Again, think carefully about the appropriateness of road riding for your child and their ability to manage this hazard.

Turning vehicles

Another particular risk to cyclists on roads or footpaths is turning traffic. Other road users may be turning onto another road or into a driveway and may not see cyclists. Teach your child to scan the traffic often, particularly when approaching cross roads. Again, ensure the bike and rider are as visible as possible, and whether the road is a safe choice.

Supervise and Share

Yep. Another one that comes down to you and your being involved. One of the best ways to support your child to become a safe and competent cyclist is to constantly supervise them and to share their cycling experience. Get on a bike next to them and make riding a family activity that you can share. There are so many benefits to cycling with your child, here are a couple:

- You will be constantly modeling behaviour. They get to see how all of the things you talk to them about are actually executed. This will reinforce their learning and translate each skill into concrete practice.
- You gain a family hobby. A shared experience, something you can engage in, talk about, plan, discuss *together*.

- You have the opportunity to closely monitor your child and their skill development. You can see what their strengths are and identify areas that need a little extra work. You also get the chance to see when their ready to progress their skills.

Cycling Safety Skills

We have identified some basic safety rules to follow below. These are just a reference point to focus your bike safety thinking. They will put you in the right head space to identify additional safety practice that are relevant in your environment.

- **Wear a Helmet.** Make sure you and your child are always wearing a correctly fitted, Australian standards approved, bicycle helmet (again with the helmet!).
- **Bike safe.** Make sure your gear is safe. Check equipment for safety before each ride.
- **Dress safe.** Wear appropriate clothing, think highly visible light coloured or reflective clothing.
- **Minimize distractions.** Listening to music, texting or talking with a music player or mobile phone puts cyclists at significantly higher risk. Using a phone on a bike is illegal. Make sure your child can completely focus on cycling and the conditions around them.
- **Follow the rules.** Obey the road laws. Bicycles are vehicles, and under the law bike riders have the same rights and responsibilities as car drivers. When using a shared path give way to pedestrians.
- **Make noise.** Always let walks or slower bike riders know you are about to pass by ringing your bell or calling out.
- **Be smart.** Choose where and when you ride carefully. Plan your route.
- **Look and watch.** Be aware of other road users particularly when they are approaching you from behind or pulling out in front of you.
- **Be door aware.** Look out for drivers and passengers getting in and out of parked cars and be aware of the risk of car doors opening.
- **Go with the flow.** Ride in the same direction as traffic.
- **Space out.** Try to always keep bikes one meter from cars.
- **Always signal.** When you are turning, signal left or right to let other roader users around you know what you're up to. Easy. Just extend your arm out horizontally to indicate the direction you're turning. Your hand should be open, with your palm facing forward.
- **Look back.** Get into the habit of always scanning the road behind you. Looking back over a shoulder without losing balance will be a tricky skill for some kids to master. Until they gain competence supervise and consider a rear-view mirror.
- **Get in position.** At an intersection, position yourself according to your intended direction beyond the intersection. This goes for roads and bike paths.
- **Dismount.** Get off your bike to cross roads and cross at controlled intersection points.

Hints, Tips and Resources

There are some amazing resources out there that will help you support your child to develop their pedestrian and cycling safety skills. We have listed some of our favourites that we feel fit well with kids with additional needs. Don't be limited by this list though. Focus on your child's strengths and interests and have a look around.

- The ***Kids and Traffic*** early childhood road safety education program at Macquarie University has a collection of songs around seatbelt and road crossing safety. Available at: [roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/staying-safe/children/songsrhymes.html](https://roadsafety.transport.nsw.gov.au/staying-safe/children/songs-rhymes.html)
- NSW has the ***Safety Town*** program. This has sections for children and parents. The kids section is broken down by age/skill level and a range of games and activities. Available at: www.safetytown.com.au
- WA has an extensive manual aimed at schools and parents with lots of worksheets and activities. Available at: www.sdera.wa.edu.au/media/1256/pedestrian-safety-yr-5.pdf
- Vic Roads has some great factsheets, particularly about crossing roads. Many of these come with visuals. Have a look at: www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/safety-and-road-rules/pedestrian-safety.
- The Northern Territory has developed a great video that goes through the pedestrian safety 'rules'. It's available on you-tube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrKY9kMTHtU.
- The ***Constable Kenny*** program in the ACT has some good road safety content and some good activities. See: www.constablekenny.org.au.

Conclusion

This manual has explored some of the skills your child will need to keep them safe both as a pedestrian and a cyclist. It has touched on some of the basic concepts needed to be a safe pedestrian and cyclist, and outlined some strategies to support you in providing this instruction to your child. We hope you have found it useful! Good luck!

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