

Parent Information Note on Biking

September 2014

I hear, I know. I do, I understand

Children need to be taught the skills required for travelling safely in traffic as a cyclist; however, teaching children safety behaviour is not enough. Traffic safety skills and behaviour will develop best if children are given opportunities to **practice**.

Child Cyclists

It is important to remember that children are not just small adults. Children are developing physically and mentally and have many characteristics that make them vulnerable around traffic.

Children:

- Have peripheral vision that is about two-thirds of an adult's.
- Have difficulty localizing sound and determining the direction a sound is coming from.
- Are not good at judging the speed and distance of approaching vehicles.
- May be easily distracted, impatient, and impulsive.
- Lack a sense of danger.
- Mix fantasy with reality.
- May participate in more risk-taking behaviours as they grow older.
- Are still developing the balance, strength, and coordination required to ride a bicycle.

Being impatient while waiting for a traffic light, being distracted by friends at the upcoming park, swerving while shoulder checking, or misjudging the speed of an approaching vehicle in an intersection are just a few examples of how a child's developmental stages can result in unsafe actions and increase the risk of a bicycle-related injury.

Helmet Safety Video

This helmet safety video is fun to watch. It was done by three Manitoba organizations, and features fast cuttings, quirky humor and good information in three minutes. You can access it here: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/hlp/bikesafety/index.html#video>

Bike Safe - Bike Smart

This entertaining, yet instructional, nine-minute bicycle safety video uses a peer-to-peer approach to teach elementary school age audiences how to Bike Safe. Bike Smart. It is American but still contains a lot of appropriate information.

<http://www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Bicycles/Bike+Safe+-+Bike+Smart+%2825MB+and+146MB,+WMV+format%29>