

Choosing the right bike for your kids

We know that children not only come in different shapes and sizes, but also their skills develop at different ages and paces.

Whether you get your child's bike from a bike shop or from their cousin, make sure it is the right fit for them.

When sitting on the bike, your child should be able to:

- Comfortably hold the handlebars.
- Place the balls of both feet firmly on the ground.

When standing, the clearance from the crossbar (between their legs) should be:

- At least 3 cm on a road bike and
- 5 - 10 cm for a BMX or mountain bike.

When riding, your child should be able to pedal with plenty of clearance from the handlebars.

BIKE SIZE GUIDE

Children's bikes are often identified by wheel diameter. The following table identifies approximate fit guide.

Wheel diameter "bike size"	Approximate age	Child's inseam*	Comments
12 inches	2-4 years	35-42 cm	Most come with training wheels. Usually single geared with primary back brake.
14 inches	4-6 years	40-50 cm	Most have rear coaster breaks (and secondary hand brake)
16 inches	5-8 years	45-55 cm	Most have rear coaster breaks (and secondary hand brake) and some have two front hand brakes.
20 inches	7-10 years	55-63 cm	Some models are multi-speed with hand brakes.
24 inches	9+ years	60-72 cm	Can have most of the features of adult bikes.

*Length of inner leg.

Balance bikes (without pedals)

Age recommended:

18 months - 4 years depending on the child.

- Not all children use balance bikes before learning to ride a bicycle.
- They assist in the development of balance and steering skills and are a precursor to riding a bike.
- They have no pedals. Children propel themselves along by pushing the ground with their feet.
- Once they get more confidence and speed, encourage them to lift their feet to coast and develop their balance skills.



Single-speed bikes with back-pedal brakes

Age recommended:

4-10 years depending on the child.

- Single-speed bikes provide a solid learning base before progressing to multi-speed bikes.
- Back-pedal (coaster) brakes are recommended for young children whose hands are not strong enough to operate hand brakes effectively.
- They have a secondary hand brake that the child can learn to use over time before progressing to a bike with only handbrakes.



Multi speed bikes

Age recommended:

6 years and older, depending on the child

- Multi-speed (geared) bikes generally have two hand brakes and no back-pedal brake.
- For children who are beginning to ride further distances or in hilly areas.

