

Many biking accidents that occur with children are the result of the children on the bikes riding in an unsafe or unobservant manner. Teaching your children the importance of good bike safety is the most important part of their safety while riding back and forth to school. Although "stranger danger" is a concern for many parents that allow their children to ride to school, the greater risk will be the biking behavior of your child. Staying observant, keeping to the rules of the roads, and respecting the responsibility of their independence.

## Tips for bike riding to school:

- **Find another neighbor or friend close by to bike with.**  
For young children, "bike-pool" within your neighborhood. Have parents take turn accompanying the children to school
- **Teach children the basic rules of the road.**  
They should understand the way the road to their school operates. Things like four-way stop signs, pedestrian crosswalks, and even stop lights.
- **Give them confidence in their biking skills.**  
Go biking for fun, bike around a park, practice weaving among cones, or even take a couple of bike trips. Find fun ways for them to gain skill and confidence in their biking ability.
- **Plot a route.**  
Plan the route you want your child to take to school and stress the importance of not veering from it. (for some children biking alone, it may be wiser to have a rotation of routes to take so that they don't have the same daily routine). Having the same routine helps you better teach them the road rules of that particular route as well as give you a first place to look if you find they don't come home on time.
- **See and be seen!**  
Teach your children that when they are biking that need to be observant and concentrating. They should not be listening to music, caught up in conversation, or zoning off. Pay attention! They also need to be sure that they are seen by cars and people that they are near. Tell them never to assume a car knows they are there...be sure! Use tools (mentioned above) to help improve the visibility of them and their bike.
- **Be in control.**  
When biking to and from school, your child is responsible for being safe. Teach them that this is not the time to goof off, carry too many items, or

try tricks. They should keep at least one hand on the handlebars and both wheels on the ground at all times. Avoid swerving and weaving, as much as possible.

- **Watch out for hazards.**

Hazards for bikers are very different than cars. Potholes, large rocks, squirrels, and even puddles can cause an accident for a biker. New hazards can appear daily, even if it hadn't been there the day prior, and require bikers to stay observant.

- **Use sidewalks, if your city allows.**

Not all cities allow bikers on sidewalks, but some do and some that don't will gladly overlook children on sidewalks...especially when it's obvious they are riding home from school. Call your city and ask!