

# Mom & Dad – I Want a Bike!

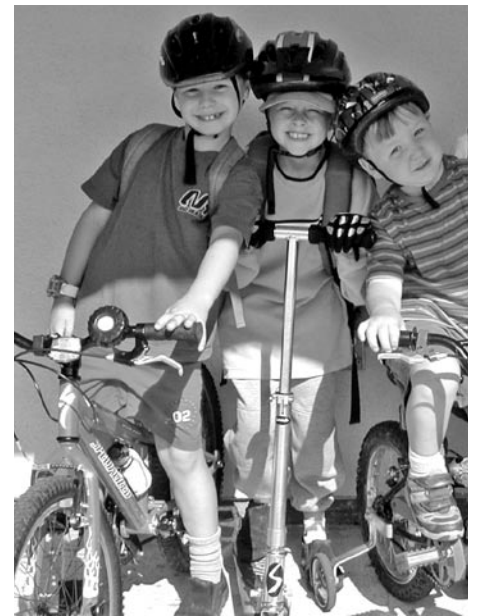


## How to Buy a Bike for Your Child

**T**HERE IS NOTHING like getting a new bike. But what if that bike doesn't fit your child? A bike that is too big or too small could hinder your child's ability to ride, causing him or her to lose control. While the surprise is fun, it's better to take your child with you when you buy your bike. This brochure is designed to help you find the right bike for your child.

## Guidelines for Buying a Bicycle for Your Child

- The first thing to check when deciding if it is time to buy a new bike is the current bike itself. Feel your child's bike for loose parts especially around the handlebar and pedal cranks. If there is something loose or broken, get it fixed. If there are any cracks in the frame, take it to the bike shop immediately for a consultation.
- Just like clothes, kids will outgrow their bicycles. Most bike shops can help you size a bike for your child. Before going to buy a bike, think about how your child uses their bike. This will determine what kind of frame and tire you will be looking for. Bicycles that don't fit can cause pain in the joints and make it more difficult for your child to handle his/her bike safely.
- If your child has a mountain or road bike, they should be able to stand over the top of the bike with about two inches between their groin and the top of the bike. BMX frames are made smaller for better handling during tricks.
- The length of the bike can be determined by comfort; generally you want to look for a slight bend in the elbow when riding and holding the handlebars and almost full extension of the leg – with a slight bend in the knee when the pedal is at the bottom of the pedal stroke. Adjusting the height of the seat should accommodate the knee bend.
- Accessories are important. Often bike shops will 'throw in some extras' at no charge, like a water bottle/cage, a cable lock or bike bell. All three are an excellent idea to have on your bike.
- Most of all, make sure your child test rides his/her new bicycle and that they will like the color and style of their new vehicle. Meeting their new bike should be the beginning of a fabulous new friendship!



# Helmet Replacement



**I**T ALSO MAY BE TIME for you to replace their helmet, too. Again, bike shops (and your child!) can help you select the proper size and style.

Check the current helmet to see if it has any cracks in the Styrofoam shell. If so, it will not absorb the shock of impact. Helmets only work once, so if your child has already sustained a blow to the helmet, it's also time to replace the helmet.

A well adjusted helmet sits level on your child's head. The adjustment straps should be properly tightened and form a "V" under the earlobes and maintain the position of the helmet on the head. After adjustment there should be no more than two (horizontal) fingers of space showing of your child's forehead. If there is more then the helmet is too small. Smaller pads might work, or if there is an adjustable brace in the rear, widening that might make the helmet fit properly.

## What to Do With the Old Bike?

**I**F YOU ARE NOT planning on passing the old bike along to the next sibling or friend, or selling it, please consider donating it to a good cause.

If the current bike is in good condition and is suitable for 4th or 6th grade children, Safe Routes to Schools would be delighted to add it to our 'loaner' fleet for our Rodeos and Street Skills lesson plans.

Please contact Kristin Nute, [Kristin@marinbike.org](mailto:Kristin@marinbike.org), (415) 456-3469 ext. 2#, to see if Safe Routes is a worthy recipient.

Trips for Kids Recyclery in San Rafael also accepts donations, sometimes even if the bike needs work. They are located at 4th Street, between Irwin and Grand Avenue.



## About Safe Routes To Schools



Safe Routes To Schools is a program of the  
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MARIN  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94913  
[www.tam.ca.gov](http://www.tam.ca.gov)



Safe Routes to Schools is a national movement that is getting kids back on their feet again by encouraging walking and biking to school and working to make it safe.

**For general information on the program:**  
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