

# Things to Know if Buying a Child A Bicycle

You may think it was just yesterday that your child could barely pedal his tricycle, and now he wants a two-wheeler bike. Perhaps your slightly older child has outgrown his bike and is ready for the next size and model. Buying a new bicycle for your child is not difficult, but you should think about what type of bike they need, how long they will use the bike and how much money you should spend. Do your research before you get to the store to make your purchasing decision easier.

## Step 1

Determine what size bike your child needs based on age and height. Consider the wheel diameter. According to the International Bike Fund, in general you should buy a 12-inch bike for a 2- to 3-year-old child, a 16-inch bike for a 5- to 8-year-old, and a 20-inch bike for a child between ages 6 and 9. Depending on your child's height, they may be ready for a 24-inch bike after they turns 9.

## Step 2

Buy a bike with just coaster brakes when your child is young and does not have adequate hand strength, according to Harris Cyclery. As soon as you feel they are ready, both physically and developmentally, buy a bike that uses at least one hand brake. Let your child try the bike's brake system before committing to a purchase.

## Step 3

Bring your child with you when buying a new bike. Ask the salesperson to let your child sit on the bike. Observe if they can touch the ground with their toes bent. Ask your child to stand up and straddle the bike. On a boy's bike, his crotch should clear the bike with a minimum of a one-inch clearance. A girl should be able to straddle the bike easily.

## Step 4

Buy a bike that is the proper size for your child, recommends the American Academy of Pediatrics. Save money by purchasing a used bike that's the appropriate size; don't buy an oversize bike, thinking your child can grow into it. A bike that is too large may make them to lose control of the bike and fall.

## Step 5

Decide on your budget for the bike. Notice the weight of the bicycles when making your decision. The International Bike Fund states that children's bikes often use steel instead of lighter materials found in adult bikes, making children's bikes less expensive. If your child is rapidly growing, find a bike that is safe but not too expensive. Save your money until she is riding more frequently and at higher speeds. Look at the quality of the bike in terms of the joint strength, ease of turning and seat comfort.

## Tips and Warnings

- Never let your child ride without a helmet. Adjust the seat height so her lower leg is almost straight when pedaling, but they can still touch the ground when they stops. Consider trading bikes with a neighbor whose child has outgrown his bike. Buy a specialized bike if your child participates in races.
- Outfit your child with a properly fitted helmet. Teach the road safety rules to your children.

## References

- [International Bike Fund: Children: Choosing a Bike: Buying a Bike](#)
- [Harris Cyclery: Teaching Kids to Ride](#)
- [Parenthood: Purchasing Kids' Bicycles](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics: Summer Safety Tips - Part I](#)

Source: <http://www.livestrong.com/>

The Space Coast TPO has many resources to help you teach your child proper rules of the road and bicycle safety. We also have brochures and staff members that can teach you about proper helmet fit. Please remember don't purchase a bicycle without providing a helmet as well. Florida Law states children must wear a properly fitted helmet until they are 16. If you are financial unable to purchase a helmet with a bicycle the TPO has resources to provide assistance. For additional information on purchasing a bicycle, the rules of the road or bicycle helmets contact the TPO at 321-690-6890.