

# A Caregiver's Guide to Raising a Safe Bicyclist

As the student's caregiver, you are an important role model for everything they do. Here are some tips for modeling safe biking and supporting your student to be a safe bicyclist!

## Make sure the helmet fits

**All children (and adults) are encouraged to wear a helmet when bicycling.** But if the helmet doesn't fit right, it won't protect your child in a crash. Use the "eyes, ears, mouth" method to make sure your child's helmet fits correctly:



### Eyes

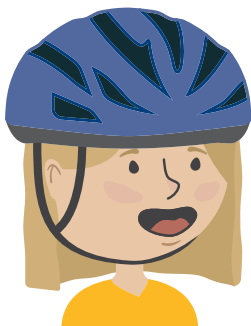
**Put the helmet on your head.** Look up. You should see the bottom of the helmet. You can test the position by putting two fingers between your eyebrows and the bottom of the helmet.



### Ears

**Make sure the straps form a "V" under your ears when buckled.**

The straps should be tight but comfortable.



### Mouth

**Open your mouth as wide as you can.** Does the helmet hug your head? If not, tighten the straps.

## Check the bike

**Before getting on the bike, do an ABC Quick Check to make sure it is safe for riding.**

### Air

Check your tires to make sure they're inflated. The tires should feel as hard as a basketball.

### Brakes

Squeeze the brake levers to make sure they stop your wheels.

### Chain

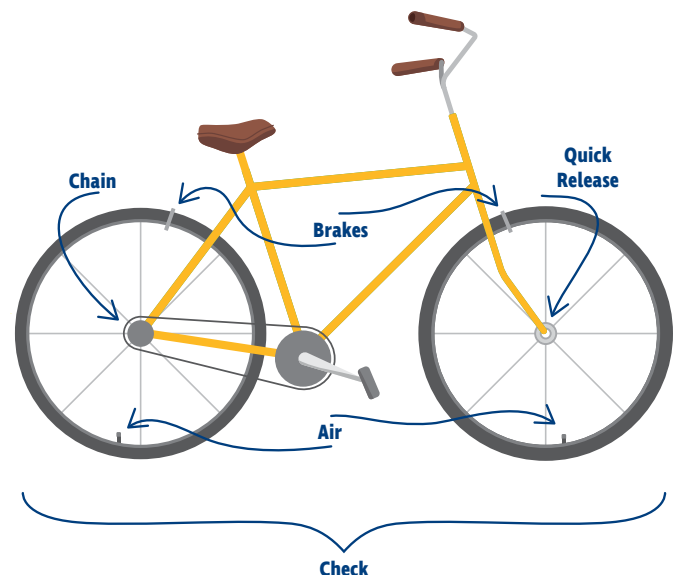
The chain should be rust-free and lightly oiled.

### Quick Release

If you have quick release valves (usually to connect the seat or wheels to the frame), make sure they're tight and secure.

### Check

After making sure the seat and handlebars are tight and the proper height, ride the bike around a bit and check that everything works well.



## Practice starting using the “blast off” position

Starting in the “blast off” position helps children start riding looking for traffic instead of down at their feet as they put them on the pedals. To blast off correctly:

- **The dominant foot and pedal should be positioned forward.** Stepping down on this pedal gives the bike momentum right away.
- **Look both ways before starting** to make sure that you aren't biking out in front of moving vehicles or people.
- **Children riding bikes with coaster brakes** may need to “blast off” on whichever pedal is in front.



## Stop safely

When stopping, it is important to **pull on both brake levers equally** and put one foot on the ground when stopped. If using coaster brakes, your student needs to anticipate extra time for stopping.

## Be predictable and respectful

**Bicyclists should ride in the same direction as traffic,** stay to the right, stop at stop signs and look both ways before crossing, and obey traffic signals. If your child is able to remove one hand, they should use hand signals to communicate where they're going to other road users.



For more information on the Kansas Safe Routes to School Program, go to:  
**[saferoutes.ksdot.gov](https://saferoutes.ksdot.gov)**

Original content courtesy of Anne Arundel County, MD. For more information and resources on being a safe bicyclist, check out: [safekids.org/bike](https://safekids.org/bike)



## Be a safe driver, too!

**Do your part to keep children safe when you are behind the wheel.**



**Go the speed limit.** Speeding is one of the top factors in traffic deaths. A person hit by a car traveling at 30 miles per hour is four times more likely to die than a person hit by a car traveling at 20 miles per hour. Slow down to stay safe.



**Yield for pedestrians in crosswalks.** Drivers in Kansas must yield to pedestrians in crosswalks. Talk to your child about how drivers have a responsibility to keep others safe by yielding to people crossing.



**Never block the crosswalk.** Crosswalks are for people crossing on foot or bike, not for stopping or parking. It can be tempting to stop in a crosswalk, especially during school drop-off or pick-up. Make sure your parking spot keeps crosswalks clear, pedestrians visible, and everybody safe.



**Give three feet of space to cyclists.** When passing a cyclist, slow down and give at least three feet of space between your car and the bicyclist. It's the law!