

Dear Cyclist:

Your bike's a great way to go anywhere: around the block, to the park, or to school. But although bicycling is fun, some kids have been hurt and even killed on their bikes.

If you ride your bike the right way, you can keep from getting hurt. This booklet shows you how. And you can use these tips for your entire life.

Parents and teachers: We designed *Kids on Bikes in Chicago* for middle-school-age kids, especially those of ages 9 to 11. It's part of the city's bicycling program that I created in 1991 to make Chicago more bicycle-friendly. I hope you find our booklet helpful.



*Richard M. Daley*  
Mayor

## BICYCLING RESOURCES

### Publications

To order this booklet, bike maps, or *Safe Bicycling in Chicago* for adults and teens:  
**Chicago Dept. of Transportation**  
30 N. LaSalle St., Ste. 500, Chicago 60602  
312/742-BIKE [www.chicagobikes.org](http://www.chicagobikes.org)  
Available on the Dept. of Transportation's Web site: This booklet and an abridged version of *Safe Bicycling in Chicago*.

### Education

**Chicagoland Bicycle Federation**  
9 W. Hubbard St., Ste. 402, Chicago 60654  
312/427-3325 [www.biketraffic.org](http://www.biketraffic.org)  
Call to learn about kids' cycling classes and ways to improve conditions for cyclists.

**Mayor Daley's Bicycling Ambassadors**  
312/744-8147 [www.bicyclingambassadors.org](http://www.bicyclingambassadors.org)  
Call for free bicycling and safety presentations for schools and community groups.

**Mayor Daley's Safe Routes Ambassadors**  
312/744-3019 [www.saferoutesambassadors.org](http://www.saferoutesambassadors.org)  
Call for free pedestrian and bicycle safety presentations for schools and community groups.

### Helmets

You can find children's helmets at most bike shops. To find the nearest one, see the Chicago bike shop directory at [www.chicagobikeshops.info](http://www.chicagobikeshops.info).

### Police Bike Registration

Get a registration card from a police station or bike shop, or register on the Web: [www.cityofchicago.org/city/webportal/jsp/forms/bikeRegistration/index.jsp](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/webportal/jsp/forms/bikeRegistration/index.jsp).

### Acknowledgments

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- ▶ Funded by the Illinois Department of Transportation, Division of Traffic Safety.
- ▶ Conceived and written by Dave Glowacz, [www.mrbike.com](http://www.mrbike.com).
- ▶ Illustrations by Tara Hoffmann and Dave Glowacz.
- ▶ Published November 2008.  
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FREE  
FREE



Richard M. Daley  
Mayor

KIDS ON BIKES

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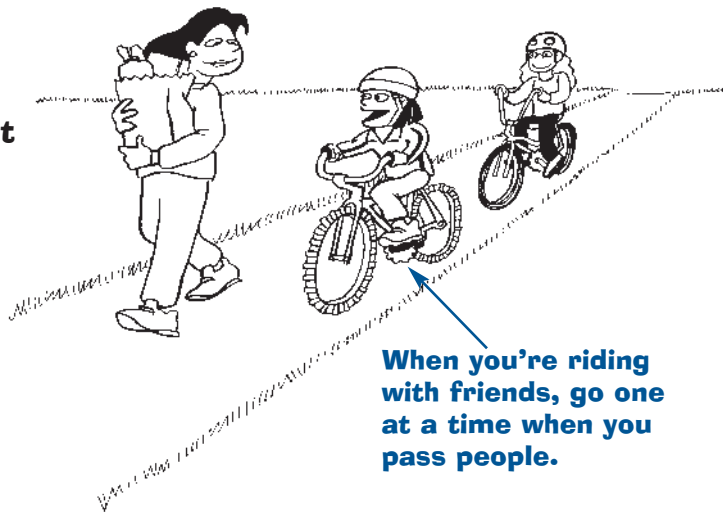


IN CHICAGO

# RIDING ON SIDEWALKS

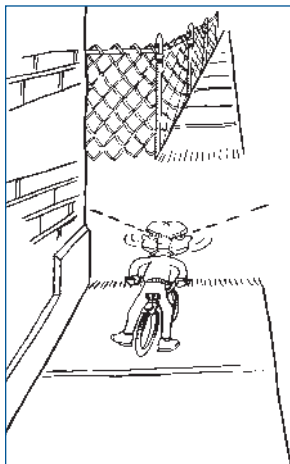
## GIVE WALKERS A BREAK

When you ride near people walking, don't surprise them! Slow down, and say "Excuse me!" or use a bell or horn.

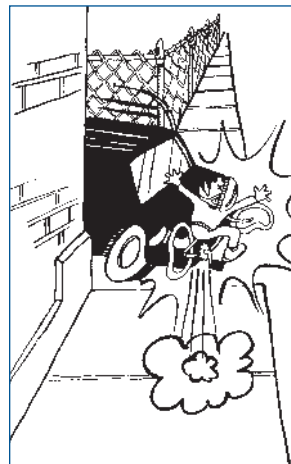


## ALLEYS & DRIVEWAYS: LOOK OUT!

Always look **LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT** before an alley or driveway. If it's not easy to see, slow down or stop first.



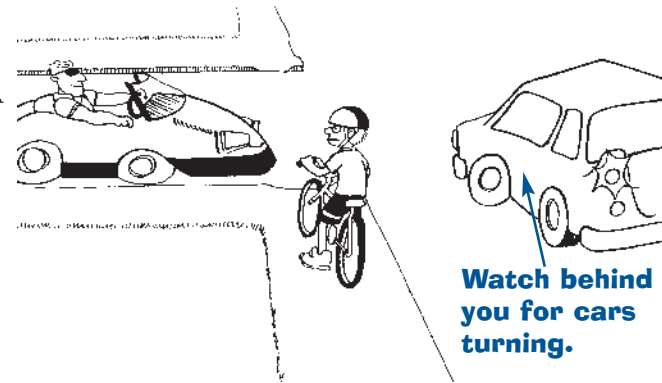
**YES**



**NO**

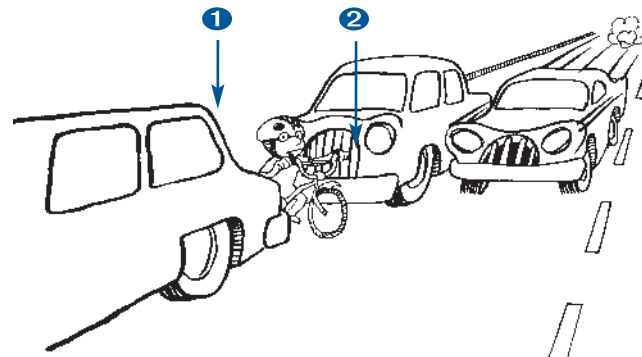
# SIDEWALKS

## AT CORNERS



Stop and look **LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT** for cars. If a car's stopped at the corner, make sure the driver sees you before you go.

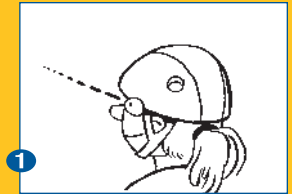
## ENTERING A STREET



You shouldn't go into a street from the middle of a block. But if you do: **1** Stop at the curb and make sure parked cars aren't about to move. **2** Go to the edge of the parked cars. Before you cross, look **LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT**.

## LOOKING LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT

Whenever you look both ways to check for cars:



**1** Look **LEFT**.



**2** If no cars are coming, look **RIGHT**.



**3** Look **LEFT** again. If no cars are coming, go. But if a car's coming, wait for it to pass. Then look **LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT** again.

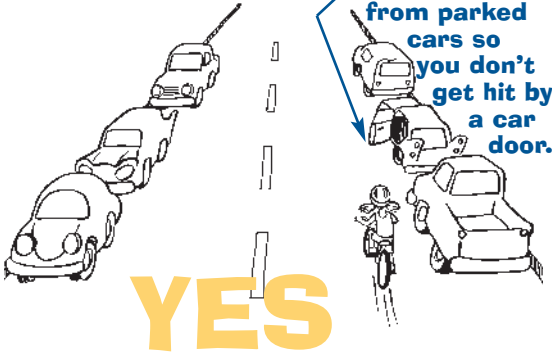
# WHERE TO RIDE

## WHAT SIDE TO RIDE ON?

Always ride in the same direction as the cars are going.

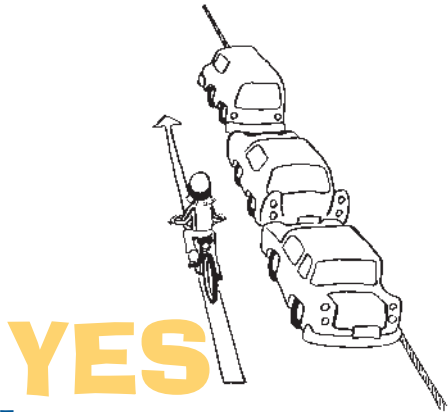
Never ride against traffic. It's the easiest way to get hit!

Ride about 3 feet from parked cars so you don't get hit by a car door.



## RIDE IN A STRAIGHT LINE

Don't ride on streets unless your parents say it's OK! They know best whether you're ready.

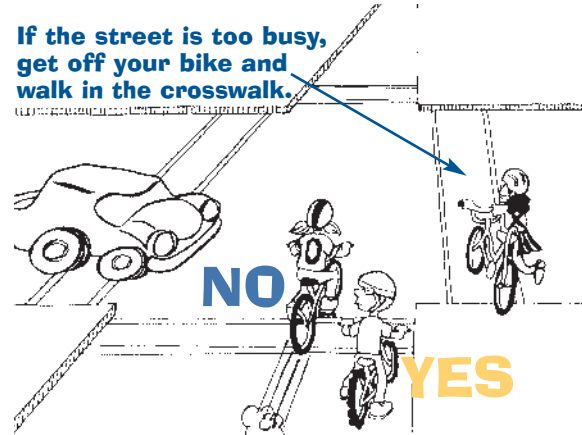


Ride in a straight line. If you do, drivers will know where you're going. Then they'll stay out of your way!

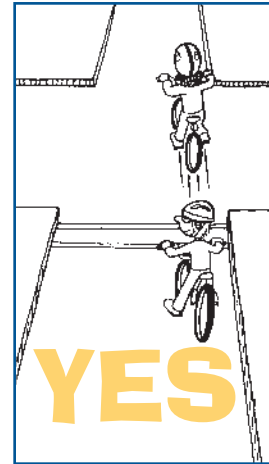
# ON STREETS

## COMING TO CORNERS

If the street is too busy, get off your bike and walk in the crosswalk.



- ① Stop or slow down.
- ② Look **LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT**.
- ③ Obey stop signs and traffic lights.
- ④ Don't go until no cars are coming.



If a friend bikes across a street before you, don't think it's safe for you to go too. Slow down or stop, and look **LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT**.

## STOP SIGNS

WHAT DO THEY MEAN?



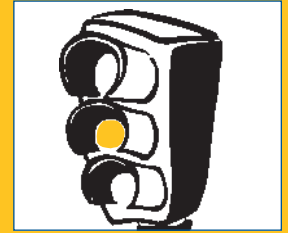
Stop. Look **LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT**. Go when no cars are coming.

## TRAFFIC LIGHTS

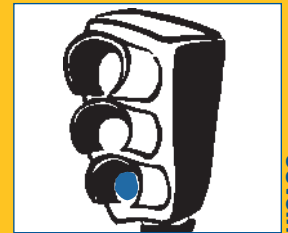
WHAT DO THEY MEAN?



Stop.



Get ready to stop.



Go when it's safe.

# HOW TO LOOK

# AROUND

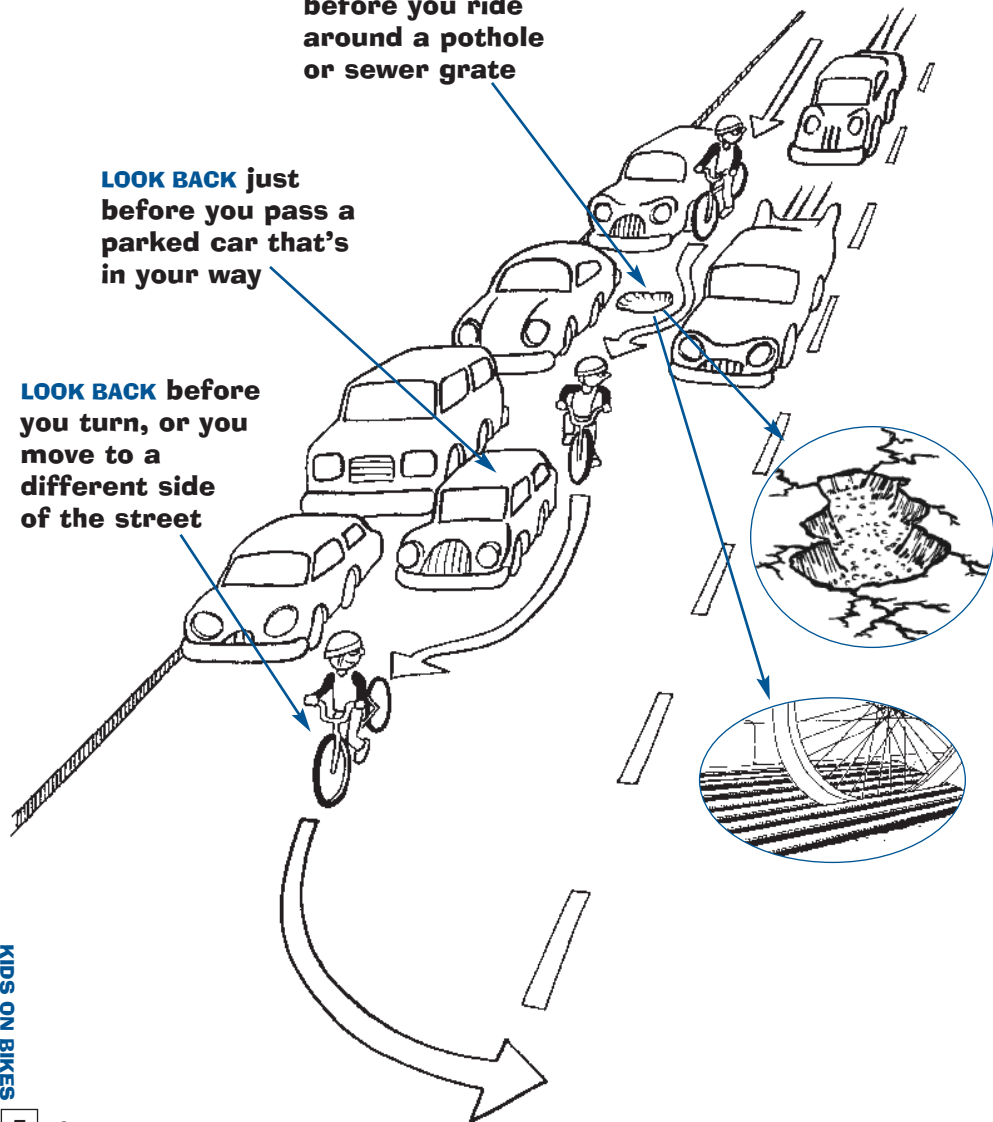
## WHY LOOK BACK?

When you ride your bike, sometimes you should look behind you. Here's when to look back.

**LOOK BACK** just before you ride around a pothole or sewer grate

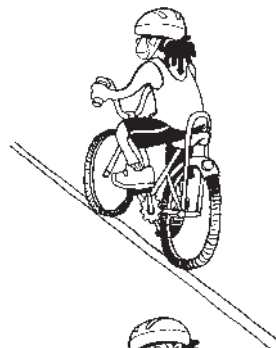
**LOOK BACK** just before you pass a parked car that's in your way

**LOOK BACK** before you turn, or you move to a different side of the street

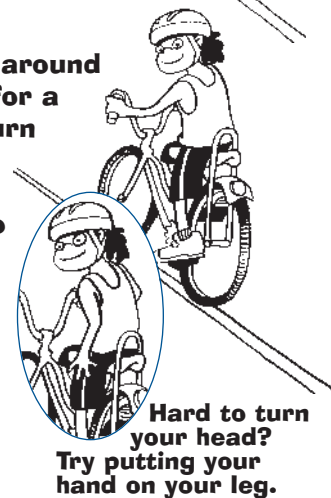


## LEARNING HOW TO LOOK BACK

① Ride along a straight line. (Find a white stripe in an empty parking lot, or draw one with chalk.)



② Turn your head around and look back for a second. Then turn your head forward. Practice until you can do it without wobbling your bike.



③ Ride forward, with a friend standing behind you. They should hold up one or two arms. Look back, and try to count how many arms they're holding up.



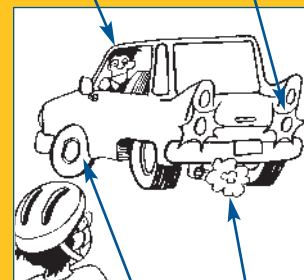
Learn to look over one shoulder first. Then practice looking over your other shoulder.

## LOOK OUT FOR PARKED CARS!

Watch out when you pass parked cars in the street. They might start moving when you don't expect it.

How to tell if a parked car might start to move:

driver looks back      brake lights go on



front wheel turned      puff of smoke

# HOW TO TURN

# ON STREETS

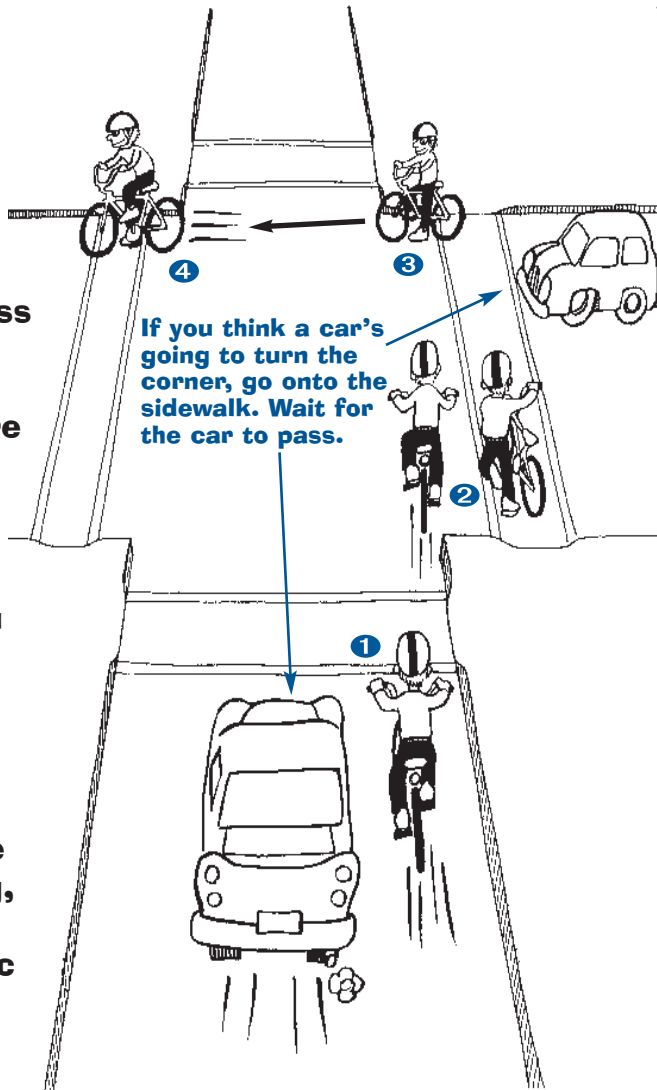
## AN EASY WAY TO TURN LEFT

1 Look **LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT** for cars. Stop if any are coming.

2 Walk in the crosswalk, or ride your bike next to the crosswalk. Cross the street.

3 Stop just before you reach the curb. Stand in front of the crosswalk, facing the way you want to go. (If you got off your bike, get back on.)

4 When there are no cars coming, ride on. (If there's a traffic light, wait until it's turned green.)



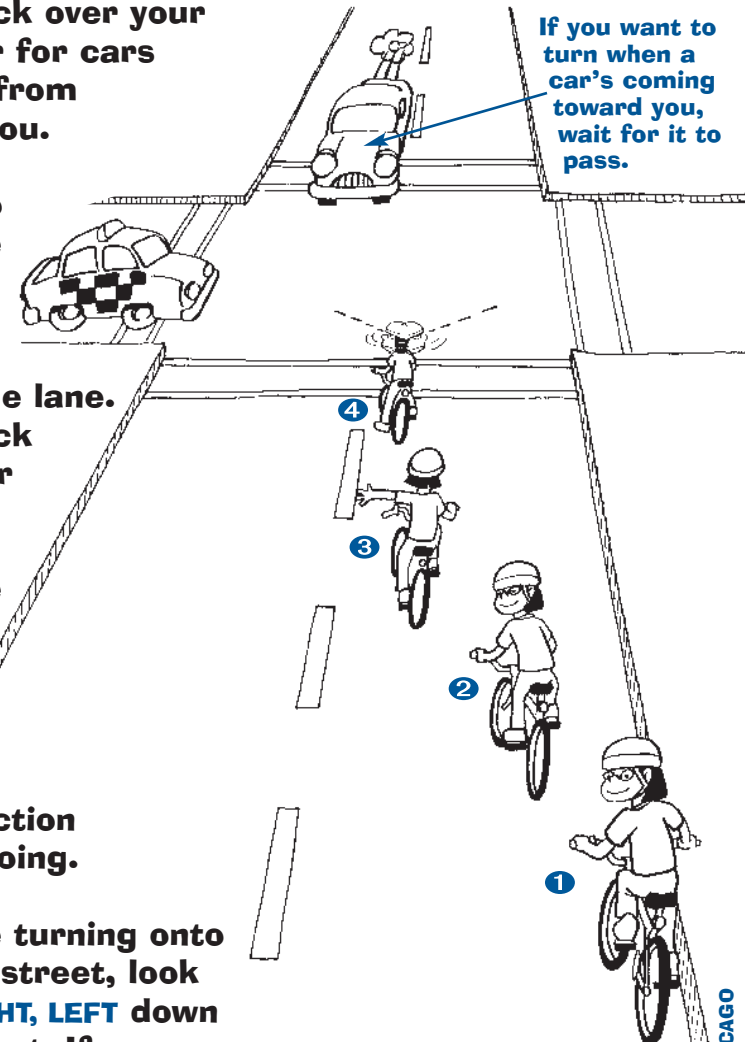
## MOVING OR TURNING LEFT LIKE A CAR

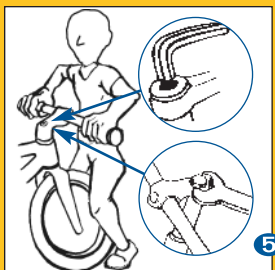
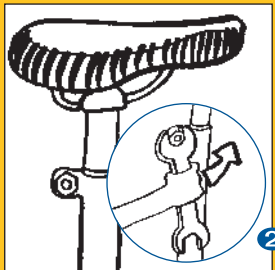
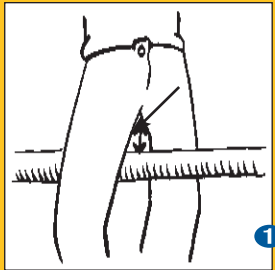
1 Look back over your shoulder for cars coming from behind you.

2 When no cars are coming, move to the middle of the lane. Look back again for cars.

3 If you're turning, point your arm in the direction you're going.

4 If you're turning onto another street, look **LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT** down that street. If cars are coming, let them pass. Then turn.





## IS IT READY TO RIDE?

Before you let your child use a bike, check these items. If you're not sure whether a bike fits or works right, take it to a bike shop.

**Frame Height:** Check that your child's bike isn't too tall or too short. Have your kid stand with the bike between their legs with feet flat on the ground, just in front of the seat. **1** For a horizontal top tube, there should be one to three inches between the tube and the child's crotch. If the tube's not horizontal, tie string to where the top tube meets the front of the bike. Hold it horizontally to make the measurement.

**Seat Height:** Ask your child if the seat feels too high or too low. If they're not sure, have them sit on the bike with feet on the pedals. With one pedal in the six o'clock position, their knee should be only slightly bent. But if they're used to a lower seat height, don't raise it too much at once. **How to change the height:** Loosen the seat post nut. **2** Twist the seat to move it. Don't raise it so high that there's less than two inches of the seat post inside the frame.

**Coaster Brakes:** If your child can pedal backward to apply the rear brake, the bike has coaster brakes. Here's how to check them: While pushing the bike forward with one hand, use your other hand to pedal backward. **3** This should stop the bike.

**Hand Brakes:** Here's how to check each hand brake: While pushing the bike forward with one hand, use your other hand to squeeze the brake lever. **4** You should be able to stop the bike without squeezing the lever all the way to the handlebar.

**Handlebars:** Hold the front wheel between your legs. **5** Using moderate pressure, try to turn the handlebars without moving the wheel. If you can turn the handlebars, tighten the stem bolt, using either an allen wrench or crescent wrench.

## HELMETS

**Why kids need helmets:** Kids need helmets as much as adults do. No matter how careful they are, they can't control everything around them. Make sure kids wear their helmets snugly—and set an example by wearing yours!

**Rating:** Look on the inside of the helmet. It should have a label with one of these: a compliance label **6** from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC); a green or blue Snell sticker, meaning the helmet passed the Snell Foundation's tests for safety; or an F1447 certification **7** by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).

**Wear:** Teach your child to wear their helmet **8** level, not tilted back. **9** A tilted helmet won't protect your kid's skull in a frontal impact. Your child should be able to look up and see the front edge of the helmet.

**Fit:** Your child **must** have a snug fit—so that if your kid's head hits more than once, the helmet stays in place. Tighten the straps so only two of the child's fingers fit snugly between the strap and their chin. **10** With snug straps, if you can move the helmet from side to side or front to back, add thicker inner pads. Or try a different brand helmet.

**Cost:** You can get a good CPSC-rated bike helmet for under \$25. More costly helmets usually aren't safer, but might fit better, have more vents, weigh less, and look cool. (See back cover.)

**Ventilation:** A helmet's ventilation depends on front-to-back air flow. Good air flow comes from long, wide air vents, and air passages (or troughs) between the vents.

**Look:** Help your child decorate their helmet. This will encourage them to wear it. Use markers, stickers, or water-based paints. Bright colors help your kid become more visible. Avoid anything that sticks out or makes the helmet's surface uneven; if your child's head slides in a fall, the helmet could catch on something and break their neck.

Complies with U.S. CPSC Safety Standard for bicycle helmets for persons age 5 and older

**6**



**7**



**8**



**9**



**10**