



GUIDE TO ASSESSING A CHILD'S CYCLING SKILL LEVEL

After a child has taken part in CYCLE RIGHT Stage One, what skills should they be expected to have? A child should show some or all of the following skills.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR AS SKILLS	HOW TO SUPPORT THE SKILL
Safety Checks (Helmet, Clothes, Bike, Conditions)	Encourage completing these checks before any cycling – it is best for an adult who is encouraging a child with these checks to also perform them themselves
All-round Awareness – off as well as on road	Use the prompt “Have you checked for ...” when cycling with a child
Control of speed – for particular environments	Ask often “Are you happy you will be able to stop safely?”
Safe stopping distance – what is it and why does it vary?	Ask “Have you enough room between you and vehicle ahead to stop safely?” Look for an invisible bike length in dry weather with good surface, two or three lengths in wet weather/poor surfaces
Starting – steady and straight	Observe – encourage looking ahead and keeping arms long
Stopping – straight and controlled, appropriate speed	Observe – encourage back brake, followed by front brake, arms long, then feet to the ground on stopping
Emergency Stop – unexpected but controlled fast stop	Observe – back brake, then front brake in quick succession, long arms to keep the bike straight, leaning back to stop back wheel rising
Predictability and visibility of a cyclist on the road	Encourage cycling steadily and straight without weaving
Left Hand Turn including cornering technique	Always shoulder-check, signal, check again and inside (left) knee up going through the corner. Slow into the corner, freewheel, then pedal out
Walking Right Hand Turn – when appropriate?	Recommended for inexperienced cyclists and for young people, see resource diagram for method
Cycling Right Hand Turn – when appropriate?	See resource diagram for method and positioning. Inside (right) knee up going through the corner. Slow into the corner, freewheel, then pedal out
Gears and how to use them	Matching gears to speed – encourage steady pedalling and adjusting speed to achieve this whether level, uphill or downhill



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Cycling in a Group – keeping control around others and communication	Awareness of others close by while looking in line of travel, calling out road conditions (“car ahead”, “car behind”, “pothole” etc.), adjusting speed and position depending on the nature of the road
Right of Way – what is it, how does it work?	Who has to stop and who keeps going (while always being ready to stop if necessary) – see resource diagram. ALWAYS prompt stopping for STOP and YIELD signs, as well as RED LIGHTS
Cycling on the road – which side and does it vary?	Remember to discuss with a child, particularly if cycling where traffic moves on the right
Knowledge of road signs and road markings	Ask a child questions about road signs when on a journey – what do individual signs mean, what is the significance of their colour? Also see resource posters for discussion
Cycling infrastructure – different types and how to use them	What is the difference between a cycle track and a cycle lane? What is an Advanced Stop Box? How should cyclists cycle on Greenways shared with pedestrians?
Knowledge of different forms of crossings	Observe a child on approach to crossings and ask questions to check understanding
Traffic lights and how to treat them	Observe actions on approach and ask a child what they understand about the colour sequence – see resource poster for discussion
On-Road Positioning – distance from the kerb/edge	Observe and ask a child how far they should cycle from the edge and why. Prompt as they cycle to keep a safe distance.
On-Road Positioning – other traffic	Observe and prompt to keep safe distance from other road users (other bicycles, cars etc.)
Junctions – types and how to cycle them	Observe positioning on approach, observe understanding of right of way, observe preparation to move off and prompt as necessary to reinforce appropriate behaviours
Importance of obeying signs and rules of the road	Observe behaviours in response to road signs, prompt as appropriate – see resource poster for discussion



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Overtaking parked cars	Encourage assessment as to whether to cycle or get off and walk until past. Encourage a diagonal approach to be able to see and remain seen by approaching traffic. Observe and prompt on appropriate distance in case a door opens. Observe and prompt on vigilance and action should a car start to move off. Encourage staying in position until past a line of parked cars (if safe), not weaving in and out. See resource diagram for discussion.
Bike security and preventing bike theft	Discuss the serial number and where to find it on a bike, and the recording of this and other bike details for security.
Large vehicles and how to approach them	Observe and prompt ALWAYS waiting until a large vehicle moves away or turns and NOT approaching along either side or staying directly in front or behind – emphasise always being able to see the driver's passenger side mirror and staying well back from the vehicle. See resource poster for discussion.
Vehicle blind zones and how they affect cyclists	Emphasise the limited vision drivers of vehicles have, especially large vehicles and how this creates blind zones all round vehicles. See resource poster for discussion.
Basic roundabouts and how to approach them	Encourage novice cyclists to shoulder check, signal, and pull in to the left side in advance of a roundabout and then walk and cross each arm of the roundabout as a pedestrian.
Responsibility for own safety as a cyclist	Always encourage a child to assess the road environment themselves, so that they don't default to relying on others they are with and following their assessments

When cycling with a child, the adult should always cycle **BEHIND** and slightly out to the right (further out from the edge). This allows the opportunity to see what the child is doing and also gives the child protection from traffic coming from behind, as well as allowing the adult time to react if something is not going according to plan (eg the child veers out into the road).