

# Life Cycle Guide

## Children's bikes

### Children's Bikes

Children love cycling. It offers a sense of freedom and achievement that children love and cannot easily attain from other activities, and it is a great way for them to take exercise. With encouragement your children will be independent cyclists before you know it - riding to the park with their friends or even to school depending on the local environment and their skills.

The snag can be finding a suitable bike at the right price.

Most children's bikes are overweight - they can often weigh as much as half your child's bodyweight. New bikes can be bought for as little as £50 from a Supermarket however, Life Cycle would never recommend buying a very cheap bike. They can look very attractive, but will be very heavy and difficult to cycle. Such bikes are often only used a few times before being relegated to the shed.

Your child will get more enjoyment out of cycling - and more miles - with a lighter bike. The key to success is to buy the lightest bike you can afford. Your child will use it regularly, get years of enjoyment and it will prove better value for money in the long-run. If looked after, such bikes retain their value, and can be sold when your child has outgrown it.

### Gears

The number of gears is a badge of status among children, but too many gears causes mechanical complications. One gear is best for starter bikes, a three-speed hub for second bikes, and a 7-speed or 8-speed derailleurs for pre-teens.

It is better to choose a light weight bike for your child than one with many gears. In the long run they will find it easy to cycle, than a heavy bike with lots of gears.

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Life Cycle  UK

start cycling • keep cycling • love cycling

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### Top tips for fitting a bike correctly:

Don't be tempted to buy a bike your child will 'grow into'. An over-large bike will be awkward to ride; your child will struggle to reach the handlebars and brakes, and they will feel like they need to stretch the whole time. This will be uncomfortable and is likely to put all but the most determined off cycling. If the bike is too small for your child, they will also struggle to ride it comfortably; they will be scrunched up with their knees too close to the handlebars.

Your child should be able to reach the brakes and pull them back without having to lift themselves out of the saddle, or stretch unreasonably. The reach should be relaxed, with the elbows slightly bent.

If the bike has a horizontal crossbar, get your child to stand over it with his/her feet flat on the ground. There should be a good inch clearance from the top of the cross bar.

When your child is learning to ride, they are likely to feel more confident with the saddle at its lowest position so they can easily get their feet on the ground. However, the saddle should be raised as soon as their confidence grows.

Wheel Size	Approx. Child's Age
12 Inch	2 ½ to 4 years.
14 Inch	3 – 5 years
16 Inch	5 – 7 years
20 Inch	7 – 9 years
24 Inch	9 -11 years
26 Inch (classed as adult bikes)	11 +

### Expect to pay...

You will need to consider paying around £200 to buy a lightweight bike for your child. Good quality bikes have a high resale value, and you can occasionally buy these on eBay and other similar sites. Look out for Isla Bikes.

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