

Pedalheads Parent Guide

Choosing a bike



Your child's bike should be solid, well maintained and not too big. Buying a bike your child will "grow into" isn't a great idea when they are first learning to ride. It is harder to control a bike that is too big and lowers confidence when kids don't feel able to 'catch themselves', should they need to.

Whether 12, 16 or 20 inch wheels , the child's feet should be flat on the ground on both sides when s/he is sitting on the saddle. There should be at least three centimetres between the child's crotch and the upper crossbar when they are straddling the bike.

Seat adjustments can be tricky if the bolts are rusted or too tight to turn. Do your best to adjust it yourself so the child can reach the ground when in the saddle. If the seat post is too long or too short for further adjustments, it may be exchanged, altered, or it could be time for a different bike, as kids whose seats are too high cannot gain complete control of their bikes.

For younger kids, footbrakes are easier to use than hand brakes. When choosing hand brakes, ensure that your child can reach and pull the levers. Many are difficult for kids to use because they can be either too big for their small hands or too stiff. Almost all hand brakes can be adjusted and lubricated to suit kids hands better.

Once your child(ren) are up, riding, and confident in their cycling abilities, the next big step is to decide when it's time to make the big shift to a gear bike. For more information on gear bikes, please see "Shifting to Gears" in the Pedalheads Parent Guide series.

