



Lessons from
**EUGENE SCHOOL
DISTRICT 4J**
Kinder/1st Learn to Ride

SafeRoutes
Eugene-Springfield Safe Routes to School



graphic design by

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Duration

3 week (6 session) program allows for the majority of students to progress from gliding to pedaling.

2 weeks is also sufficient, particularly at a lower need school.



Gear

- 1. Strider 14 inch bikes with removable pedals fit most kinders**, but the coaster brakes and small pedals make it challenging to transition to pedaling. Bikes with hand brakes in various sizes are a great addition to a learn-to-ride fleet. Wooms have kid-sized components and are easy for kids to use to transition to pedaling.
- 2. Label the helmets with the students' names** in big letters on the front and back of their helmet on painters tape and store in bags with one bag per class.
- 3. Only bring out one bag of helmets at a time** to avoid mixing classes.
- 4.** If students need to use a helmet that isn't their own, **require that they wear a surgical cap under their helmet for lice protection**, a.k.a. "Fashion cap".
- 5.** If the helmets **sit for 10 days between classes**, that's long enough that lice cannot live on them. If not, vacuum helmets to remove hair, or use fashion caps.
- 6.** If you don't have enough bikes to leave balance bikes without pedals, **add pedals to convertible Strider bikes**, several bikes at a time, before or after class, as more students become skilled at gliding. By the end of the program, nearly all the bikes, or all the bikes, should have pedals. (Have volunteers arrive early or stay late to help with this.) Ideally, have enough bikes in your fleet that you don't need to add/remove pedals.
- 7. Have a toolbox and bike pump on hand** for minor adjustments.
- 8.** A voice amplifier with a bluetooth speaker is **invaluable for communicating with kids and playing music to make it fun**. [Shido makes a waterproof, rechargeable model.](#)



Curriculum

1. Expect to spend a portion of the first class **fitting/labeling helmets** and **sizing bikes**.
2. **Start every class with expectations** – safety rules (they may not need these every class), have fun, and, if needed, some social emotional learning tips.
 - a. **Safety rules:** Bike the same direction, look where you're going, go a safe speed.
 - b. **Have fun!**
 - c. **Social Emotional Learning** – practice at the start of class and reinforce throughout:
 - i. **Personal Safety:** You are safe on these bikes. You can put your feet down if you feel like you're going to fall. Put your hand on your heart and say, "I'm safe."
 - ii. **Calming skills:** Practice deep breaths and tell students these are a tool they can use if they get frustrated with sharing or if it's hard. This is less of a problem if you have multiple bikes with hand brakes, rather than just a few that need to be shared.
 - iii. **Persistence:** Biking is a chance to practice persistence (read/learn more about Mindset by Carol Dwek)
 - iv. **Kindness:** Tell students, "Some people have practiced biking more than others. We all have different skill levels and that's okay. If you see someone having a hard time, you can tell them, "Keep it up! You got this!" or use other encouraging words."
 - v. **Problem Solving:** Students can get frustrated sharing bikes if you've got some larger ones in your fleet, but not enough for everyone. Or, there may be name calling or other conflict. "Easy to Love, Difficult to Discipline: The 7 Basic Skills for Turning Conflict," by Becky Bailey and the Conscious Discipline model is used by school districts across the country and is highly effective. Try it to give students lifelong problem solving and self-regulation skills.





3. **Put on helmets** (it's fun to play Simon Says with some movement like hopping on one foot, touching elbows, and jumping jacks for those who quickly get helmets on while they're waiting for others to be ready).
4. After an intro talk and helmets, **it's time to ride and play games!**
 - a. All Kids Bike provides **curriculum with their bikes.**
 - b. Games that **help students practice starting, stopping, lifting their legs**, include:
 - i. **Red Light/Green Light**
 - ii. **Play music and have them touch feet with other students when the music stops or go to a particular color gym dot, line on the gym floor or cone.**
 - iii. **Animal game:** Be a - Stomping Elephant · Jumping Jack Rabbit/ Kangaroo/Frog (lift both legs) · Fast Cheetah (Go as fast as you can) · Flying Bird (Try to keep your feet up and legs out like wings) · Mouse (Tiny quick steps) · Sleepy Bear (Stop bike and pretend to sleep on handlebars)
 - c. **You can play tag**, if you have someone who can safely lift a hand off handlebars. Tagged students stop and do 5 jumping jacks then get back on their bike.
5. If you have capacity, you can give **all students a certificate** at the end of the session.
6. Again, if you have capacity, throughout, you can **use stickers to support and encourage students.**



Volunteer Support

1. **It is critical to have additional support.**
Volunteers are especially helpful at the start when students are getting fitted with helmets and are first learning to glide and then at the end when multiple students each day are learning to pedal.
2. A consistent parent or community member is **very helpful.**
3. Older students can also **provide support.**
4. **Safe Routes to School staff** can support and train volunteers – student, family and community members.
5. **Introduce volunteers** to the class.
6. **Teach Volunteers:**
 - a. **The bike skills and social emotional skills** we're teaching students.
 - b. The **value of gentle assertiveness** (kinders may not be clear on what is best for them in terms of i.e. seat height, helmet fit, readiness to ride a pedal bike, etc).
 - c. **Classes are short and there are a lot of students to serve;** if a student is challenging it's okay to move on to another student. If that student really needs support, ask a school staff member to help (ideally those students who really need it will have aides).
 - d. **There may be some chaos,** especially the first week.
 - e. **Celebrate every move** from standing over the bike, to walking, to gliding, to pedaling as an achievement!
7. **Explain gym or outdoor space layout and share the various roles:**
 - a. **Helping with getting out bikes**
 - b. **Helping with helmets at start of class**
 - c. **Individual support:**
 - i. **Encouraging** students to sit on the seat of balance bikes
 - ii. **Teaching** new pedalers
 - iii. **Teaching** how to slow or stop
 - iv. **Adjusting** seat heights on bikes
 - v. **Switching** kids from glide to pedal bikes
 - vi. **Giving out** stickers and praise
 - d. Standing at a corner or end of the gym and **encouraging good traffic flow** (while encouraging students, reminding them to lift up feet, etc.)
 - e. **Bringing bikes out at start of class and putting them away after.**





Gliding Skills (in order)*

1. **Walking while sitting on seat** (vs. standing up and walking)
2. **Stopping**
3. **Moving faster** (3-2-1-Blast Off! To lifting feet)
4. **Gliding while looking ahead** (Students or group can count gliding duration)
5. **Moving feet onto pegs** without looking down
6. Once students can **glide smoothly for 5+ seconds without looking down** and can **glide around corners** its time for pedals

Encourage students to **sit on the seat and **look forward***



Pedal Skills (in order)**

1. Ascertain that the **student can glide well** (lift feet for 5-10 seconds) before attempting pedals.
2. Have them **practice putting feet on and off pedals while someone holds the bike**, first looking at their feet then without looking.
3. Show them **how to use brakes**.
4. Ask them to **start by gliding on the pedal bike and then lift their feet onto the pedals without looking**. Then they can put them back on the ground or start pedaling!
5. Their first time(s) trying pedals, **follow along with them** so you can prompt them on how to stop.
6. **Resist urge to hold a student up by the handlebars—they won't learn to balance!**
The exception to this is a student is struggling with the act of pedaling. If a student hasn't used training wheels or practiced pedaling ever, it can be helpful to ask them if they'd like to have you put a hand on their back/shoulders to help them balance while they practice pedaling. Usually they just need a couple of minutes to learn that skill. Putting a hand on their back or shoulder lets you modulate the amount of support/balance that you're providing, vs. holding the bike. **Always ask permission before touching a student.**
7. **An option is that as students become proficient at pedalling**, you could begin "graduating" them to activities with the PE teacher so they do not become a distraction/hazard to other learners (this works well for 1st graders or if you're doing a longer class).



Classroom Layout Options

1. Have students **going around in a circle** or **going back and forth from one point to another** (the latter is better for games).
2. If you have the space, you can **sort students into groups based on skill level**: walkers, gliders, fast gliders, pedalers.
3. If possible, send pedalers outside for **more space to ride in a bus loop or on the playground**. Or, if you have a large enough space outside and the weather permits, bike outside with everyone in one loop.
4. Students can be **practicing gliding and walking in the middle of a circle** while other students are **practicing pedaling or gliding fast in a bigger circle around the outside**.



Prepare PE Teachers

1. **Several weeks before class starts**, send letters to be sent home that include volunteer sign-up link and info about the class. [Here is an example](#) in English and Spanish, long and short versions.
2. **Arrange a space to store the bikes at the school for the duration of the program** - ideally close to where you'll be using them. The corner of the gym works well with the bikes pushed together in a row, alternating which direction they face (so they fit more compactly), with helmets stacked on top to make it harder for students to grab one when they're not in use ([see photo on bottom left](#)).
3. **Get the class lists** so that you can label helmets.
4. Ask them to figure out **if blacktop is available for having class outside**. Bus loops and playgrounds work well.



Track Your Success

1. **During the first class**, write down what students are doing (already pedaling, gliding, walking) next to their name on the class list. As you go through the class, update the list to reflect whether students are now gliding or are new pedalers.
2. **Track your success in a spreadsheet** so that you can celebrate and share your program success over time with volunteers, schools and others!



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