

CYCLING TIPS

Tips for parents of children with hearing impairments

Green-Schools Travel



All children need to be taught cycling safety. Cycling off-road is the best way to start for any child but children with hearing loss may experience additional difficulties when riding their bike. Listed below are some simple tips to promote safety when cycling or scooting.

Cycle Right Online Course



[Cycle Right](#) is the National Standard for Cycle Training in Ireland and provides practical cycle safety and skills training to promote competent and confident cycling. Cycle Right is an inclusive programme and offers free [certified online courses](#) for adults and [resources](#) including information sheets on different forms of disability and the learning process. Completing this course will give you the skills to be a leading example for your child.

Helmets

In general, look for a helmet with fitting foam (the squishy pads) so you can move them around to accommodate a hearing aid without affecting impact performance. It may be an idea to acquire the next size larger helmet, with more fitting foam used all around. That in turn requires very careful strap adjustment to make sure the helmet will stay on the rider's head in a crash.



[Nutcase helmets](#) are recommended by www.earcommunity.org. These helmets have two layers of padding— one in integrated in the shell and the other velcros in and out – the Velcro pads can be moved, re-positioned or missing on that side to accommodate sound processors/hearing aids.

Important

Never remove any of the styro-foam (the rigid foam) to accommodate a hearing aid. This would compromise the impact performance of the helmet in that spot. The thickness of the foam is a key element in reducing the shock of the impact.

Rear View Mirrors

When riding a bicycle or a scooter in a public space, deaf children may not hear another bike or scooter coming from behind or be able to decide which side to move when the rider rings their bell. It could therefore be an idea to add rear vision mirrors as an additional aid.

The rear view mirrors will help but ultimately your child needs to learn the skills to safely observe (free wheeling and keeping the arms long when shoulder checking) and the need for constant all round awareness (scanning and checking all round before changing position, including starting and stopping).



Emphasise caution in residential areas

This is a generic safety tip but one that needs to be emphasised for deaf children. They may not hear when a car is pulling out of a driveway and the driver may not be able to see them.

Make others aware

If your child is cycling in a public space, it may be an idea to implement some simple measures to ensure others exercise caution. Some examples are available from <http://www.deafbikesigns.com/>.



For example;

- You could Print 'deaf cyclists' on a hi-viz vest
- Contact your local authorities about installing signs in the area
- Add some simple decals to the helmet
- Add a licence plate indicating 'deaf cyclist' to the bicycle