

## Cycling on Sidewalks

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As part of Bike to School Month I'm putting out weekly emails to team members with a weekly safety topic; this week's topic concerns cycling on the sidewalk.

For young children (with my own kids, about Kindergarten through at least 2nd or 3rd grade, depending on the street) cycling on the sidewalk is necessary. Their height on a bike is too low to be visible to drivers and they might not ride consistently in a straight line on the right. But sidewalk riding can be dangerous. The following information about sidewalks & bikes will help you to negotiate sidewalks safely with kids:

- Cycling on the sidewalk becomes problematic when cyclists travel faster than the typical pedestrian.
- The design speed of sidewalks is 5 mph.
- Motorists pulling out from side streets and driveways often do not expect bikes on the sidewalk and may not see them in enough time to avoid a conflict.
- Motorists turning at an intersection may not see cyclists riding on the sidewalk because of signs, parked cars, lights or vegetation. These visual blocks may prevent cyclists from seeing motorists as well.
- Motorists turning out of driveways are often only looking in the direction of on-coming traffic. They may not have time to respond to a cyclist approaching on their right on the sidewalk.

So, how can you negotiate these hazards of sidewalk cycling? Three simple rules:

- On the sidewalk, take it SLOW.
- Every time you leave the sidewalk and enter the street STOP, MAKE SURE YOU CAN SEE WELL, AND CHECK TO MAKE SURE NO CARS ARE COMING before you go.
- Slow and CHECK FOR RUNNING CARS BEFORE CROSSING EVERY DRIVEWAY.

I also like to ride the sidewalk the "right" way (with traffic), both to make riding on the right a habit from the very beginning, and because it makes it safer to re-enter the street as a cyclist.

Parents, you are your child's most important cycling instructor. Thank you for taking the time to learn more about safe cycling with kids.

And thank you for cycling to school--enjoy the ride!

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