

# ***Bicycling in Alameda can be safe for the whole family***

***BikeAlameda*** supports **bicycling** as a means of helping parents and children discover the world together. Bicycling is a sport and a way to get places. It can help you and your family stay healthy, and get you places while keeping the air cleaner for everyone.

**Alameda is a flat island.** No hills to ride up. Most places on the island are very close together, too. Your child's school is probably less than ten minutes away by bicycle. Now is a great time **to start using a bicycle** to get to and from school, if you aren't already. If you and your child already ride to school, share your experience with other parents and kids, or learn from them what routes they take.

If your children don't ride a bicycle, **teach them.** It's a great way to get around the block as a child, the best form of independence as a teenager and a money saver as an adult. If your children already ride, teach them and reinforce **how to ride safely.** This will make the ride pleasant and get everyone where they want to go without any trouble.



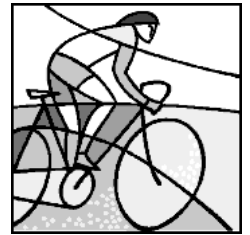
## ***Learning and teaching***

Learning to ride is fun. Be sure that your bike is comfortable and the right size. A bike that is too big can be dangerous and disappointing. **Find a helmet that fits and wear it!**

**Practice** on playgrounds, wide bike paths and completely empty parking lots. For example, the local school yard, the shoreline path on Harbor Bay, a doctor's office parking lot when the office is closed.

To help your child, hold onto her shoulders instead of the handlebars or the seat. This will enable her to feel the sway of the bike and get used to it while **giving them confidence.**

Small bikes with training wheels are great.



Ride, ride, ride to learn to balance and stop and get the feel of the bicycle. Once your child rides comfortably, practice riding in a straight line, like a sidewalk. **Be careful near driveways,** since there may be moving cars. Teach the rule "stay to the right, faster moving traffic will pass on the left."

**Ride with your child** as much as possible to show them how to obey the rules. Wear a helmet to set a good example – your head is just as precious as theirs!

## ***Ride Safely***

**Wearing a helmet is required by law** for all riders under 18. The helmet should be low across the forehead and level to protect the forehead in a front impact, and snug. Buckle the chin strap, too.

**Sidewalk vs street riding.** Once a child has been trained to follow the rules of the road, he or she is safer on the street. This can be anywhere from age 5 (riding in the bike lane) to age 12 (riding almost any street).

There are pros and cons of riding in the street and on the sidewalk. In both cases:

- **Beware of driveways.** Look them up and down to make sure there are no moving cars
- **Ride in the direction of traffic**— even when riding on the sidewalk! Drivers are more likely to see you.
- **Watch for doors** opening on parked cars.
- **Stop at all intersections** and cross cautiously. Always assume that drivers don't see you until you can make eye contact with the driver. Look for cross traffic at the intersection AND look for cars that may be turning right onto the cross street in front of you.
- **Obey the rules of the road** – just like cars do. Stop at red lights and stop signs.
- **Put a rack on your bike** to carry your bags. A bag on your shoulders can get you off balance. A front or rear basket is simple and makes it easy to store different sized items like a back pack or lunch bag.
- **Put a bell on your bike.** Use the bell to warn pedestrians that you are passing. Pass them slowly and carefully.



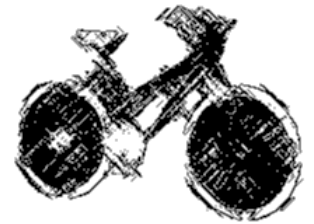
before the school term begins, so you and your children are not in a hurry and can explore the way.

Look for streets with **fewer cross streets** and **fewer driveways**. Some of the best streets with low traffic to ride in Alameda are San Jose Avenue, Pacific Avenue, Shoreline Drive bike path, Harbor Bay shoreline bike path, Otis Drive (in some places), San Antonio Avenue. Fernside Boulevard has a wide and safe bike lane. The Harbor Bay Island lagoon paths are excellent.

Please see [www.bikealameda.org/info/map.html](http://www.bikealameda.org/info/map.html) for more info or call Public Works for a copy of the Bicycle Master Plan map at (510) 749-5860.

## **Remember**

- Look for eye contact. Even if you can see a driver, the **driver might not see you**.
- Wear a well-fitting **helmet**, properly
- **Never** ride on the wrong side of the street.



## **Know the route**

An important part of riding a bicycle to school, or anywhere, is knowing the **safest route** to take. Ride or walk to school on a weekend or

Produced by BikeAlameda, a 501(c)3 corporation, with suggestions from its email list members, [www.bikealameda.org](http://www.bikealameda.org), 595-4690

*“Your superior valet bike parkers at fine events throughout Alameda”*

If you would like to be involved in a community of bicyclists to share ideas and riding tips and brainstorm about better Alameda routes, please join our email list.

This pamphlet was made by volunteers.

If you would like to contribute to BikeAlameda, send donations to BikeAlameda PO Box 2732 Alameda 94501.