

Bike and Adaptive Bike Safety

Bicycle safety is an important consideration for parents of children and youth with special healthcare needs (CYSHCN). According to Safe Kids Worldwide, only 45% of children under age 14 wear an appropriate bike helmet on a regular basis, which is a leading factor in the alarming statistic that more children in this age group receive emergency treatment for biking injuries than for any other sport. Additionally, they state that children who wear appropriate fitting bike helmets for every ride reduce their risk of brain injury by up to 88% ([Safe Kids Worldwide Bike Safety Tips, 2019](#)).

Many experts recommend that parents take the following considerations into account to help ensure their child's safety while participating in recreational bicycling:

- Ensure that the helmet you select for your child is approved by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- Never purchase a used helmet and replace bike helmets if they are involved in a crash.
- Make sure that the helmet you select for your child fits appropriately.
- Require that your child wears their helmet every time they are riding their bike.
- Ensure that your child is riding an appropriately sized bicycle, and that all parts of the bike are in working order prior to every ride.
- Provide supervision while your child is using their bicycle, and make sure that they have a safe location to ride.
- Do not let your child ride their bike after dark and consider utilizing bright colored clothing and/or reflective strips or flags on your child's bike for easy visibility.
- Teach your child pedestrian safety rules.

Parents of CYSHCN have additional safety needs to think about, including: previous brain injury or trauma, hydrocephalus and shunts, craniofacial differences, sensitive skin and/or no hair, and many other conditions that may require special helmet considerations. It is important for parents to talk to their child's doctor or medical team to determine the safest bicycle equipment and helmet for their child. Additionally, parents can ask their child's doctor for assistance with or a referral for a customized fitting for a bike helmet, if needed.

Riley Hospital for Children has a helpful safety guide to [Bike Helmets for Children with Special Needs](#), which helps walk parents through medical considerations that should be taken into account to help keep their child with special healthcare needs safe during recreational bicycling.

For more
information,
contact Indiana
Family to Family.

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They also have a guide to [Adaptive Bicycle Products for Persons with Disabilities or Healthcare Needs](#), which helps to present the types of adaptive bicycles, attachments, and supports that are available so that parents can better determine the safest bicycle options for their child with special healthcare needs.

[The Safety Store](#) at Riley Children's Hospital offers low-cost safety products to families, including bicycle helmets. Safety Store employees are trained educators, and they are able to provide families with safety advice, product suggestions, and educational materials. Families can contact The Safety Store online (<https://safetystore.iu.edu/>) or at 317-274-6565. Additionally, The Safety Store website has many topic-specific educational resources available to parents.

For more bike safety tips and ideas, visit our [Indiana Family to Family Pinterest Safety Board](#).

For more information about bike safety, contact Indiana Family to Family at info@inf2f.org or 844-F2F-INFO (844-323-4636).

Programs and systems change often. It is important to ensure that you are using the most current information. This fact sheet was updated October 2023. Please check <https://www.inf2f.org/fact-sheets.html> for the most recent edition.

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