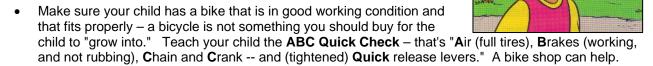
Dear Parents,

Now is the time to teach your child safe bike *driving!* Bicycling is a great way for your family to have fun and exercise together. It's a sport to enjoy for one's entire lifetime. Bicycling can make a child more independent -- and you will feel more confident granting this independence

when you know your child has learned to drive a bike safely.

• First, **set a good example** by riding on the right when on the street and by following all traffic laws -- which apply to bikes just as they do to cars. And, don't forget *your* helmet!



 Kids are not just small adults. They have a narrower field of vision, less ability to judge speed or distance, and may be impatient and impulsive. It's important to teach them the skills needed to avoid the most common causes of crashes -- and learning these skills takes practice.

	Crash Cause	Way to Avoid
	Coming out of a driveway and ailing to yield to traffic	Teach child to look LEFT, RIGHT, and LEFT again. Enter the roadway when nothing is coming.
F	Failing to stop at stop sign	Practice stopping; ride with your child and explain searching for traffic. BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL.
S	Sudden left swerve into traffic	Practice riding straight and "scanning" to the rear looking back to see if there is traffic.
F	Riding on the wrong side of the street	Ride on the RIGHT- it's safer and it's the law.
F	Riding at night or in bad weather	Children shouldn't ride at night. Anyone riding at night needs light colored clothes and lots of lights!

Generally, younger children should start off riding on sidewalks. Teach your new cyclist to:

- Stop at road crossings. Look Left Right Left. Wait for cars. Then, take his or her turn alertly, paying attention to what the motorists are doing.
- Be aware that cars might turn into a driveway the driver may not look for bikes on sidewalks.
- Watch for clues that a car may soon be backing out of a driveway: engine noise, taillights on, exhaust smoke, driver in car, garage opening, cars hidden behind bushes or other cars. Many car drivers only look back not side-to-side until they are at the street.
- Speak up ("Bike passing" or "Excuse me") or sound a bell or horn before passing someone.

As kids mature and bike faster, sidewalk biking conflicts with cars worsen. Faster-moving bicyclists on sidewalks are harder for motorists to see than cyclists on the right side of the road. Studies have shown that sidewalk cyclists riding against traffic are much more likely to collide with cars than on-road riders going in the same direction as traffic. Very few bikes get hit from behind – most adult car-bike crashes occur at intersections. As cyclists get faster, biking on many streets becomes safer than sidewalk riding.

When your child is ready, **practice road riding together** to teach skills such as: bicycling defensively, scanning around for traffic, looking back (and listening) for cars behind, proper lane positioning when turning (or going straight), hand signaling, and knowing where it is safe to ride for your child's skill level.

