



## **SAFE KIDS USA POSITION STATEMENT KIDS RIDING BIKES ALONE**

Between approximately 5 to 10 years of age, children learn to become independent. They enjoy walking, riding bikes, and playing outside. They don't yet have the judgment to cope with traffic, but they can begin to understand safety rules.

Bicycles are vehicles. Children should not ride bikes in the road until they fully understand traffic rules and show they can follow them. There is a correlation between being a safe pedestrian and a safe bike rider.

Parents and caregivers should be aware of the risks associated with bike riding. Among all recreational sports, bicycling is the leading cause of emergency department visits for children and adolescents. Most children who are killed in bike crashes are 7 to 12 years old, and traumatic brain injury accounts for two-thirds of all bike-related deaths.

The issue is not whether the child has and wears a safety-approved helmet. It is what the child is capable of doing safely while wearing one.

Parents and caregivers should ride with children for supervision and to model safe cycling behaviors. Safe Kids USA's policy is that, keeping in mind the range of traffic patterns and driver behavior, adults should watch children carefully to assess their bike riding and traffic negotiation abilities and skills. Until children are able to negotiate traffic, understand risk, and judge speed (at least age 10), they should not ride unsupervised.

Among the concurring organizations are:

American Academy of Pediatrics

<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;108/4/1030#B2>

[www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)