

# Kids Love Bikes

## Program Philosophy and Curriculum Details



### Educational Philosophy

Our bike class is about more than fewer skinned knees. The Kids Love Bikes curriculum strives to provide a course that enables learners of every type and enhances youth social, emotional, and physical development. We teach kids the principles they need to know to bike confidently and safely and to understand the responsibilities, risks, and joys of being a bicyclist.

### Our Curriculum

Using inspiration and notes from programs and curricula utilized across the country and through the many decades of personal experiences of Bike Walk Knoxville staff, we have developed curriculum tailored for different youth age groups, from kindergarten to young adult. Our instructors are certified by the League of American Bicyclists. We focus on bike handling, maintenance and safety, but what does that really mean?

- **Handling**, because 80% of bike accidents involve only a bicycle. If the child is in control of their bike, they have the power to stay out of harm's way and signal to drivers that they are confident and competent cyclists.
- **Maintenance**, because bicycles should last longer than the air in their tires. A huge barrier to consistent cycling is fear of becoming stranded due to a mechanical issue or that once a mechanical issue arises, the bike becomes no more than garage clutter or a lawn decoration. We teach kids how to maintain their bicycles and know how to identify serious problems.
- **Safety**, because you can't follow rules you don't know. For most people, the only bike safety education they receive is informal (if at all) from parents or peers. Road sign and rules literacy is a fundamental aspect of making safe decisions and forming good habits while riding a bike.

### How we teach it

Through our course, not only are participants learning bike skills and safety; they are developing healthy habits, coordination skills, and awareness of the benefits of active mobility. Students also learn to operate bikes respectfully in space with other users - people walking and biking, fast and slow. For their safety, students must understand the rules and responsibilities of riding on the road with cars (which must be approved by parents/guardians). Increased independent thinking and positive social behavior are additional expected outcomes from the program. The Kids Love Bikes program uses a combination of classroom, as well as off bike and on bike techniques to engage all learning styles.

### Learning techniques

- **Written**: We utilize surveys, worksheets, and handouts to help engage students. These focus on bike knowledge prior to class, parts of the bike, rules of the road, and more.

- **Oral:** Throughout class, we engage students in discussions to learn more about their bike experience, their comprehension of handouts and practiced skills, and their understanding of navigating safely. We begin and end each class with group discussion that allows them to learn from the instructors and each other.
- **Practice:** While we use more than just practice, this takes up most of our class time with on-bike skill building. This includes bike safety skills, repeated handling drills, and riding on nearby sidewalks/greenways (if applicable). This also includes bike safety checks at the start of each class and maintenance lessons.

#### Other benefits

- Obtaining pedestrian safety knowledge through learning road safety
- Experiencing riding bikes for fun/adventure
- Discovering opportunities for regular physical exercise
- Increasing biking and walking as normal activities in communities

### **Skills Covered through the Kids Love Bikes Program:**

#### Handling, Maintenance, Safety:

##### **Bike Handling**

- Controlled starting and stopping
- Scanning
- Shifting gears
- Weaving
- Quick stopping and rock dodging

##### **Maintenance and Mechanics**

- Daily bike checks
- Parts and functions of bike
- Saddle adjustment
- Pumping air and changing flats
- Cleaning bike chains

##### **Safety**

- Helmet fit
- Signaling
- Riding position
- Passing safely
- Group ride communication

#### Other Skills:

##### **Personal development**

- Goal setting and achievement
- Personal responsibility & self preparation
- Develop self-confidence

##### **STEM**

- Simple mechanics
- Systems thinking
- Body physics

##### **Personal community awareness and safety**

- Awareness and ability to deal with natural environment
- Weather preparation & awareness
- Community & landscape engagement
- Navigation skills & geo-spatial awareness

##### **Physical and health skills**

- Hand/eye/body coordination
- Understanding the connection between physical activity and health
- Understand benefits of physical activity