



Help your child avoid serious injury with head-to-toe protection.

Your child should wear a brightly colored, properly fitting helmet that meets the Department of Transportation (DOT) safety standard. The DOT symbol should be on the outside of the helmet, and an information label should be located on the inside. Helmets with ANSI or Snell labels provide added assurance of quality. If the helmet is without a face shield, make sure your child wears goggles. Next, leather or heavy denim jacket, long pants, and gloves are needed to protect from the elements. Make sure footwear is sturdy, extends above the ankles, and has short heels that won't catch on rough surfaces. Check to see that laces are tucked in. To increase visibility, encourage your child to wear bright, contrasting clothes on the upper body. Apply reflective materials to the helmet and to the motorcycle.

Review the motorcycle owner's manual with your child. Before every ride, your child should check the tire pressure and tread, hand and foot brakes, headlights and signal indicators, fluid levels, and under the bike for signs of oil or gas leaks. If carrying cargo, the load should be secured and balanced on the motorcycle; the suspension and tire pressure adjusted to accommodate the extra weight.

Make sure the motorcycle is safely maintained.

## WHEN YOUR CHILD IS A PASSENGER...

- Make sure your child wears a helmet and proper, protective clothing.
- Advise your child never to get on a motorcycle when the operator has been drinking. Both your child *and* the intoxicated operator should get a ride with someone who has not been drinking.
- Remind your child to get on the motorcycle only after the engine has started; sit as far forward as possible, directly behind the operator; avoid contact with the muffler; and keep both feet on the foot rests at all times, even when the motorcycle is stopped. And to prevent the bike from falling over, only dismount from the motorcycle when the operator says it is okay.
- Teach your child to hold firmly to the motorcycle operator's waist, hips, or belt; keep movement to a minimum; and lean when the operator does.
- Remind your child to keep their feet on the pegs at all times, including while stopped, and keep hands and feet away from hot or moving parts.
- Remind your child to avoid distracting the operator with unnecessary conversation.
- Don't let your child ride with someone unless the operator has a *motorcycle* operator license and is insured.
- Make sure the operator is experienced and capable of handling a motorcycle.



**BEFORE  
YOUR CHILD  
GETS ON A  
MOTORCYCLE**

For more information visit:  
[www.tntrafficsafety.org](http://www.tntrafficsafety.org)  
Or call: 1.800.99.BELTS



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Racing or touring — motorcycling is an exciting way for your child to enjoy the outdoors! But caution needs to be taken. Parents can take the following steps to ensure their children are motorcycling safely while still having fun.

## WHEN YOUR CHILD IS THE OPERATOR...

Licensing regulations vary among states; most require a written and riding test to receive a motorcycle license endorsement. Many states also mandate that operators complete a state-sponsored rider training course. Your state law probably requires that everyone operating a motorcycle must have a motorcycle endorsement on your license. So, you'll need to check with your state's licensing agency for the licensing requirements in your area. Also, your child's motorcycle must have the proper insurance.

Operating a motorcycle requires more coordination than driving a car. Alcohol and drugs, including some prescribed medications, impair judgment and alertness and reduce critical reaction time. These substances negatively affect a rider's sense of balance, throttle control, and the ability to shift gears.

**Be certain that your child is familiar with the motorcycle.**

Operating a motorcycle safely takes lots of practice! Riders who have less than six months' experience on their bikes are involved in more than half of all multi-vehicle motorcycle collisions. Because they vary in handling and responsiveness, motorcycles that are new or unfamiliar should be ridden in a controlled area until your child is familiar with the machine. Make sure your child knows how to handle the bike in a variety of conditions — carrying cargo, riding in inclement weather, or encountering hazards like slick roads, potholes, or road debris. *Young and inexperienced riders should avoid carrying passengers when riding.*

**Do not loan your motorcycle.**

We discourage motorcyclists from loaning their motorcycles to others because every motorcycle handles differently and you may not know how much riding experience the rider may have. If you must loan your motorcycle, make sure the rider is:

- experienced
- licensed
- wearing protective clothing and a helmet
- *not* under the influence of alcohol or other drugs
- insured.

Parents need to warn children about taking risks when riding a motorcycle. Make sure your child knows the local traffic laws and the penalties for failure to comply. Explain the importance of being visible and riding "defensively." Studies show that most multi-vehicle motorcycle crashes are caused by drivers of other vehicles who just "*didn't see the motorcycle!*" Your child can increase his or her visibility by applying reflective materials to the motorcycle, wearing brightly-colored clothing, and by keeping the motorcycle headlights on at all times, even using high beams during the day. Remind your child to proceed cautiously at intersections and yield to pedestrians and other vehicles, as appropriate. These and other important safety measures are taught in rider education courses, so it is important for parents to make sure their children complete a course. For more information about rider education courses, call the Motorcycle Safety Foundation at 1-800-447-4700.

When seated, your child should be able to reach the ground with his or her feet. The motorcycle should also be light enough for your child to push, pick up, and park easily. Also, make sure the motorcycle is not too powerful for your child to handle. *Motorcycles with smaller engine sizes are suggested for all inexperienced riders.*

**Stress the importance of riding responsibly.**

**Make sure your child is properly licensed and insured.**

**Make sure your child is alcohol and drug free.**

**Select the right-sized motorcycle for your child.**