



Selecting the Right Bike & Helmet

While iCan Bike provides the bikes that the rider will use during the camp week, an important part of our program is transitioning the rider from our bikes to their own family bike. It is important that the rider is comfortable and confident on their own bike in order to begin practicing immediately following the program.

Bike shops offer the best selection of our recommended bikes. A good quality bike is more likely to be ridden as it is more comfortable and less likely to be in disrepair. Selecting a bike can be challenging. Some basic ideas and design characteristics to consider when selecting the most suitable bike for learning are listed below.

- Choose the largest wheeled bike upon which your rider is seated and can place both feet flat on the ground (heels slightly off the ground may be appropriate if the rider can support themselves and the bike). Being able to put both feet down when they feel insecure or when the bike comes to a stop helps them feel safe and confident. Buying a bike that you hope they can grow into is not recommended. If they feel safe and confident, they are going to want to ride the bike and will continue improving their skills. There will likely be avenues to sell an outgrown bike, especially back to other families taking part in future iCan Bike camps.
- The bikes that we recommend are usually sized by the diameter of the tire (16", 20", 24" 26"), not the frame. This means that your rider may not fit the same on all bikes even if they have the same tire size. The best way to find a suitable bike is to bring your rider with you and have them sit on the bike.
- Choose a low-slung and compact frame bicycle. Low-slung meaning that the top tube of the bicycle is lower to the ground, making it easier for our riders to get on and off, sometimes referred to as a step-through frame. A compact frame promotes an upright riding posture, meaning that the handlebars should be noticeably higher than the seat. An upright riding position will allow riders to pedal while keeping everything above their waist relatively static. This all makes it easier to balance because you aren't shifting your center of gravity

from side to side. The smaller bikes (16" & 20") may be called a youth or junior style bikes. The larger sized bikes (24" & 26") may be referred to as cruiser bikes.

- The pedals, at their highest point, should be no more than $\frac{3}{4}$ the height of the tire. Pedals higher than this will cause the rider's feet and knees to elevate too high with each rotation. This is uncomfortable and results in the rider's weight shifting from side to side making it more difficult to maintain balance.
- Choose a bike with handbrakes. It is easier for most riders to differentiate the two motor skills of "feet go forward" to make the bike go and "squeeze with the hand" to make the bike stop. Geared bikes and 20" single speed bikes will often come with handbrakes. Larger (24" & 26") single speed cruiser bikes will not usually come with handbrakes, but often can have them installed. Consult with your local bike shop to determine if one can be installed. Be sure to understand the return policy of a bike, especially from Big Box Stores, if later you find that you cannot install a handbrake.
- 16" and 20" bikes should only have a handbrake connected to the back wheel. A front wheel handbrake can be dangerous and may cause the rider to flip over the handlebars with an abrupt stop. All 16" and 20" family bikes with a front handbrake will be disengaged at the iCan Bike program.
- 24" and 26" single speed cruiser bikes are safe with a handbrake to either or both wheels.
- Please avoid competition/freestyle (BMX) and mountain bikes. They are more difficult to ride and not designed for learning riders. These bikes have taller frames making it difficult for riders to get on and off. They also have longer frames with seats and handlebars at the same height. This forces riders to lean forward to reach the handlebars, causing their center of gravity to shift with each pedal stroke. The pedals are too high off the ground, making balance more difficult. BMX bikes are designed for riding while standing and mountain bikes are for riding in steeply inclined environments – neither are good for our learning riders.
- Geared VS single speed bikes - there are pluses and minuses to each. Single speed bikes keep things simple, but often do not come with handbrakes. It would be an extra step to have a handbrake installed, if one can even be installed. Geared bikes come with handbrakes, but allow pedaling backwards and will have "clicking" shifters on the handlebars, both which may cause confusion, frustration, or source of distraction. There are ways to lock out gears

and/or use tape to disable the shifters; consult your local bike shop. The important piece is getting a bike with the correct fit, allowing your rider to sit in an upright position, with their feet on the ground. You know your rider best and the iCan Shine staff will be also able to give you insight to your rider's pedaling and whether or not they think a bike with gears is or isn't advisable.

- Be sure the rider likes the selected bike!

Modifications to get the perfect fit

- Change the bike seat to be wider and/or softer for comfort.
- Change the seat to be smaller or narrower to help the rider's feet completely reach the ground. This will potentially provide the needed reach to allow the rider to fit on a bigger wheeled bike with both feet flat on the ground. It's simply easier to ride a bigger wheeled bike, so we want riders on the largest wheeled bike they can fit on. This will also allow for more years of growth before needing to buy another bike.
- Remove the seat post reflector, allowing the seat to be adjusted lower.
- For riders that appear to be leaning forward reaching for the handlebars, consider adding a stem riser or higher rise handlebars which will provide a more upright riding position. Note that for geared bikes, making the handlebars higher may require changing the brake and/or shifter cables to make the reach. Your local bike shop can easily make those changes.

For additional information on bike selection and fitting, as well as helmet fitting, please watch our *Selecting a Suitable Bike for Learning* video on the parent page of our website: <https://icanshine.org/parents/ican-bike-parents/>.

Suggested Learning Bikes

Bike manufacturers frequently introduce new models and discontinue others. So, while this list isn't all inclusive of every suitable bike, it provides examples of many commonly available bikes. Some of the bikes listed come without a rear wheel handbrake; however, a bike shop may be able to add one for a nominal fee.

In the list below, *Current/New Bikes* represent bikes in the market that can likely be found at bike shops and larger retail stores. The *Discontinued/Used Bikes* are still excellent learning bikes but are no longer in production and will likely only be found in the used market (think Craigslist, Facebook Marketplace, etc.).

Bike models with the same name may come in both "men's" and "women's." We recommend the low-slung easy step-through frames, which often are referred to as "women's".

** Canadian campers see your special listing on our Canadian Recommended Bike List.*

Bike Shop Bicycles

16" Tire (Current/New Bikes)

- Fuji Rookie (has handbrake)
- Giant Animator
- Jamis Laser & Miss Daisy
- Liv Adore
- Raleigh Jazzi & Rowdy
- Schwinn Lil Stardust & Gremlin
- Schwinn Piston
- Raleigh Jazzi & Rowdy
- Specialized Riprock Coaster
- Sun Flower Power
- Sun Matrix
- Trek Precaliber

20" Tire (Current/New Bikes)

- Fuji Rookie
- Giant XTC Jr. 20
- Giant Motr 20
- Jamis Laser & Starlight
- Liv Adore
- Performance Fuji Rookie
- Raleigh Jazzi
- Schwinn Stardust & Aerostar
- Specialized Riprock Coaster
- Sun Flower Power
- Sun Matix
- Trek Precaliber
- Sun Flower Power

16" Tire (Discontinued/Used Bikes)

- Diamondback Mini Impression
- Dyno Vertigo
- Raleigh Lil Honey
- Raleigh MXR

20" Tire (Discontinued/Used Bikes)

- Diamondback Impression
- Diamondback RM20
- Electra Hawaii
- Giant Bella

- Performance Sparrow
- Schwinn Lil Dust
- Specialized Hotrock Coaster

- Giant Moda
- Performance Downforce
- Raleigh Retro
- Specialized Hotrock
- Sun Lil Bolt
- Trek Jet
- Trek Mystic

24" Tire (Current/New Bikes)

- Electra Cruiser Lux 1
- Electra Cruiser Lux 3i
- Firmstrong Urban Single Sp. Cruiser
- Firmstrong Bella Classic Single Sp.
- Sixthreezero Around The Block
- Sun Boardwalk
- Sun Revolutions

24" Tire (Discontinued/Used Bikes)

- Electra Cruiser 1
- Electra Townie
- Schwinn Sprite
- Schwinn Streamliner

26" Tire (Discontinued/Used Bikes)

- Cobo
- Electra Townie Original
- Giant Via W
- Liv Simple Single W
- Raleigh Retroglide
- Schwinn S1
- Schwinn Sprite Deluxe
- Torker Boardwalk
- Pure City Hama
- Pure City Sydney

26" Tire (Current/New Bikes)

- Del Sol Cantina
- Del Sol Shoreliner
- Electra Cruiser 1
- Electra Cruiser Lux 1 & 3i
- Electra Townie Original 3i EQ
- Firmstrong Urban Single Sp. Cruiser
- Firmstrong Bella Classic Single Sp.
- Fuji Cape May ST
- Jamis Earth Cruiser 1&2 Step-Over
- Jamis Hudson Easy & Easy 3
- Jamis Taxi & Boss Step-Over
- Pure City Step Through Cruiser
- Schwinn Debutante
- Schwinn Sivica 1 Step Thru
- Sixthreezero Around The Block
- Sun Atlas & Atlas X-Type
- Sun Boardwalk
- Sun Cruz
- Sun Drifter
- Sun Revolutions
- Sun Streamway

It can sometimes be a challenge finding single speed 24" and 26" bicycles. While we recommend single speed bikes for learning, below is a list of geared bikes that are relatively simple and suitable (there are more listed under the *Larger Retail Store* section). Please speak with your iCan Shine staff to determine if one of these geared bikes would be appropriate for your rider.

24" Tire (Current/New Geared Bikes)

- Electra Cruiser 7D
- Electra Townie
- Firmstrong Urban 24" 7 Speed
- Firmstrong Urban 24" 3 Speed
- Firmstrong Bella Classic 3 Speed
- Sixthreezero EVERYjourney

26" Tire (Current/New Geared Bikes)

- Del Sol Cantina 7
- Electra Cruiser 7D
- Electra Townie
- Raleigh Special IE Step Thru
- Schwinn Sierra
- Sixthreezero EVERYjourney
- Specialized Crossroads
- Sun Boardwalk 7
- Sun Cruz 3
- Sun Drifter 7
- Sun Revolutions 3
- Sun Streamway 3

Larger Retail Store Bicycles

The table below has bikes that can be found at larger retail stores such as Target and Walmart. Keep in mind that there are usually trade-offs with the lower priced bikes that you will find at larger retail stores. These bicycles are usually of lower quality, less durable, not assembled by experienced bike mechanics, and you will likely not find staff that are knowledgeable about the bikes they are selling. Not all of the bikes listed below will be found in stock; however, these stores have additional inventories online. Please note that online purchases often require some assembly.

Many of these bikes will not accept hand brakes, especially those with fenders. Thus, without expert advice when shopping for bikes at these locations, it will be difficult to determine whether or not the bike can have a handbrake installed. You will need to take it to your local bike shop for guidance.

Most of the 16" and 20" bikes that have handbrakes from these stores will be installed to the front tire, which will be disengaged at camp, thus negating its handbrake feature. Also, on these smaller sized single speed bikes, if the pedals and cranks rotate backwards, then it does not have a coaster brake and is a BMX freestyle bike. Again, it is best to avoid all BMX bikes. Understand the return policy prior to purchase.

16" Tire (Current/New Bikes)

- Huffy Rock It
- Huffy Sea Star
- Schwinn Cosmo
- Next Flare

20" Tire (Current/New Bikes)

- Huffy Sea Star
- Kent 2 Cool
- Schwinn Falcon
- Schwinn Fierce

24" Tire (Current/New Bikes)

- Columbia Newport
- Huffy Cranbrook
- Huffy Nel Lusso
- Kulana R3025

26" Tire (Current/New Bikes)

- Huffy Cranbrook
- Huffy Nel Lusso
- Kent La Jolla
- Schwinn Huntington

Bike Helmets

A properly fitted bike helmet is required for all riders at iCan Bike programs. We strongly recommend that all individuals riding a bicycle wear a helmet, regardless of how short the ride may be. Even a low-speed accident can result in a serious head injury. Be a good role model and always wear a helmet when you and your rider's siblings are riding bikes.

- There are different helmets for different recreational activities. Each type of helmet is made to protect your head from the impacts common to a particular activity or sport. Skateboard helmets protect the back of your head, which is the most common location for skateboarding head injuries. They are designed for multiple low speed impacts. Bike helmets are designed to protect the front of the head, the most common area of most biking injuries. Bike helmets are designed for higher speed single impacts. You can see the differences below.



Skateboard Helmet
(not for biking)



Bike Helmet

- Buy a helmet that meets U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) safety standards for biking. There should be a sticker inside the helmet or identified on the helmet box.

Bike Helmet Fit

The two-finger rule is an easy guide for proper fit. You should be able to:



- Place two fingers between the eyebrows and the helmet. This ensures proper placement on the head, not too far forward or backward. The helmet should fit firmly and level on the rider's head.
- Hold two fingers in a peace sign "V" with the bottom of the "V" just below the ear lobe. This is where the side straps of the helmet should be when the helmet is on the rider.
- Insert two fingers between the chin strap and chin. The strap should be tight enough to secure the helmet, but not so tight as to constrict, pinch, or be uncomfortable.

- Helmets should be adjusted to fit each individual's head. After adjusting, the helmet should fit securely and not shift on the head.
- Before each ride, a helmet should be checked and adjusted, if necessary.
- Helmets should be replaced if subjected to a severe blow, even if it doesn't appear to have damage. One cannot often see if the structural integrity has been compromised. Some manufacturers use the mantra "one crash and it's trash."