

Helmet Wearing and Safe Play

Children are vulnerable to head injuries and should wear a standards approved bicycle helmet whenever they ride a bike, scooter or other wheeled toy.

[NSW Road Rule 256](#) states that **all** riders of bikes – and their passengers – must wear an approved bicycle helmet that is securely fitted and fastened when riding on a road or road-related area. [NSW Road Rule 250-1](#) states that riders under 16 years of age and an adult 18 years or older who is supervising them may ride on a footpath. Riders must give way to any pedestrian on footpaths.

[The National Quality Standard](#) requires children's services to have policies and procedures to protect children's health and safety and to provide a safe environment. The *Kids and Traffic* team can help children's services develop policies and procedures for helmet wearing and the safe use of wheeled toys.

The earlier young children learn how important it is to wear helmets whenever they ride, the more likely they are to continue wearing them as they grow older.



How to make sure each child's helmet fits properly

- Make sure it meets Australian Standards.
- Choose a helmet that's the right size – not too big that it falls over ears and eyes, and not too small that it sits only on the top of the head.
- Choose a helmet that's lightweight – not too heavy for their heads and necks to carry.
- Helmets must stay securely in place. Straps need to sit flat without twists and fasten snugly under the chin.
- To fit properly, a child's helmet should be worn two child finger widths above the eyebrows so that it sits about half way down the forehead.
- Wearing anything under a helmet stops it from fitting properly. Sun hats or pony tails lift the helmet higher on the child's head and reduces its protection. Sun protection helmet covers or shaded play areas are preferable.
- As each child grows, keep checking that the helmet still fits properly. Some helmets come with padded inserts or a 'ring fit' system to allow you to adjust them.
- Advise families to make sure their child tries a helmet on before they buy it. Then they can be sure that it fits properly and is one that their child is happy to wear.
- Head lice can only be spread by direct head-to-head contact. They cannot be spread by sharing hats or helmets.¹



Adults are responsible for making sure children always wear a properly fitted helmet

¹National Health and Medical Research Council (2012, Updated 2013). *Staying Healthy* (5th ed.) Canberra: NHMRC, page 112.

Roads, carparks, footpaths and driveways are never safe places to play or ride. Fenced play areas that are away from vehicles and water are preferred and, of course, an adult should always be there to supervise.

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