

### A problem I have encountered with cycling...

Cycling on busy roads with a child who has just learned to ride - the problem was how to know if this was the right thing to do, and how to get appropriate training for her when she was only just turned 5 (Primary 1) and cycle training only seemed available for P6 (ten year olds). I wanted to cycle to school with her - she wanted to as well - but her relatively low speed, lack of experience, vulnerability, and fears of both parents (particularly mother who was also inexperienced), plus the distance (1.3 miles) necessitated use of busy roads.

### How I solved it...

We tried to build experience on side roads, cycle paths, so she could take her tumbles there. We tried to get cycle training through national schemes. We approached the school (Scennes) but Kirsty was 5 years too young. We approached the bike station but the only cost effective way to do it was with other parents, and none of our contemporaries at that stage had a child so competent & keen that we doubted her needs would be met. We tried cycling to school at the weekend, arriving much later, as a trial.

But what worked best was buying "Cyclecraft" by John Franklin. This book promotes cycling on road with children and tells you how to do it as safely as possible. I read it, learnt a lot from it, have used it for 18 months to train my first daughter, who has been cycling to school since ~~February~~ <sup>February 2009</sup> (primary 1). It emphasizes the freedom a bike gives children, and tells parents how to handle the hazards. It has helped me improve my cycling, almost 40 years after I first learnt to ride. Early on, my eldest came off the bike twice on main roads at rush hour, but we were surprised to tell the tale and a tremendous result is that <sup>18 months later</sup> her little sister Sarah cycled to school on her first day of P1, one week ago, with her elder sister, <sup>Kirsty</sup> and both parents present to cheer her on.

Thanks for entering - Encourage your friends to enter too! Details also at: [www.spokes.org.uk](http://www.spokes.org.uk)

Have recommended this book to several friends & acquaintances, but still very few have got their kids cycling competently on road, still a big issue that I had to resort to a book, ~~but~~ it did help solve our problem!

Kirsty (6) + Sarah (5) set off to school, 14/8/11



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