

How to Use Support When Teaching Bicycle Safety

There is a lot happening when teaching a bike safety class. People are driving cars on the road, people are crossing the street, and the weather may not be great. Students are still getting used to their bikes while others are throwing pine cones at each other. And you still have to provide meaningful feedback to the students! Bike safety is easiest when taught with 2-3 adults supporting the class. So let's talk about how to use all that support to ensure students have a safe, constructive experience.

Recruiting Support

Schools are overloaded with the need for assistance so looking for outside sources can sometimes be the way to go. You may recruit a parent volunteer. Parents who volunteer usually have experience with bicycles and can provide solid feedback to the students. There are also many riding clubs and racing teams that could be interested in volunteering. The people in these groups are less likely to dedicate themselves for the entirety of the program, but they may be able to string together a slew of volunteers to cover the entire program.

Otherwise, the school may have TA's and support staff able to assist depending on their workload. One of the most wonderful things about bicycles is their ability to spark engagement. Most people that ride bikes love riding bikes and love sharing that passion. Get those experts on your side!

Using Support

Now that you know where to find support, let's talk about how to use it.

On-campus

If you have any students that don't know how to ride or prefer more practice without away from the group, volunteer support is great for working with these students. Not only is it a tremendous help for these students, but people get extreme joy and satisfaction over helping a first time bike rider - they will want to keep coming back to help. Volunteer support can also ride at the back of the line to encourage students during practice drills. A third option is to stick them with the wait lines during drills. They can remind students what the drill is focusing on and manage/engage with students while they wait.

Off-campus

Volunteer support should take up the rear of any lines when off-campus; however, they can help a ride travel smoothly by being deployed at intersections for monitoring student crossings. For off-campus drills that involve a less centralized activity (What are they gonna do?, Share the Road, etc.) keeping the volunteer support with the wait lines will be the most beneficial. For drills that have a centralized activity (all right-of-way drills), post volunteers at a corner to monitor several waiting lines and provide simple feedback to students.

