

Section 2

Bike Rodeos

Many communities in Huron County are already using bike rodeos to provide young cyclists with the necessary skills to become better riders.

A bike rodeo based on CAN-BIKE content creates a fun environment for children, while also teaching them valuable lessons about cycling safety and injury prevention. Bike rodeos are designed for children aged 8 and up. Children who participate are required to have a helmet, a bell or horn, and a properly fitted bike in good working order. You can plan a bike rodeo around the needs of the participants or the resources you have. Bike rodeos can be planned in partnership with organizations such as church groups, youth organizations, community groups, health units, and local police detachments.

School Bike Rodeos:

Bike rodeos are often held in partnership with local schools. This makes planning and running a bike rodeo much simpler, as the children are in a central location with adequate supervision during the rodeo. Running a bike rodeo with a school is a little different than a community bike rodeo. The skills are all the same but there is no need for a registration table as the children have already gotten waivers signed by their parents in advance. Teachers and staff are an enormous help during a school bike rodeo. Because they are already familiar with the students, they help keep the kids under control and paying attention to the lessons. Also, beforehand, teachers and staff can break the kids up into smaller groups and help to assess their skill level.

In Ontario, teaching is done in 100-minute periods. When planning your school rodeo, calculate your activities for a 90-minute teaching window. Imagine working with a group of 20-35 youth in each teaching period. Depending on the number of periods the school will allow, in one day, up to 140 students can be taught.

6 - Host a Bike Rodeo

Case Study: Howick

In Howick, the Optimist Club partners with the school, OPP and local business to offer a bike rodeo.

Parents bring bikes out to the community centre the night before or in the morning, a volunteer checks over the bikes and does tune ups – if they need a bell or reflector a note goes back to the parents. Kids write a test in class before going to the rodeo. These get marked by the older students. Depending on weather, students walk or bus over to community center two grades at a time to go through the course.

PRO TIP: Consider running a classroom session and an outdoors skills session on two different days. The classroom session will include lessons on helmet safety, traffic dynamics, bike fit, and an ABC quick check. The outdoors skills session will include all of the on-bike skill development activities and the on-road riding component. Past school bike rodeos have included both the classroom learning components and the outdoor components in one combined outdoor session. The children participating found it hard to concentrate on all of these lessons, as they wanted to start riding immediately. Splitting up the learning into two sessions should improve recall and sustain the participants' attention.

PRO TIP: Partner with a local business to get low cost or donated helmets. Low cost helmets are also available through Seven Star Helmets www.sevenstarsports.com

PRO TIP: Pair one instructor with one group of students through out all the activity stations; you'll be able to learn the kids' strengths and weaknesses and build on their individual strengths.

Community Bike Rodeo Preparation and Stations:

First, you will need to determine how many instructors are required for the bike rodeo. This depends on how many children are expected to participate. The maximum student to instructor ratio for skills practice is 6:1.

You will also need to have all the necessary equipment. Some kids may not have helmets. Provide helmets for purchase, borrow, or give-away. Have the necessary tools to make adjustments to bikes. You will be surprised by how many students have bikes that are not fitted properly, have flat or deflated tires, and brakes that do not work. Partnering with a local bike shop can be very beneficial for providing mechanical repairs and tune-ups. Kids with unsafe bikes cannot participate in the rodeo.

Before the bike rodeo, you need to set up all the necessary stations. This will include a bike repair station, a helmet fitting station, and the various skills stations. If the bike rodeo is being held at a school, you can use existing painted lines on the playground, a basketball

court, or a parking lot for skill development. If there are no existing lines, you can use chalk or tape to make your own lines. Provide a refreshment station with water and snacks for the kids. You will be outside for long periods of time.

The way students move through the stations is up to you. You can have a single group of students move from one station to the next that is taught by one instructor, or you can have one instructor lead the students through all the stations. Having one instructor with one group can be more beneficial as it allows the same instructor to assess the student's skills and how they are progressing and whether or not they are able to take on more advanced skills.

This outline has been very successful and is based on the CAN-BIKE curriculum and Safe Cycling Thunder Bay's own experiences hosting bike rodeos.

The following pages outline potential activity stations for a community bike rodeo.

1. Registration:

This is your first point of contact with kids and parents. This table should be front-and-centre, highly visible, fun, and have all the forms the parents and participants need to sign. Have plenty of pens and clipboards available. The registration table is also a great time to do a cycling knowledge test. This will be especially helpful if you do an

evaluation test at the end of the course. Having before-and-after tests will allow you to measure how well you met your learning objectives.

Goal: Get waivers signed and explain to parents and kids how the rodeo course works, how long it will take, where to go next, and answer any questions.

2. Helmet Fit:

This is the first activity station because helmets are fundamental to safety. Before anybody can participate, they need a properly fitted helmet that is in good condition. It is essential that parents be present here; most don't know how to fit a helmet properly or nor identify a helmet that is unsafe. For example, helmets older than 5 years

must be thrown out. Parents and youth should both be shown improper and proper helmet fits. A mirror helps to show this. This is where extra helmets will be handed out.

Goal: Educate parents and kids on proper helmet fit and identifying an unsafe helmet.



3. Bike Safety Check:

The participants need safe and functional bikes for the rodeo. This means no loose parts, brakes that work, gears that shift, and tires with air. Parents should be present for this station, as most don't know how to identify broken or dangerously dysfunctional bikes.

Goal: Teach parents and kids how to identify problems with their bikes. Fix any major problems.

What to do: A.B.C. Quick Check

A – Air

1. Are the tires pumped up?
2. Are the tires worn or damaged?
3. Is the wheel straight?

B – Brakes

1. Are both brakes working?
2. Are the brake pads hitting the rims?
3. Are any cables frayed?
4. Are the brake levers too close to the handlebars?

C – Cranks

1. Is there any play in the crank?
2. Do the pedals spin freely?
3. Are the ball bearings loose?

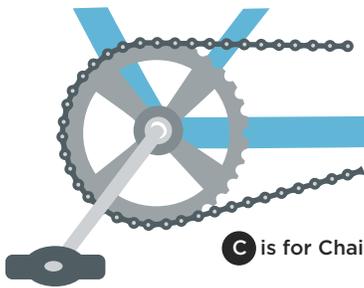
Quick release – Are the levers tight and folded up against the frame of the bike?

Final check – Pick up the bike a few centimeters and drop it – Any funny sounds? Anything loose?

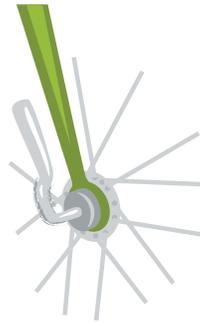


A is for Air

B is for Brakes



C is for Chain and Crank



Q is for Quick Release

4. Balance and Straight-line

Riding:

Riders need to know how to balance and ride in a straight line. The first step is fitting the bike to the rider. Showing riders how to start riding and how to ride predictably and safe is your next task.

Goal: Participants understand the importance of straight line riding and feel confident riding in a straight line.

Teaching theory:

1. The slower we ride, the more our wheels wobble. As we get better as cyclists and ride faster, we wobble less.
2. Ask them to think about what makes their wheels wobble more or less.
3. Riding in a straight line makes your predictable. Motorists know where you are going and you get to your destination faster.
4. Riding in a straight line is easier in an easier gear – when pedaling faster.

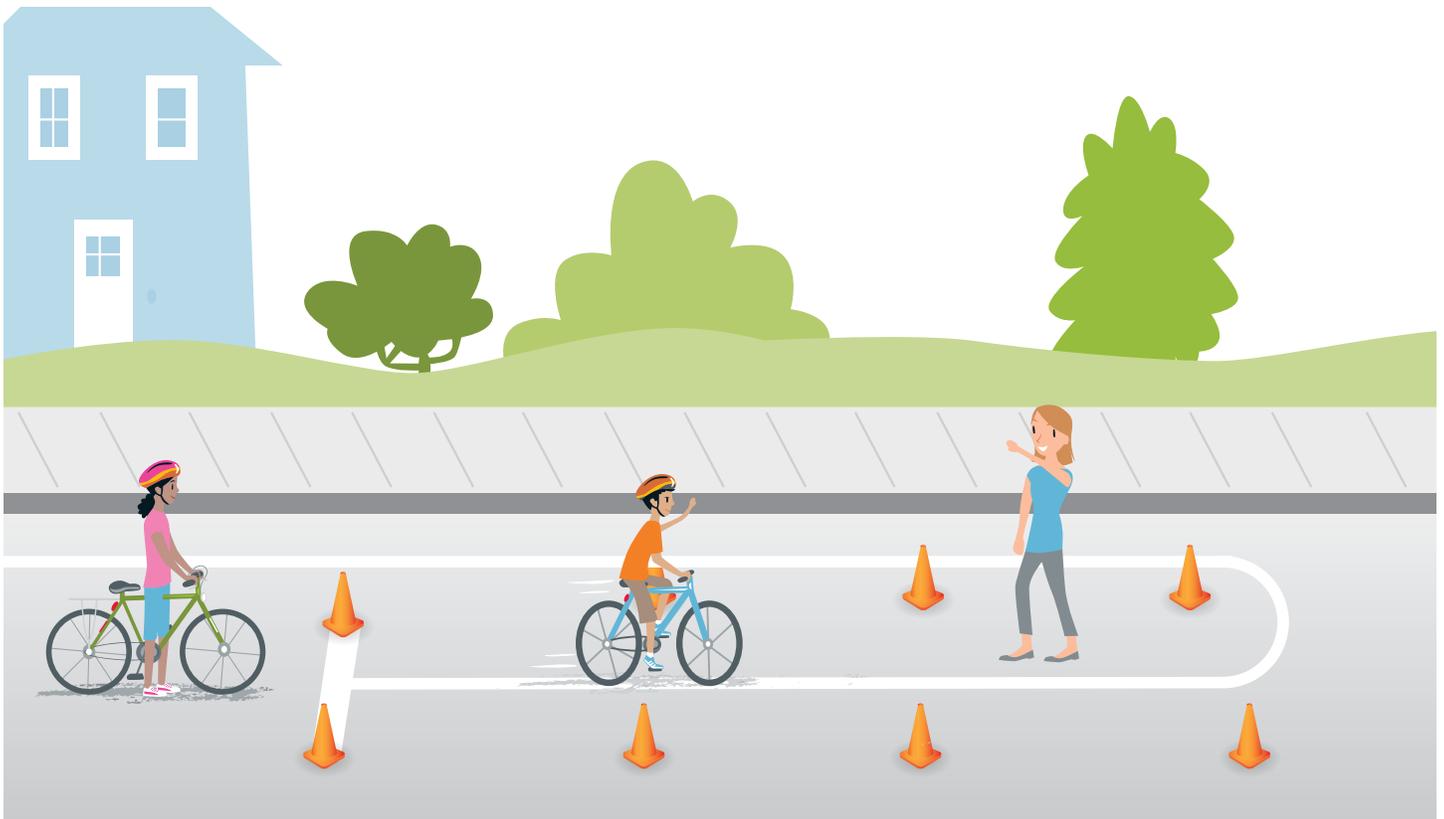
Skill Development:

1. The instructor will walk to the far end of the course and have the children bike towards her/him.

2. Once they are good at riding towards the instructor, challenge them to ride on the white line.
3. Try and cycle along the painted line; the goal is to keep their front tire on the line as much as possible; encourage them to change gears if it makes it easier; stay relaxed and look ahead to the destination.
4. Once good at that, some may be ready to ride with one hand. Instructor could crouch half-way to end of white line and challenge riders to give her/him a 'high-five' when passing by.

Learning Questions:

1. Best place to ride is one metre from the curb – Can they show you how far one metre is?
2. Why one metre? (Answer: avoid debris, sewer grates, potholes, car doors opening)
3. Should we be tense or relaxed on our bikes? (Relaxed)
4. Should it be hard or easy to pedal? (Easy!)
5. Where should you be looking when you are riding? (You will go where you look)
6. Should you coast or keep pedaling? (Easier to ride in a straight line when you keep your legs moving)



5. Shoulder Checking:

A good shoulder check is what makes a cyclist safe. It helps the cyclist prepare and make decisions on when it is safe to change his or her position.

Goal: Learn how to do a proper shoulder check while riding in a straight line.

Teaching Theory:

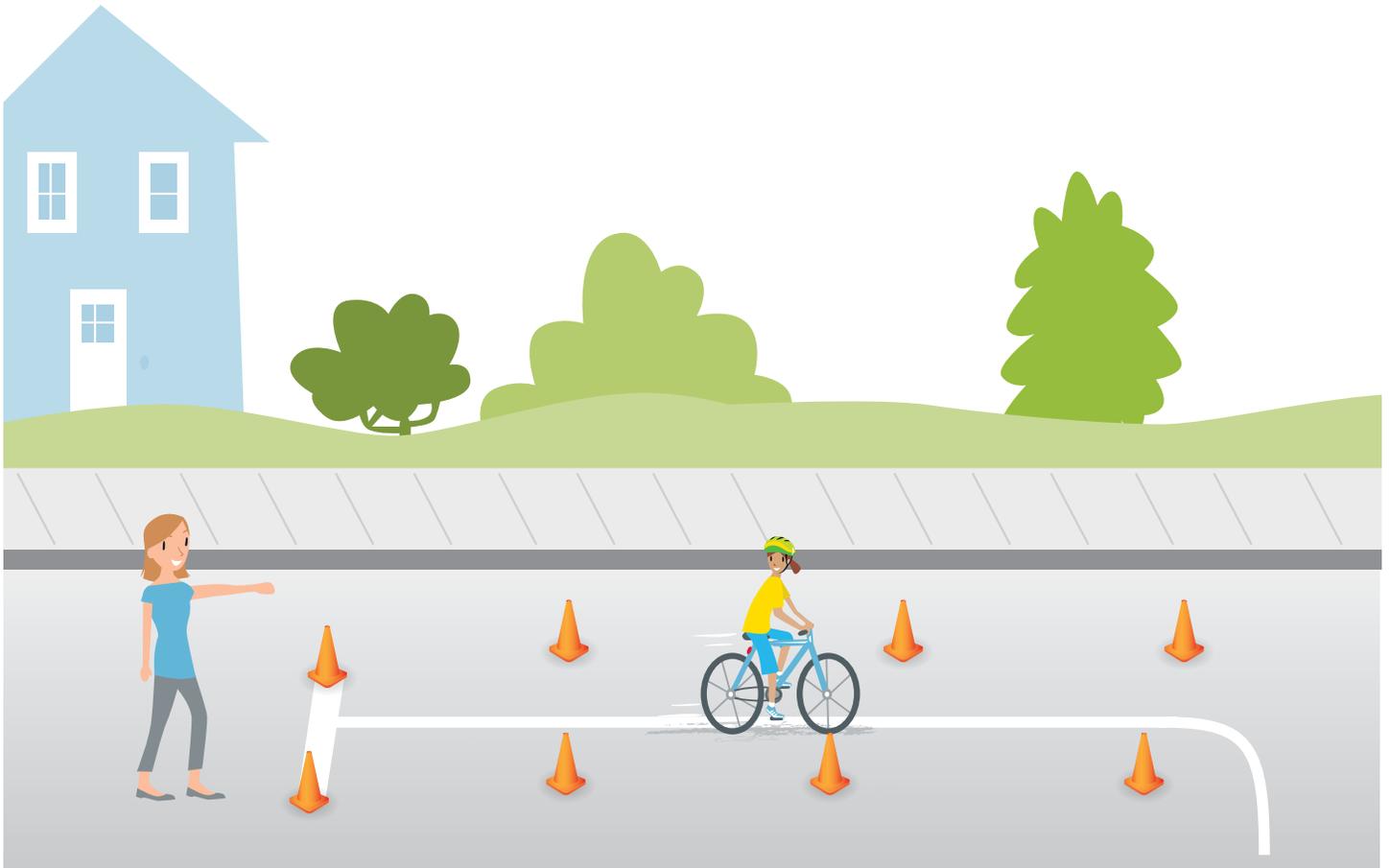
1. To begin, ask the children just to straddle their bikes to learn the skill.
2. With both hands on the handlebars, ask them to turn their head and shoulder check; keeping the front wheel straight.
3. What can help us to help with shoulder checking? Being relaxed, riding in the right gear, constant pedaling, look ahead when going straight.

Skill Development:

1. Stand at the start line, ask the children to ride away from you, down the straight line.
2. Ask the children to try shoulder checking a few times while riding down the straight line.
3. Now, in order to determine if they can see accurately when they are looking back, hold up one, two, or no hands. Ask them how many hands you are holding up. Using left, right, stop signals works well too.

Learning Questions:

1. How it feel to check over your shoulder?
2. What could happen if you turned into the street without looking behind you? (Could get hit).
3. What is the first thing you do before you turn and even before you signal? (Always shoulder check).



6. Signaling:

Signaling is one of the most important ways that cyclists communicate to the other road users. Signaling combines balance, straight-line riding, and shoulder checking into one action.

Goal: Children understand the importance of signaling and have begun to feel comfortable using the skill.

Teaching Theory:

1. Ask the children to demonstrate the signals they know, while straddling their bikes but not riding.
 - **Right turn:** Left arm out, bent up at the elbow at 90 degrees.
 - **Left turn:** Left arm extended straight out.
 - **Stop:** Left arm out, bent down at the elbow at 90 degrees.
2. Remind them to spread their fingers wide, which makes the signal more visible. They have to keep their arms at a 90 degree angle and make the signal obvious. Don't rush the signal; hold the signal for at least 5 seconds to make sure other road users see what you are doing.

Skill Development:

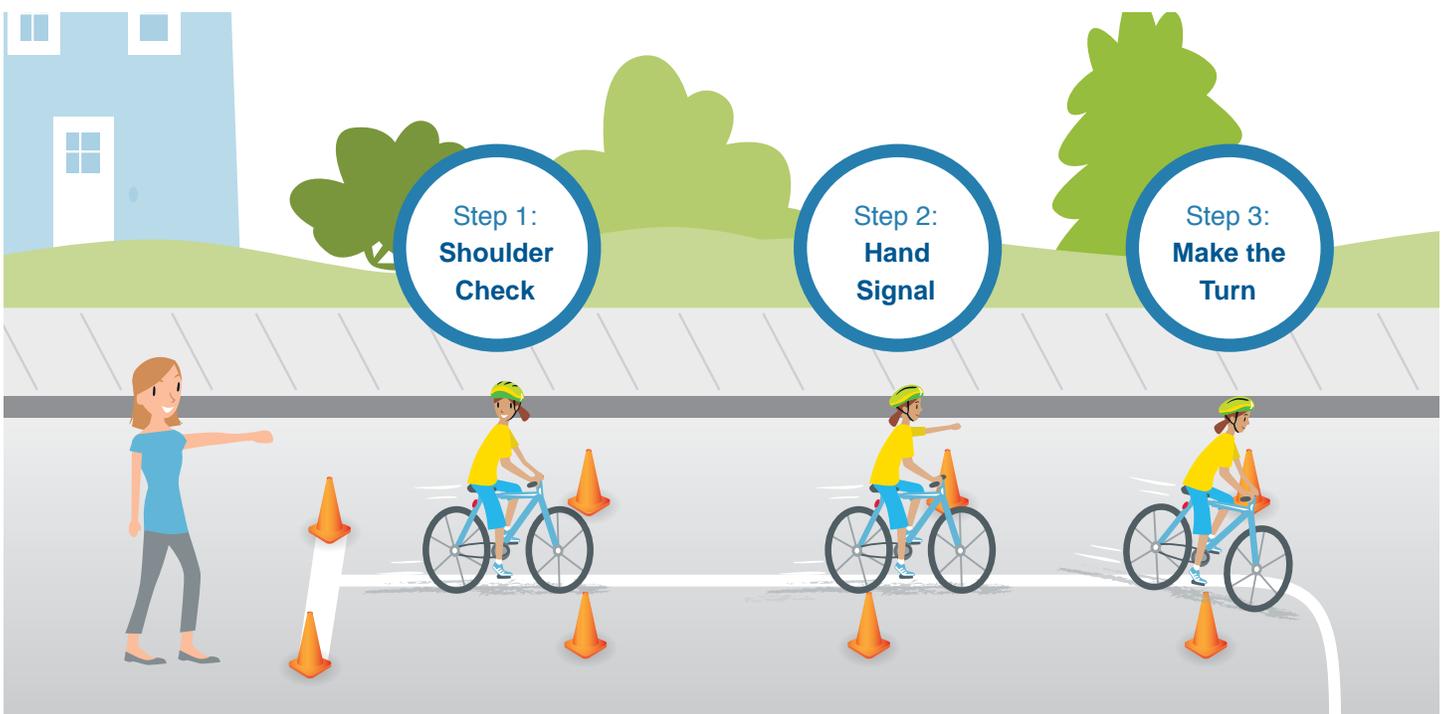
1. Get the students to demonstrate what they must do before they get on their bike. Start with the shoulder check and then signal.
2. The students ride down in a straight line practicing their signals without the shoulder check. (If a child is

not comfortable doing a proper signal, ask them to practice just dropping their hand off of the handlebar.)

3. Once confident with signaling, practice the sequence of skills needed for a proper lane change or turning maneuver; 1. Shoulder check 2. Look back to the front 3. Signal. 4. Turning in the right direction. While you stand at the start line, get them doing both right and left shoulder checks with a variety of signals as they ride down in a straight line.
4. Finally, they need apply these skills. Stand behind the painted line. Let the students know that you will be pointing to the left or the right, or making a hand signal. The students are to make the same signal and turn in that direction. As the children ride down the line, they will shoulder check. If they can see you properly, they will mimic your hand signal and turn in the right direction.

Learning Questions:

1. Why is signaling important? (Tells the other road users what you are doing).
2. Before you signal, you have to shoulder check. Why? (To see if it is safe to turn, to let other traffic know you want to turn).
3. When do you want to signal? (before any and every change in location of the road)
4. Do you need to signal if you are going to ride around a parked car? (Yes. Other road users need to know this)



7. Braking and Stopping:

It is important to be able to stop predictably and controllably. This station teaches riders what kind of brakes they have and the best way of using them.

Goal: Develop an understanding of the importance of braking and develop the skill.

Teaching theory:

1. Explain how brakes work. Rubber pads rub on the rim of the wheel, coaster brake, or metallic pads on rotors.
2. Ask the kids to check their brake levers. They should stop about two finger's width from the handlebar. They should be able to reach the brake levers easily.
3. Explain which brake does most of the work. (The front). Demonstrate what can happen if you only use the front brake (Fall over handlebars) and what happens if you only use the back brake (You can skid and takes longer to stop). Need to use both!
4. Introduce the idea of counter weight when stopping by pushing back on the seat. Ask the kids to try.

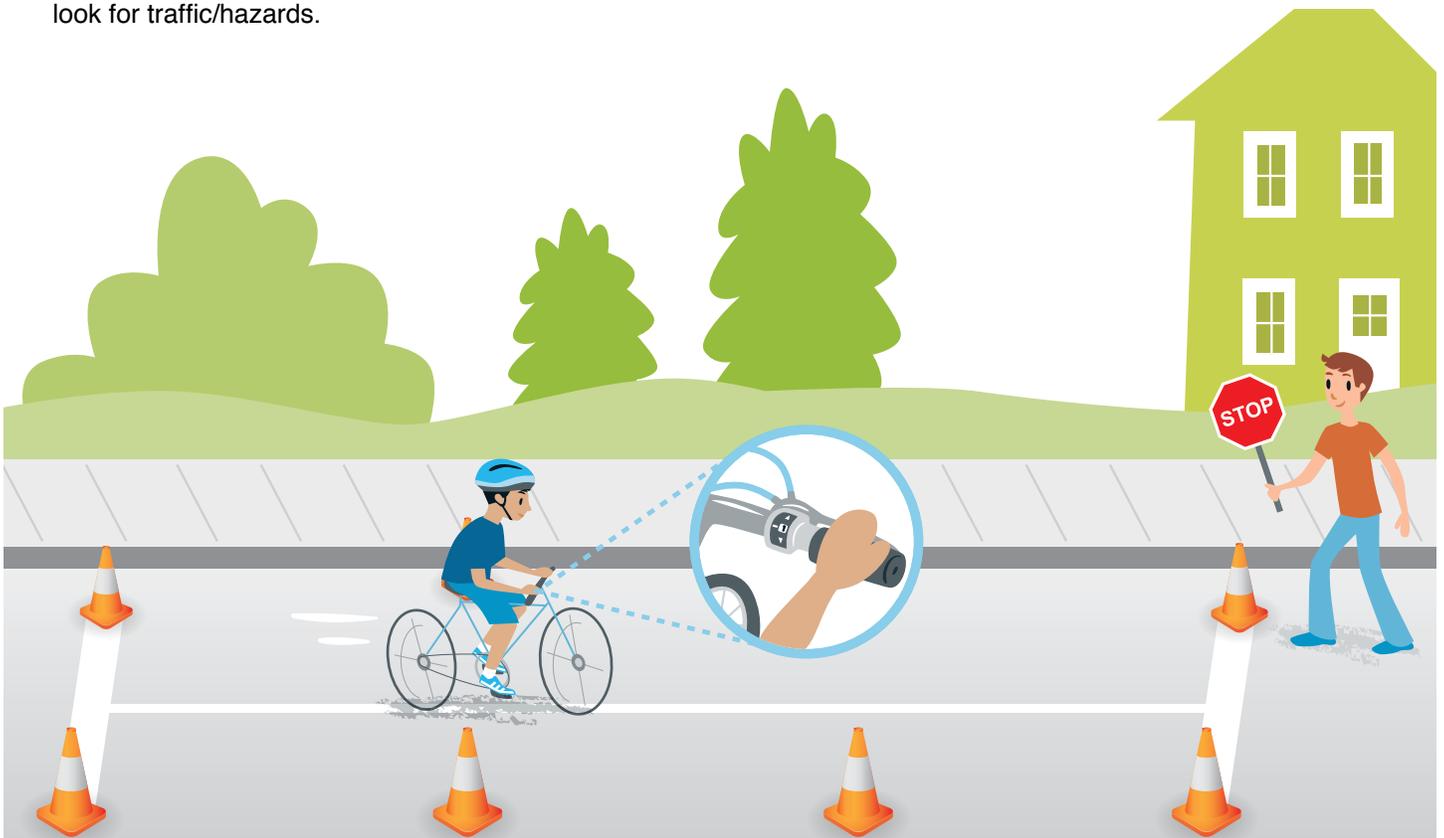
Skill Development:

1. Take turns cycling to a white line or other marker where they should come to a complete stop and put their foot down. This helps them to stay stable and look for traffic/hazards.

2. As they get more comfortable, have them increase their speed. Encourage them to shift their weight over the rear wheel to prevent accidental falls.

Learning Questions:

1. What happens when you ride in the rain or when the road is wet? (You can't stop as fast; you need to give yourself more time to stop).
2. What happens if the brake pads are too high? (They will rub on the tire and will wear a hole in the tire. They should be adjusted)
3. What if they are too low? (They will miss the rim and the pad will wear unevenly)
4. Which brake levers control the front and rear brakes? (Left – front; Right – rear)
5. Which brake does most of the work (Front)
6. Which lever are you going to squeeze harder? (Front)
7. Skidding: When you back wheel skids, what can happen to your bike? (Lose control)
8. Why else is skidding not a good idea? (Don't stop fast; you will wear a hole in your tire)



8. Cornering and Maneuvering:

They can start and they can stop, now it's time to learn to maneuver the bike. The idea is to get riders weaving about; pylons are great, trees are great, tennis balls are great. We want the students to learn balance and handle their bike to avoid road hazards.

Goal: Develop an understanding of balance and maneuverability.

Teaching theory:

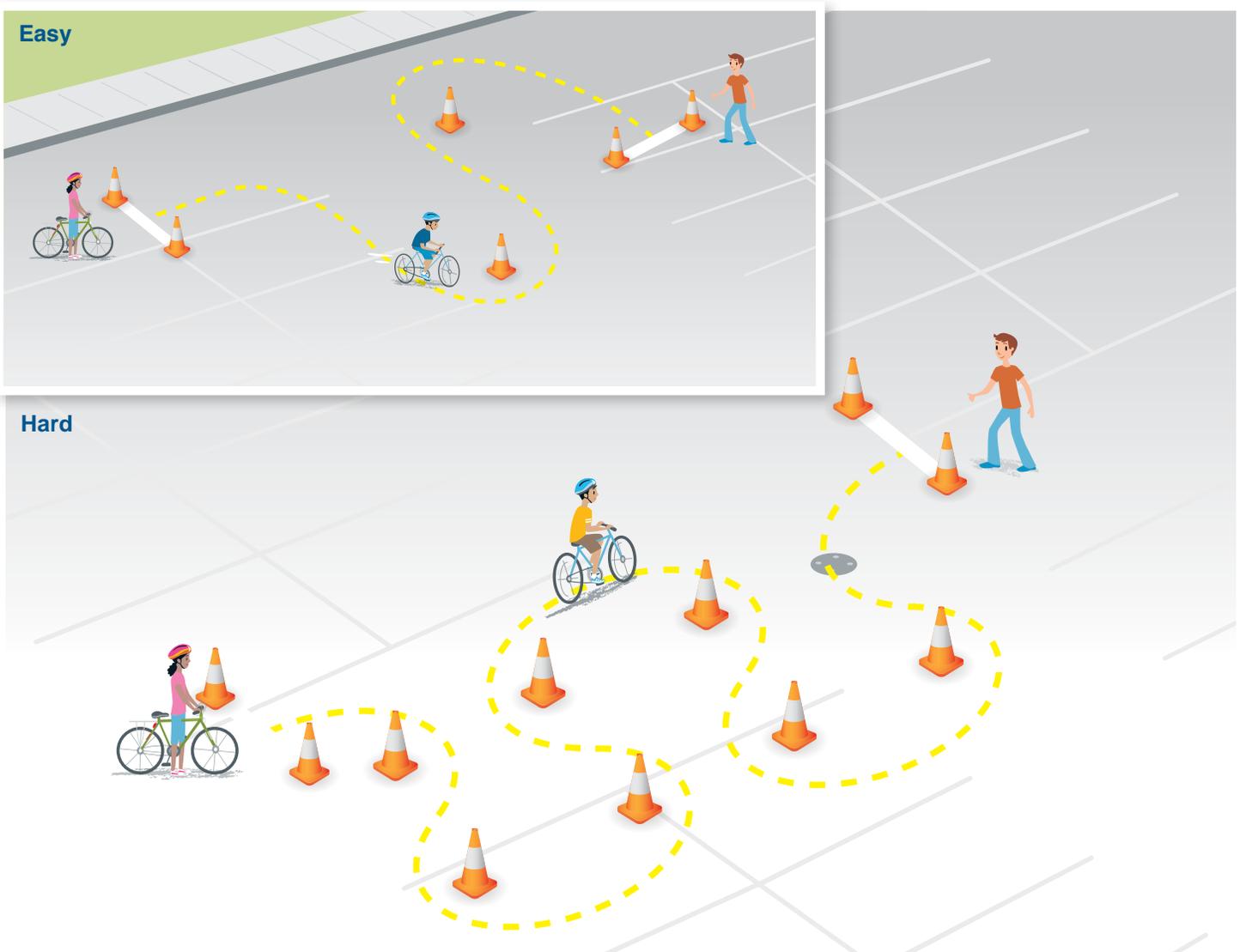
1. Teach the principle of looking where you want to go and plan ahead for your next turn.
2. Emphasize lesson through exaggerated head movements to show where you are looking.
3. Explain that it is OK to go slow, and if in trouble, put foot down.

Skill Development:

1. Ride your bike through the obstacle course first to show how to do it (by exaggerating movements) and what direction to go in.
2. Allow the students to go one-at-a-time.
3. Assure the students that going slow is OK; remind them to pedal throughout.
4. As skills progress, move pylons or tennis balls tighter together horizontally and/or further vertically for a greater challenge.

Learning Questions:

1. Where is the best place to look when riding the course?
2. Do you balance better when you pedal or stop pedaling?



9. Using Gears:

Not only are gears cool, but they help riders go further, faster, and tackle more challenging terrain. Unfortunately, many adults and kids don't know how to utilize the gearing systems on their bikes, so they stick to a single speed or fumble between gears,

Goal: Teach participants where, when, and how to use the gears on their bikes.

Teaching theory:

1. Using a slope, explain how gearing impacts the effort needed to go up the hill.
2. Explain how easy gears allow the rider to spin easily up the hill; how hard gears make it difficult to keep on pedaling.
3. Explain that spinning quickly may be slow, but it is still faster than walking.

Skill Development:

1. Put student's bike in most difficult gear and have student ride up the hill; upon return, have student describe their experience.

2. Put student's bike in easiest gear and have student ride up the hill; upon return, have student describe their experience.
3. Show student how to change gears on her/his own.
4. Get student to ride on flat terrain changing gears. Once they have a handle on that, get student to ride up hill, changing gears to find the best one.

Learning Questions:

1. How does your bike change gears? (Student should identify the shifter, chain, derailleur, and front or rear gears)
2. What parts of the bike actually change the gears? (Derailleurs)
3. What is a really hard gear good for? (Riding downhill)
4. What is a really easy gear good for? (Riding uphill)
5. How fast should your legs be turning when you ride normally? (80-100 rpm)
6. Why is riding in a hard gear bad? (bad for chain, bad for joints, exhausting)



10. Rules of the Road:

With some basic skills nailed down, it's time to help the participants apply them in real life riding situations. The safest way to do that is in a simulation. Bike rodeo simulations try to cover typical road conditions such as; stop signs, left turns, right turns, parked cars, and traffic lights. Some special situations can be included such as train tracks, yields, bike lanes, and other traffic conditions, based on what you have in your community. It's essential to have a volunteer or instructor at each situation who will guide the participants through what they should be doing in that situation.

Goal: Teach students what they should be doing at typical on-road situations to increase participants' knowledge and prevent accidents.

Components

Entrance: While it may seem common sense, don't overlook the need to have someone at the beginning of the road simulation to explain to the participants what they are doing, what to expect, and where to ride. The youth need to know that this is a road simulation and that they need to follow the rules of the road, just like if they were really riding on the road. This will set the stage and get them ready for this challenge.

Left Turn: Using a stop bar and a stop sign, have the participants make a complete stop including the hand signals. If they don't know what to do at a stop sign, you can let them know and explain why. Give them an opportunity to try it numerous times so that they feel confident. Teach them the proper hand signal for left turns, including a shoulder check. Signaling teaches students how to communicate their intentions to other road users. This component combines one-handed riding, braking skills, and shoulder checking.

Train Tracks: If you have access to a portable train crossing sign, that is great but kids are great in such that, if you get creative and make your own, they'll love it. Use chalk or a ladder to make your own train tracks. Have the participants stop, dismount, and look for trains at this station. Perhaps even have a train whistle on hand to simulate an on-coming train to test their knowledge. Let the participants cross the tracks and continue to the next station.

Right Turn: Using a stop bar and a stop sign, have the participants make a complete stop including the hand signals. If they don't remember what to do, this is a great

opportunity to quiz them. Give them an opportunity to try the signals and stopping numerous times so that they feel confident. Teach them the proper hand signal for right turns, including a shoulder check. Signaling teaches students how to communicate their intentions to other road users. This component combines one-handed riding, braking skills, and shoulder checking.

Parked Cars: Two parked cars, 10-20 metres apart, works best for this station. Riding on a straight stretch, have the students ride past the parked cars without instruction. Chances are, they may ride very closely to the vehicles and weave between them. Here is your teachable moment: you can explain to them why it is best to stay 1 metre from the car doors and not weave between cars. The small group setting is the perfect learning situation. Using one student as the rider, you can have her/him ride between the cars while the others hang back – ask them leading questions like “Could you see ‘student’ when they were between the cars? Why might this be a problem?” A similar demonstration can be used for opening up car doors. This component teaches the need to be maneuverable, visible, and predictable.

Bike Lanes: Bike lanes are a common feature in most Canada communities. It's important that youth understand how they work at a young age, even though they may be too young to use them. Using chalk and stencils, having mock bike lanes will be very fun and instructive for the participants. They will get a chance to ride in their own little space on the road. Instructors can explain to the students how bike lanes work and what to look out for: for example, having a parked car beside a bike lane.

Traffic Signals: If you are able to borrow a working traffic signal, it will be one of the highlights of the Rodeo. It adds an element of fun, challenge, excitement, and skill testing. Testing the youth's knowledge of the light colours and what to do, especially while riding, will challenge their decision-making skills and cycling skills. Allow the participants to ride this portion with different scenarios to learn different situational skills.



An example of what your Rules of the Road station could look like.

