

# the **early years** toolkit

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## Learning to ride a tricycle

### Why do some children find this difficult?

Balance and the ability to coordinate both sides of the body at the same time can make it difficult for some children to perform this skill. There are also children who have abnormal postural tone, which affects the control they have on their movements and their body. If you suspect that your child has difficulty with this, please contact CYPIT for advice.

### What you may see

- Your child may not want to sit on the trike
- They may not know what to do with their legs
- They may be fearful of moving
- They may not be able to steer safely

### Strategies and Advice

- Make sure your child's tricycle fits them properly and that their legs can touch the pedals or reach the floor.
- If their sitting balance is poor, consider purchasing one of the modular tricycles that are suitable from infancy and have straps and adapted seat backs.
- Some children are helped by practising on Balance Bikes without pedals which allows them just to focus on their balance. There are a range of makes available on the commercial market.
- Young children can also practise gaining their balance on other sit-and-ride toys such as rocking horses, little cars etc. This will give them the opportunity to practise getting on and off and sitting on. Make sure their feet can touch the ground.
- Practice with getting on and off the tricycle. Help them by steadying it to start with. This will involve them getting on and off balancing on one leg.
- Practice with pushing the tricycle along with both feet doing the same movement without the pedals to start with. If they need help to move

the tricycle forward, consider buying one with an adult push bar or use a walking stick, pushing against the frame.

- Once they are confident, try encouraging them to place their feet on the pedals. Some makes of tricycle have pedal straps to keep their feet in position.
- Place their feet on the pedal with one knee at the top and physically prompt and/or tap their knee to push down to get started. You may need to use the push bar to help them if they are not strong enough.
- Keep prompting and praising the child so they continue pushing down with the top knee to keep moving the pedal and the tricycle forward.
- You will initially need to help your child steer as they get used to doing all the different components of tricycle riding, gradually offering less and less support until they master it.

If you find that your child does not master riding their tricycle with regular practice in six months, please contact CYPIT for advice.