



Is Your Child Ready for an E-Bike?

A Parent & Caregiver Readiness Checklist — BikeWalkKC

E-bikes offer young people freedom, exercise, and independence, but they are significantly faster, heavier, and more powerful than conventional bicycles. Work through every item on this checklist before your child rides an e-bike. Use it alongside the **BikeWalkKC E-Bike Guide** and complete the **BikeWalkKC E-Bike Family Agreement** together.

BikeWalkKC Age & Class Quick Guide

Under 12	Ages 12–15	Ages 16+
No e-bikes recommended*	Class 1 only — pedal assist, max 20 mph, unmodified*	Class 1 or 2; Class 3 legal at 16+ in KS & MO*

***NOTE:** E-motos (electric dirt bikes or electric motorbikes) are **NOT** e-bikes. Most states have laws requiring a valid driver license, insurance, registration, and helmet usage to legally operate an e-moto.

SECTION 1: CHECK YOUR CHILD

- ☐ **Age Check: Is your child 12 or older?**
E-bikes are not recommended for children under 12. Kansas and Missouri law restricts Class 3 e-bike operation to riders 16 and older.
- ☐ **Skill Check: Can they ride a conventional non-electric bicycle confidently and brake smoothly?**
Your child must demonstrate confidence and the ability to start, stop, turn, and scan for hazards on a regular bike before attempting an e-bike. E-bikes are heavier and faster — strong bike-handling skills are non-negotiable.
- ☐ **Judgment Check: Will they follow road rules and resist peer pressure to take risks?**
Speeding, phone use while riding, or showing off can be fatal on an e-bike. Honestly assess your child's maturity and history of following rules, especially when they are with their peers. Peer pressure can come from social media, too. Be clear about what riding behavior is acceptable, and what is not.
- ☐ **Helmet Check: Do they have a speed-rated helmet and will they wear it every ride?**
Any helmet is better than no helmet! Look for a helmet rated ASTM F1952, NTA 8776, or DOT. Kansas and Missouri do not legally require helmets, but cities are allowed to set their own helmet laws and it's important to know your city's specific regulations. BikeWalkKC **strongly** recommends one for **every** rider on **every** ride.
 - Tip: Let your child choose the style or color — riders are far more likely to wear a helmet they picked themselves.
- ☐ **Bike Fit Check: Can they comfortably and easily reach the brake levers, maintain control, and get on and off?**
Improper fit is a safety issue. An ill-fitting e-bike reduces braking ability and steering control, especially during emergency stops at speed.

SECTION 2: CHECK THE ENVIRONMENT

- ☐ **Traffic Check: Do they consistently obey road rules and watch carefully for vehicles?**
Watch your child ride a regular bike in real traffic before allowing solo e-bike use. In Kansas and Missouri, e-bike riders have the same rights and duties as motor vehicle drivers. Basic Rules of the Road: Ride on the right side of the road (follow the direction of traffic); Obey all traffic laws and signs; Use hand signals for stopping and turning.
 - ☐ **Policy Check: Does your community have local age or location restrictions for e-bikes?**
Local ordinances vary. Some cities restrict e-bikes on sidewalks, in parks, or on multi-use paths. These ordinances change frequently. Regularly review the laws and restrictions for your city.
 - ☐ **Route Check: Is the planned route low-traffic with safe crossings and bike infrastructure?**
Plan routes together before the first ride. Avoid high-speed roads and complex intersections until your child builds confidence and experience.
 - ☐ **Rules Check: Have you set clear family rules in writing before the first ride?**
Complete the BikeWalkKC E-Bike Family Agreement so expectations are explicit and agreed upon in writing by both parent/caregiver and child.
 - ☐ **Charging Check: Does your child know where and how to safely charge the battery?**
Designate a safe charging spot — on a wire rack, away from flammables, near a smoke detector and ABC fire extinguisher. Never charge in a bedroom or overnight. Only use the compatible charger. Never charge a damaged or bulging battery.
 - ☐ **Insurance Check: Will your household be covered if your child is in a crash or causes injury?**
E-bike liability coverage is often excluded from standard homeowners and renters insurance policies, which means if your child causes property damage or injures a pedestrian, you will be responsible for out-of-pocket costs. Contact your insurer and consider a dedicated e-bike or umbrella liability policy.
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SECTION 3: CHECK YOUR DEVICE

- ☐ **E-Bike vs. E-Moto Check: Are you certain this is a legal e-bike — not an e-moto?**
E-motos are frequently — and sometimes fraudulently — marketed as e-bikes. A legal e-bike must have: (1) operable pedals, (2) a motor of 750 watts or less, and (3) max motor-only speed of 20 mph (up to 28 mph for a Class 3 e-bike). If it lacks pedals or exceeds these limits, it is an e-moto, which is considered a motor vehicle and may require licensing, registration, and insurance to operate. E-motos are NOT legal for minors on public roads or trails in Kansas or Missouri, and are a leading cause of youth injuries.
 - Tip: If in doubt, consult with a local bike shop before purchasing and be extra cautious when buying from low-cost overseas online retailers.
- ☐ **Certification Check: Is the battery certified to UL 2849?**
UL 2849 is the fire safety standard for e-bike electrical systems. Uncertified batteries, which are common in cheap online purchases, are a leading cause of dangerous e-bike fires.
- ☐ **Modification Check: Has anyone tampered with the motor, controller, or speed limiter?**
Speed limiters can be bypassed easily. Instructions are freely available online and are well-known among teens. Warning signs: unusual wiring near motor/controller, missing speed sensor magnets, aftermarket devices on motor housing, or speeds exceeding the advertised maximum. Check for these signs especially when purchasing a used e-bike.
 - A modified e-bike may behave like an e-moto and is considered illegal, uninsured, and extremely dangerous.
- ☐ **Safe Storage Check: Is the e-bike stored and charged in a designated safe location?**
Keep battery charge between 30–60% for storage. Store and charge at room temperature. Do not block exits. Never charge or store an e-bike in a bedroom. Remove battery before long-term outdoor storage. Store in a cool, dry location.