

CENTRAL PENN Parent

centralpennparent.com | May 2011

ages & stages

Bike Safety: Prepping Your Kids for Safe Cruising

BY JOE BARRY

AS WARMER WEATHER creeps back into Central Pennsylvania, many kids are bursting with excitement to get out on the new bike, scooter or skateboard they haven't played with in what seems like forever.

While this enthusiasm for getting out and active is great, parents may want to take some time to do a little prep work with their kids. A bike safety reminder at the start of a new season ensures that kids will spend the rest of the summer cruising safely.

"We want kids to be active but safe," said Allyson Fulton, child safety coordinator of Safe Kids Pennsylvania. Fulton

suggests the following tips to ensure that children ride safely:

• **PARENTS** should make an effort to inspect their children's bicycles before the start of a new bike riding season. Check reflectors, tire pressure, brake and chain tightness, seat rigidity and any signs of wear and tear. Parents who feel uncomfortable tuning-up their child's bike can visit a local bicycle shop—many shops provide the service for a small fee.

• **UNTIL AGE 10**, children should be restricted to riding on sidewalks and walking paths to ensure their safety. It's also especially important to cover the rules of the road with children while they



are young because it encourages future safe riding behaviors.

• **ALL CHILDREN UNDER 12** are required to wear a helmet certified by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission every time they ride a bike or play any other wheeled sports. Wearing a helmet has been proven to reduce the risk of head injury by 85 percent.

• **MAKE SURE THE HELMET FITS** and your

child knows how to put it on correctly. A helmet should sit on top of the head in a level position and should not rock forward, backward or side to side. A helmet that is being worn correctly should be centered, low and leveled, snug but comfortable and have straps that are buckled. The helmet straps must always be buckled but not too tightly. ☑