

the back-mounted kid seat

When you think about riding a bicycle with a kid, most people get a picture of a kid riding in a back-mounted bike seat. They make the bike a bit heavier and it's a bit harder to balance, but it is one of the cheapest and easiest ways to start biking with a child. Most of these have tall backs that allow a child to sleep pretty comfortably. The new "Mr. Fox ECO" by Italian company MammaCangura is a great eco-option since it's made entirely of non-toxic bio-plastics (made from renewable resources like corn and potatoes!), and is 100% recyclable! It's also a very lightweight model with great head support for your wee one. www.Mammacangura-na.com

Age range of passenger: The back-mounted seat can be used for kids from approximately 9 months to 5 years.

Price range: From \$5 at your local yard sale (buyer beware) to \$250 for a beautiful one with all of the bells and whistles.

the trailer

The next most common family-bike choice is a trailer that holds one or two kids and attaches behind the bike. Canada makes its own super-green and awesome brands, like the Chariot and the Wike. The benefit of a trailer is that they are relatively inexpensive, easy to use, don't require you to buy a new bicycle, and some of them can carry two kids and their stuff, easily. It will also shelter your child from the rain and provide them a cozy place for napping on-the-go. Most bike trailers can also serve as a stroller, so, for one price you get it all. I disliked using my trailer; it never felt safe because of how low-to-the-road and far away it was. These same traits make trailers harder for vehicle drivers to see. I strongly recommend using a tall flag and bright lights if you choose this option. I also found that my children fight more when they are in a trailer as they, too, don't have the same visibility and are thus less engaged with the ride compared to the other options discussed. www.Wicycle.com www.chariotcarriers.com

Age range of passenger: The trailers all say that in North America it is advised kids wait to bike until they can sit up and hold their heads up on their own, at approximately 1 year of age. Many, though, have baby support systems as add-ons or work with infant carriers as well. They work until a child gets too big at about 5 or 6 years of age.

Price range: From about \$250 to \$800.



the ultra versatile Wike Softie trailer/stroller/jogger

the trail-a-bike

The Trail-a-Bike is a Canadian company that created a "tandem style" bike that attaches to your bike and pulls the kid. It got so popular that the whole category is referred to by this name now. You can even get a version that seats two kids. The trail-a-bike has the added advantage of letting your child get a feel for the balance and skills needed for bicycling on her own. The child needs to do some work on the Trail-a-Bike, at minimum to stay awake and hold on. One really interesting version of this option is the WeeHoo i-Go trailer, which combines the peddles of a tandem-style attachment, and the seat and support of a trailer. www.rideweehoo.com www.trail-a-bike.com

Age range of passenger: Options for kids ranging from 3 to 10 years old. (Although they also have a baby seat accessory for kids starting at 1).

Price range: From \$250 to \$600. ●



the very cool WeeHoo i-Go trailer

FURTHER READING

- 🌐 www.bikes-as-transportation.com
- 🌐 www.cargobike.ca
- 🌐 www.ebikes.ca
- 🌐 www.xtracycle.com
- 📖 **Mud, Sweat, and Gears: A Rowdy Family Bike Adventure Across Canada on Seven Wheels**, by Joe Kurmaskie, published by Breakaway Books, 2011.

CITY TRAIL RESOURCES

- Vancouver:** www.vancouver.ca/streets-transportation/cycling-routes-maps-and-trip-planner.aspx
- Montreal:** www.velomontreal.com/cartes/maps.php
- Halifax:** www.halifax.ca/cycling
- Edmonton:** www.edmonton.ca/transportation/cycling_walking/bicycle-map.aspx
- Calgary:** www.calgary.ca/CSPS/Parks/Pages/Pathways/Calgary-pathways-and-bikeways-map.aspx
- Toronto:** What's left of the city's bike routes can be found at www.ridethecity.com/toronto