



Cycling can be a fun recreational activity or means of transport for the entire family. There is equipment available for cycling with children of just

about any age, from 1 year old and upward. Most children will enjoy cycling, as long as you keep the journeys to a reasonable length and provide interesting destinations or activities for the kids when you are stopped. A child trailers is one of the options available to people wishing to cycle with children.

If you are not a competent cyclist yourself, Bike North would recommend practicing to attain a level of cycling competency prior to cycling with a child in a trailer.

Trailers vary in price but trailers of reasonable quality will be around \$500-\$800. Some trailers are also available with optional front wheels and rear handlebar for use as a jogging stroller. Most trailers have space to accommodate two children and a typical load carrying capacity of 50 kg. Trailers are available for one child only and these are relatively lighter and narrower than those for two children. The typical empty weight of a trailer (for two children) is around 12 kg. Most modern trailers have the children sitting side by side and facing forward. Typically there is a reasonable space for storage behind the seat, accessible from the rear of the trailer. Good trailers have a drawbar which either attaches to, or near the rear axle of the bicycle. The attachment should be secure, fast and easy to attach or remove. The drawbar should allow relative rotation about three axes.

When purchasing a trailer, consider how easily it folds down for transporting and storage. The trailer should have a secure, easily adjusted and simple to use harnessing system for the number of children the trailer is designed for. Cheaper trailers tend to have smaller wheels, often of moulded plastic construction and fitted on cantilevered axles. More expensive trailers tend to have spoked alloy wheels, of 20" diameter. These wheels often have an external support, running outside of the trailer.

Another important consideration is the level and flexibility of the weather protection provided by the trailer. Good trailers allow adjustment of airflow

to cater for different weather conditions. Typically the front of the trailer will have a roll down, plastic cover. Inside this there may be a mesh cover. In hot conditions the plastic cover can be rolled up to allow enhanced air flow.

### Relative advantages of trailers compared to child seats:

- The trailer, unlike the bike seat, has almost no effect on the bike handling. Apart from the obvious reduction in speed
- Much easier to store luggage with a trailer including children's toys
- The trailer can carry two children at once.
- The trailer provides better protection from the weather than the seat.
- The trailer is safer than the seat due to its rollover protection and inherent stability (although cycling with a seat is also safe).

### Relative disadvantages of trailers compared to child seats:

- Considerably more expensive.
- Heavier & slower to tow.
- Takes up more storage space at home.



A good quality trailer for two children.