



MASSACHUSETTS

Safe Routes to School

Mass.gov/MassDOT/SafeRoutes

Bicycle Rodeo!

A tool to teach children to ride a bike safely



Bicycle Rodeo

Welcome to Safetyville!

A bicycle rodeo is a fun way to teach children about the rules of the road while practicing safe bicycling. The rodeo consists of stations and courses where children can learn about bicycle safety and practice safe bicycle skills. Students begin practicing individual skills and eventually advance to a simulated neighborhood environment in the “Town of Safetyville.”

Bicycle rodeos are typically offered to students ages 8-12, though younger or older students may also benefit from the training. Participating students should have permission from their guardians to attend.

Who is Involved

School staff, parents, local law enforcement, and others (such as high school students) may volunteer to assist with the rodeo. There should be two volunteers at each course - one to assist the child using the station and one to manage queueing students.

Ideally, local law enforcement should attend to assist the rodeo and establish a good relationship with children and the community.

Where and When?

Bicycle rodeos are often held in school parking lots, but may also be held in a large gym or auditorium, on a closed street, in a playground, or on another large, flat space. Rodeos may be held after school or on a weekend and typically require about two hours. They may also be set up for longer periods of time in conjunction with festivals or other events.

Stations

Introductory stations allow students to learn the basic rules of the road and safety procedures before putting their knowledge to use on the more intermediate courses:

1. the parts of a bicycle;
2. bicycle and helmet fit;
3. the Air, Brakes, Chain and Crank (“ABC”) bike check;
4. road signs;
5. rules of the road; and
6. turn signals.

At each station, the instructor should have copies of the pages in this manual for that station. Instructors can refer to these handouts when explaining these lessons. Instructors may also photocopy these handouts and give them to participants.

All students should start by visiting the stations to prepare for riding. After learning these rules, they can move on to the courses.

Courses

Instructors set up riding courses described in this manual with sidewalk chalk, cones, and other materials. Each riding course described here includes instructions for the exercise.

1. Turtle Race
2. Red Light, Yellow Light, Green Light
3. Shoulder Check
4. Zig Zag
5. Obstacle Dodge
6. Safetyville Streets

Stations, Courses, and Materials List

Stations

1. The Parts of Your Bicycle
2. Bicycle and Helmet Fit
3. ABC Bike Check
4. Know Your Road Signs
5. Rules of the Road and Turn Signals

Courses

1. Turtle Race
2. Red Light, Yellow Light, Green Light
3. Shoulder Check
4. Zig Zag
5. Obstacle Dodge
6. Safetyville Streets

Materials List

1. Sidewalk chalk (white and assorted colors)
2. 5 traffic cones
3. 25 dome cones
4. 10 brightly colored sponges
5. Sign kit (STOP, YIELD, GO, SLOW, ONE WAY, DO NOT ENTER, PEDESTRIAN CROSSING, RAIL ROAD CROSSING)
6. 10-30 child sized bicycles and helmets
7. Air pump for bicycle tires



Station: Know Your Bike Parts

Knowing the proper name and use for each part of a bicycle will help students learn the functions of each part of the bike. At this station, instructors should identify each part of the bicycle labeled below and briefly describe how it works.



Photo by Richard Child

Quiz: Know Your Bike Parts

Can you name all the parts of your bicycle? Write the proper name for the parts of a bicycle next to each number.



Photo by Richard Child

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

Station: Bicycle/Helmet Fit and Riding Form

Bicycle and helmet fit are important parts of bicycle safety. At this station, instructors should demonstrate how to wear and secure a helmet. In addition, the size and position of each child's bike should be evaluated. Before leaving this station, children should know how to wear and secure their own helmet and how to adjust their own bike.

Helmet Fit

1. Helmet should fit snugly and move only slightly when shaking the head.
2. Helmet should sit straight on top of the head, not leaning forward or back.
3. Straps should form a "V" under each ear (use the plastic slide to adjust).
4. Strap fastens under the chin with one finger width of space between the strap and chin.



Proper Helmet Fit

Bicycle Fit and Power Pedal Position

1. Adjust the seat so both feet reach the pedals with a slight bend in the knees. Both feet should be flat on the ground when standing above the bike frame.
2. When riding, the knees should not touch the handlebars.
3. When stopped, have one foot on the ground and one foot resting on the pedal up in the 2:00 position. When on the road, the foot nearest traffic should be on the ground. This is the **Power Pedal Position**.



Power Pedal Position

Station: ABC Bike Check

Before riding, students should check the condition of their bicycles to make sure they are safe to ride. Students should follow these instructions from the League of American Bicyclists to get their bicycles ready to ride.



Air:

Inflate tires to rated pressure as listed on the sidewall of the tire. Use a pressure gauge to insure proper pressure. Check for damage to tire tread and sidewall; replace if damaged.



Brakes:

Check to make sure coaster brakes will stop the bike by spinning the back wheel and applying the brake.

If the bike has hand brakes, check to see that the levers don't hit the handlebars when squeezed. Lift one tire up at a time and spin it; squeeze the levers to make sure the tire stops. The brake pads should be clean, straight and contact the rims properly.



Chain and Cranks:

Try to wiggle the crank arms side to side. There should be no movement. Spin the pedals and cranks to see if the chain drives the rear wheel. The chain should look like metal, not rust or black gunk.

If the bike has gears, check to make sure the gear levers and derailleurs (gear-changing mechanism) work to shift the chain between gears.

Station: Know Your Road Signs

At this station, instructors will review important road signs. Students should be able to readily identify and recall the meaning of each sign before moving on to the next station.



Stop



Yield



One Way



Do Not Enter



**Pedestrian
Crossing**



**Railroad
Crossing**

Station: Rules of the Road and Turn Signals

At this station, instructors will explain how traffic works and how bicyclists fit into traffic patterns. It is important to explain concepts like riding in a predictable fashion and remaining observant at all times. After going through basic traffic procedures, instructors should demonstrate and have children mimic the turn signals used by bicyclists. Before moving on to the next exercise, instructors should quiz the students who should be able to repeat and demonstrate the rules and turning signals previously discussed.

Rules of the Road

1. Wear your helmet while riding.
2. Ride on the sidewalk or the right side of the street.
3. Stop at all STOP signs.
4. Use your turn signals when turning or stopping.
5. Yield to pedestrians.
6. Walk your bike in the crosswalk.
7. Bicycles must have a white light in the front of the bike and a red reflector or light in the back of the bike.
8. Only one person may ride on a bicycle at a time.
9. NEVER use headphones or mobile phones while bicycling.

Turn Signals



Left Turn



Right Turn



Stop

Course: Turtle Race

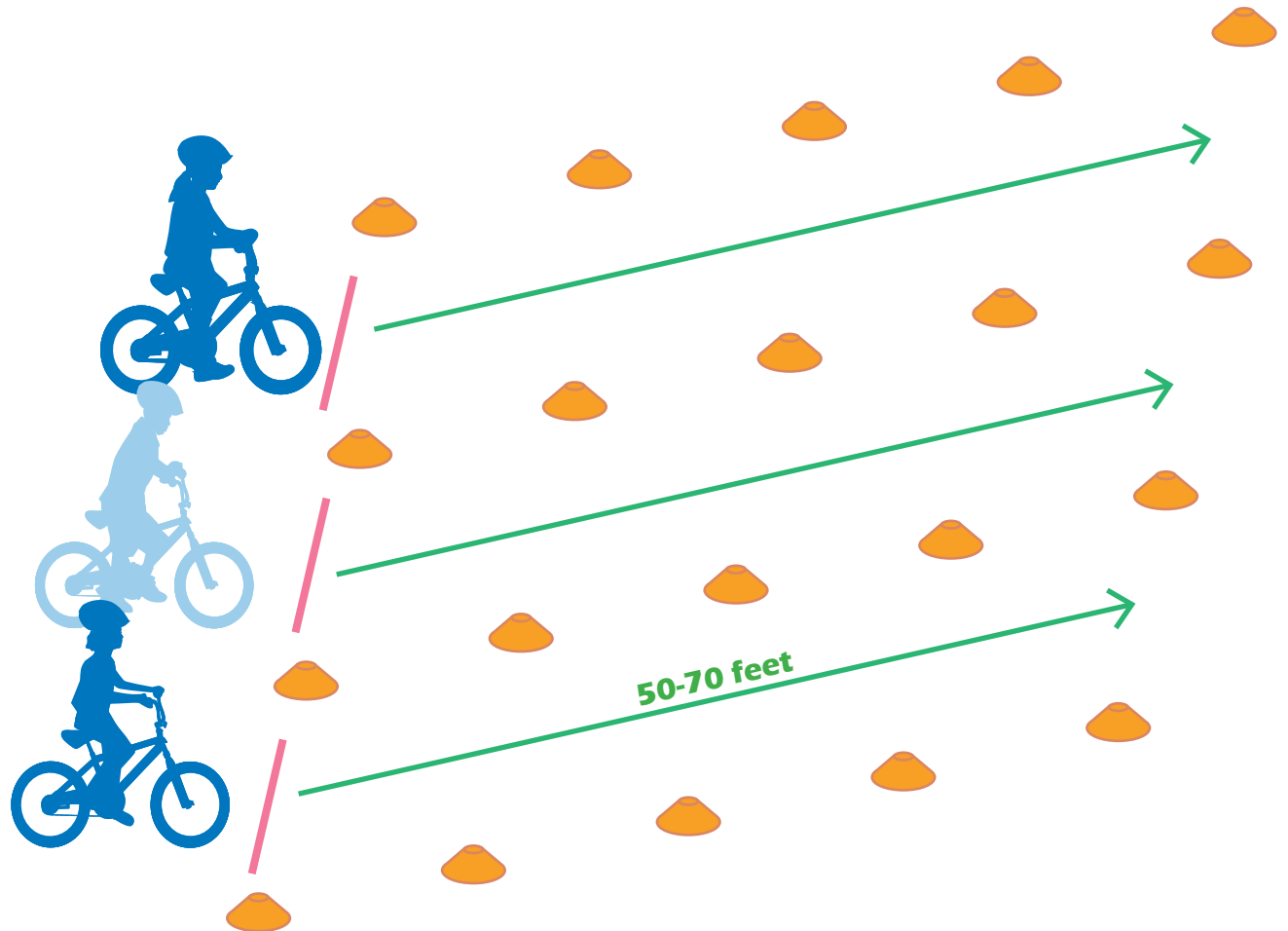
The Turtle Race is used to teach children to balance and ride in a straight line, both of which are critical skills for bike safety.

Objective

Children will practice balancing and controlling their bikes at slow speeds.

Instructions

1. Children line up at the start line, in “power pedal” position.
2. The instructor holds up the “GO” sign.
3. Children ride slowly in their lane and try to avoid swerving. Swerving or losing balance when bicycling can be very dangerous on the street.
4. The last person to cross the finish line without touching the ground with their feet wins!



Course: Red Light, Yellow Light, Green Light

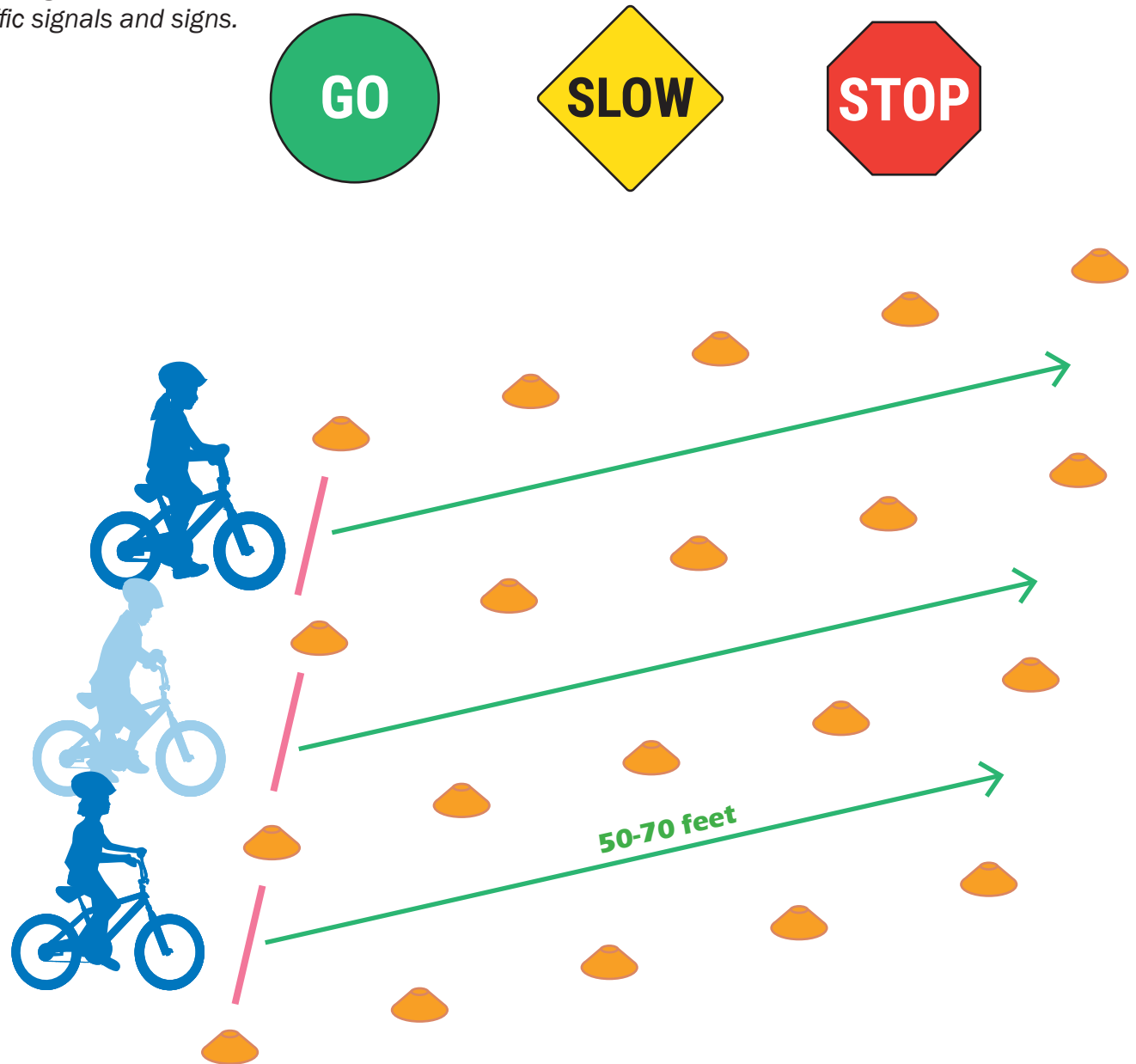
This course is used to practice riding in a straight line, controlled braking, and observance of traffic signals and signs.

Objective

Children will learn to obey signs and brake effectively.

Instructions

1. Children line up at the start line, in “power pedal” position.
2. Instructor holds up GO sign and children start riding.
3. Instructor holds up the SLOW sign, and children begin to brake.
4. Instructor holds up STOP sign and children come to a full brake.
5. Steps 2-4 are repeated until children have come to the end of the course.



Course: Shoulder Check

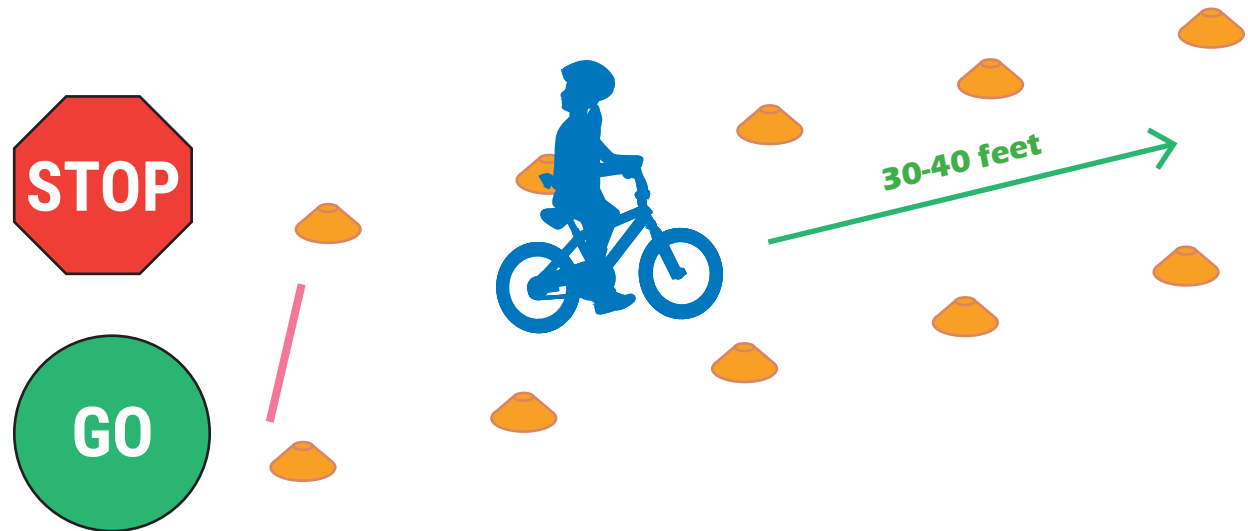
At the Shoulder Check course, children will practice balance, riding in a straight line, and control as they simulate looking over their shoulder to check for traffic.

Objective

Children will learn to look back over their shoulder while maintaining control of their bicycle, despite a natural tendency to swerve towards what they are looking at.

Instructions

1. Children line up at the start line, in “power pedal” position. Children will proceed one at a time through this course.
2. Instructor holds up GO sign and children start riding.
3. Instructor calls out “Check Left” or “Check Right” and holds up either the “GO” or “STOP” sign.
4. The child turns their head to look over their left or right shoulder, depending on the instruction, and announces which sign they saw when checking, while keeping their bicycle moving in a straight line.



Course: Zig Zag

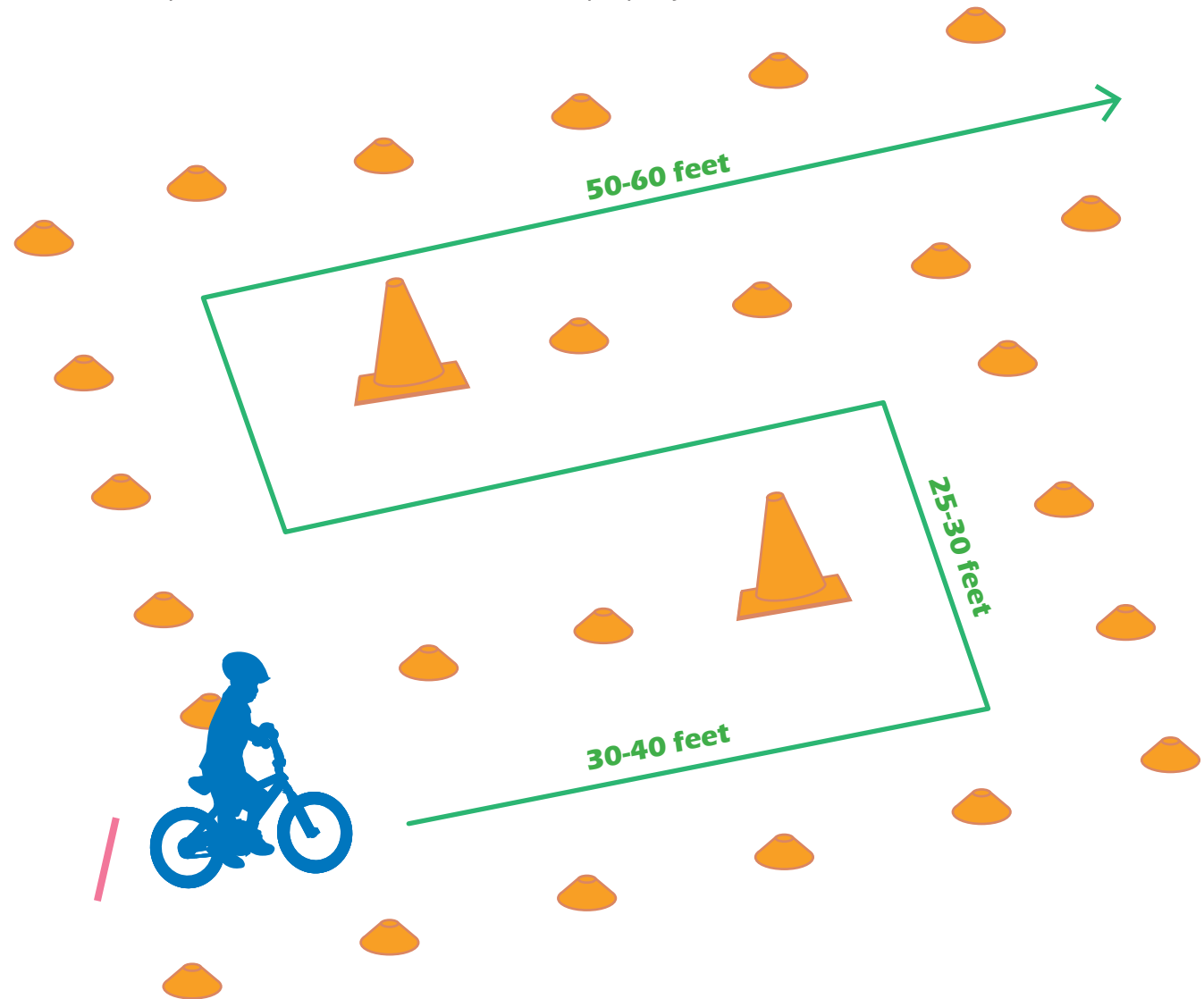
The Zig Zag course will give children a safe place to practice turning, while also continuing to practice balance and riding in a straight line. Children should be instructed to look where they are going - not at the ground in front of them - to help them maintain control and steer properly.

Objective

Children will practice making turns while following a specific course. Turns should be tight and controlled.

Instructions

1. Children line up at the start line, in “power pedal” position. Children will proceed one at a time through this course.
2. Instructor holds up GO sign and children start riding.
3. Children will follow the course, making turns. The Instructor may place large cones at turning points to make it easier for students to identify where they are supposed to turn.
4. Once students master this course, the Instructor may ask students to ride this course and use hand signals at the turning points.



Course: Obstacle Dodge

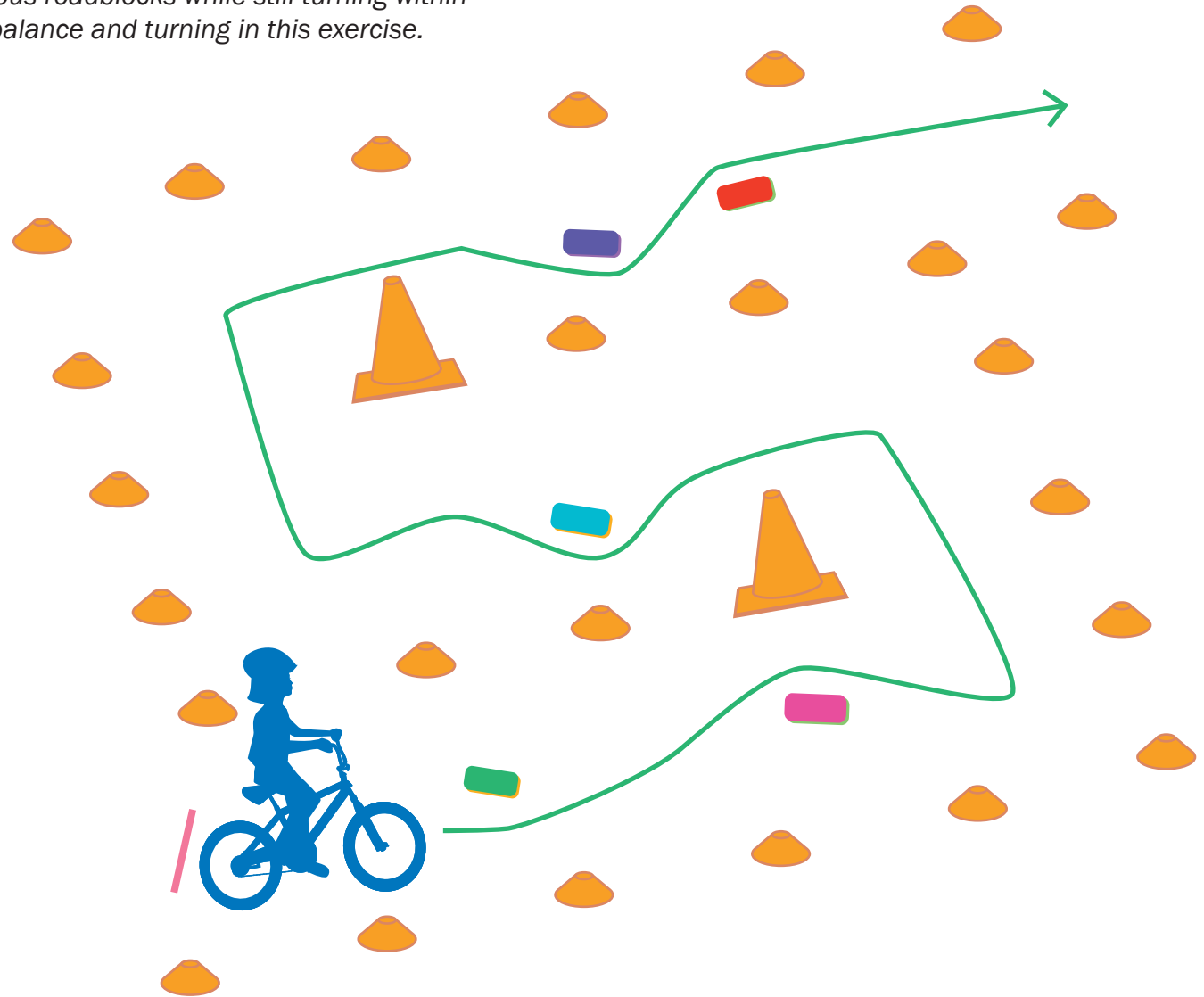
The Obstacle Dodge course is a more advanced version of the previously completed Zig Zag course. By adding “obstacles” to the zip zag course, children will practice maneuvering around various roadblocks while still turning within the cones. The students will practice balance and turning in this exercise.

Objective

Children will practice making tight turns around obstacles. When bicycling on the road, bicyclists may need to swerve around potholes or other obstacles and must take care not to swerve into traffic.

Instructions

1. Children line up at the start line, in “power pedal” position. Children will proceed one at a time through this course.
2. Instructor holds up GO sign and children start riding.
3. Children will follow the course, making tight turns around obstacles (the Instructor can use colored sponges, small stuffed animals, or other small objects as obstacles).



Course: Safetyville Streets

Objective

Children will practice all the skills they learned in the previous exercises in an integrated course. Note that sidewalk chalk, rather than dome cones, is used for this course.

Instructions

1. Children line up at the start line, in “power pedal” position.
2. Children ride through the course, staying in the right lane.
3. Children must obey all signs, including STOP, YIELD, DO NOT ENTER, and ONE WAY.
4. Children must use turn signals when turning.
5. Children should make tight turns around obstacles in the road, avoiding swerving into the opposite lane.
6. The course can be adjusted as space allows to include the elements from the previous exercises.

The Safetyville Streets course will put together all of the skills practiced throughout the day. Children will practice moving through the course while practicing riding in a straight line, turning, checking over their shoulder, and avoiding obstacles.

