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September 2014

Kids love to play, explore, and expand their mobility. It is a natural drive that takes them from sitting to crawling, to walking, to running. Riding a bike represents the next natural step in the pursuit of these experiences. It's why "riding a bike" is such a childhood milestone. With the development of the new category of balance bikes on the market, children are reaching this milestone earlier than ever before. Additionally, this early-riding development has been scientifically proven to increase overall balance and coordination which will help in all aspects of their lives.

Simply put, the earlier a child develops the part of their brain used to ride a bike on two wheels, the easier all physical and athletic endeavors will be for them later on. Let's consider the typical methods of learning to ride in comparison to a balance bike:

Product Comparison	 Balance Bike*	 Ride-On Toy	 Tricycle	 Training-Wheel Bike
Sized for a 2 year old	😊 11-16" inseam*	😊 10-12" inseam	😞 12-15" inseam	😞 16"+ inseam
Weight of unit	😊 5-7 pounds*	😊 4-6 pounds	😞 7-15 pounds	😞 15-22 pounds
Balance exposure	😊 Yes	😞 No	😞 No	😞 No
Steering function	😊 Same as pedal bike	😞 None	😞 Opposite of pedal bike	😞 Opposite of pedal bike
Mobility on all terrain	😊 Yes	😞 No	😞 No	😞 No
Transition to pedal bike	😊 All balance, steering, leaning skills transfer	😞 No skills transfer	😞 No balance or steering skills transfer	😞 No balance or steering skills transfer

*Based on industry-leading STRIDER™ balance bike design.

Balance Bikes are properly sized for beginning riders, as young as 18 months, and adjust as children grow, offering up to 4 years of use from one bike. They are lightweight and simple, yet focus on the fundamental skill development of balancing on two wheels. They teach proper steering technique for a seamless transition to a pedal bike, they are easily portable, and they offer mobility on all types of terrain.

Ride-On Toys are usually small in size and lightweight for really young riders but they lack any ability to develop balance and steering skills. They don't enhance mobility over walking or running, and can't go on varied terrain such as grass, dirt, or gravel. They don't adjust to fit a growing child and don't aid in the transition to a pedal bike later on.

Tricycles have been the "go-to" choice for decades and seem ideally suited for toddlers, but a focused analysis reveals a number of shortcomings. Tricycles have added weight and complexity compared to balance bikes. Many times the reach from seat-to-pedals is beyond a young child's inseam. This is why you often see children pushing on the ground with their feet instead of pedaling. Beyond poor fit, the real issues lie in the poor function of the three-wheeled design. To learn balance, a child must be allowed to experience the feel of balancing and leaning and how the steering affects both. Worst of all, tricycles seem stable yet tip over very easily when turning, often surprising, scaring, or injuring an unsuspecting young child.

Training-Wheel Bikes have all the same characteristics and flaws of a tricycle but to a worse degree due to their larger size. They are much heavier and more complex: they have higher seats (bigger fall), a higher center of gravity (more likely to tip over), and still do nothing to help children transition onto two-wheelers.

But what about pedaling? Isn't pedaling the foundation of riding? No, pedaling is simply a means of propulsion, a way to make a bike move. Bikes can be propelled by any number of means: walking, striding, pedaling, gliding, gravity, an engine, an electric motor, etc. The common element is always balancing on two wheels and leaning through turns. For young children, walking and running are the simple and natural way to propel the bike as they focus on the fundamental skills of balancing, leaning, and steering.

Balance bikes are clearly the best choice for advancing children's skills and development. The next question becomes, "Which balance bike brand do I choose?" READ: Why a STRIDER™ Balance Bike CAT002