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## Lantzville hosts children's bike clinic

By NICHOLAS PESCOD

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Children in Lantzville have the chance to participate in a free bike safety clinic later this month.

Beginning Wednesday (Oct. 19), the District of Lantzville is hosting a free children's cycling safety clinic at Costin Hall.

The clinic, which is taught by members of the Greater Nanaimo Cycling Coalition, is an opportunity for children and parents to learn and improve their cycling safety and bike knowledge over the course of four classes that last two hours.

Leo Boon, one of the clinic instructors, said it is important for parents to make sure their children are educated about bike safety before they start riding around their neighbourhood on their own.

"With the purchase of a bike comes the responsibility of the parent to make sure that their kids are able to ride that bike properly," he said. "Not only for them to balance it, but to ride appropriately on the road or sidewalk. It's a great first step for kids who want to learn how to ride their bike," he said.

The clinic, which is funded by the District of Lantzville, includes sessions at Huddlestone Park and on Lantzville Road. Boon said it is recommended that children spend at least 20 hours over the course of several years learning how to ride and operate their bike safely.

"As with anything, whether you're learning baseball or basketball, there is a certain amount of instruction that is needed," he said. "For cycling we figure that is about 20 hours of instruction over the course of time."

Boon said the clinic will teach children and parents more than just the basics of riding a bike in a fun environment. The course will teach proper clothing to wear, what to do when biking on the road and the type of equipment needed. It will teach kids how to go from riding on a sidewalk to riding on a road and what to do if there are no dedicated bike lanes.

"People need to know how to go from an area where there are bike lanes to an area where there are no bike lanes," Boon said. "But also how to position themselves in traffic, so you don't hold up traffic, but also so that traffic can see you and are aware of you."

There are plenty of mistakes parents can make when it comes to their children and biking according to Boon, who said one of the classic mistakes that a parent can make is buying the wrong-sized bike.

"That's such a no-no," he said. "That doesn't help kids. They can't find their balance and once they grow and do find their balance and grow into the bike, they'll have already given up on that bike."

The free clinic runs Oct. 19-20 and 26-27 beginning at 2:45 p.m. at Costin Hall. Children must know how to ride their bike and must wear a helmet.

To register, please visit [www.lantzville.ca](http://www.lantzville.ca). or visit [www.bikesense.org/blog/](http://www.bikesense.org/blog/)

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Leo Boon advocates for bike safety, especially with children. / NICHOLAS PESCOD/THE NEWS BULLETIN