

# Cycling



## during pregnancy and with a baby

### About the project

In a three-year research project (from June 2015 to May 2018), the traffic planning office 'Verkehr mit Köpfchen' (a spin-off office 'Verkehrslösungen') is studying the following questions:

- What makes cycling so unattractive during this period?
- What needs do parents with a baby have with regard to cycling?
- And what are the possibilities for making it easier for young parents to use the bike?

The objective is to promote and increase opportunities for cycling after childbirth.

### Promoting cycling with a baby among families

#### Information and marketing

### Offers and measures

**Information and marketing** can close information gaps and increase the desire to go by bike.

A flyer and a brochure were drawn up to clarify questions on cycling during pregnancy and with a baby. The flyer gives a concise overview on the topic and provides general information. The contents of the brochure include issues that should be considered when cycling during pregnancy, what possibilities there are for going by bike with a baby, what to consider when riding a bike with a baby and what health issues there are when cycling with a baby. Articles in parenting magazines are also planned.

A specific marketing campaign is a film in which a family is accompanied in the months before and after the birth of their child.



**Planning approaches** for improving cycling can only be implemented at the political and administrative level. Therefore, these stakeholders receive recommendations within the framework of the project to facilitate parents' options for cycling with a baby. These include, among others, developing cycling infrastructure, in particular sufficient dimensioning of bicycle traffic lanes, a designated area at the head of a traffic lane at an intersection with traffic lights, suitable bicycle parking and speed limit reductions in urban areas. Last but not least: Improving the bicycling traffic situation is not only beneficial for parents who cycle but can serve all cyclists and frequently in an long run strengthen accessibility and the quality of life in cities.

**Service offers for parents** include action days for test rides and a trailer rental for several days. These offers help to reduce reservations and obstacles to making a purchase. During test ride action days, pregnant women and parents with a baby are given the opportunity to test different ways of biking with a baby and to take a test ride free of charge. Another service offer is the rental of bike trailers and cargo bikes. The objective here is to have parents test the bike trailers in their daily lives. They can see if it is easy to park the trailer at home, if it fits through the front door, whether their baby likes cycling, in short: whether everyday life is manageable with a bike trailer. The rentals are limited to one week, so that as many parents as possible can try the offer.



**Training for midwives** - Midwives are a strong point of reference for pregnant women and new mothers. They teach courses at midwife's practices or clinics and visit young mothers shortly after childbirth. However, midwives have varying degrees of knowledge on the topic of "cycling with a baby and during pregnancy" and accordingly discuss the topic in different ways with the pregnant women and young mothers they serve. This is a result of a survey among 34 (of a total 97 local) midwives in Heidelberg and the surrounding areas. As important disseminators on the topic, midwives are provided with information material and training. This subproject is funded within the framework of the Bicycle Bicentenary of the Ministry of Transport (VM) of the State of Baden-Württemberg.

### Obstacles and needs

In a nationwide survey in Germany, pregnant women and parents gave the following reasons against cycling with a baby.

I'm afraid of having an accident. 53%

I think my baby is still too small to be taken by bike. 47%

The network of bike paths is not very good where I live (no direct or safe paths). 36%

I cannot safely park the trailer or cargo bike (lack of parking options). 38%

A child bike trailer or a cargo bike is too expensive for me. 35%

The following needs were also listed by participants in the survey:

Improved cycling infrastructure 34%

Secure parking options in both private and public spaces 20%

I need equipment to take my baby by bike 8%

My baby must be bigger and able to correctly sit upright 8%

Bike trailers and such would have to be cheaper 4%

There is a need for more information regarding:  
... the various ways of taking a baby by bike,  
... at what point should a baby be taken by bike,  
... safety aspects when riding and health effects for the baby (spinal column, back).

This information can be a good place to start when it comes to promoting cycling with a baby.

#### Training for midwives



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The project is funded by the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure using resources for the implementation of the National Cycling Plan 2020.

