

GROUPTEST

CYCLING JOURNALIST **MIKE DAVIS** REVIEWS CHILD TRAILERS

Child trailers

Perhaps the most useful accessory for family cycling, a trailer will carry one or two pre-school children in comfort. Journalist **Mike Davis** reviews four

COMPARED TO child seats, trailers affect handling less and make it more plausible to transport two children at once. Trailers can also be used to carry cargo. The downsides are cost and bulk. While low-slung trailers look vulnerable, anecdotal evidence suggests that drivers give them a wider berth.

The age at which children can be transported depends on the child, the trailer, and the riding you'll do. From nine months upwards, using trailers is uncontroversial. Many trailer manufacturers supply baby slings for infants who can't yet sit up, although rough surfaces should be avoided with babies to avoid shaking them. The upper limit is usually determined by the child no longer fitting in the trailer – weight capacities are generous, with two-wheel trailers carrying up to 45kg.

1 Capacity

Large two-wheeled trailers have a lot of space inside, but watch the weight distribution – too much stuff too far ahead or behind the trailer's axle will force the towing hitch up or down, giving unpredictable handling.

6 Hitch

There are several designs of hitch. Make sure that the hitch is compatible with your bike (particularly hub gears or brakes). Most require a small fitting to be semi-permanently attached to the bike.

2 Visibility

Flags are useful for daytime visibility, while red rear reflectors and a red rear light are required at night.

3 Security

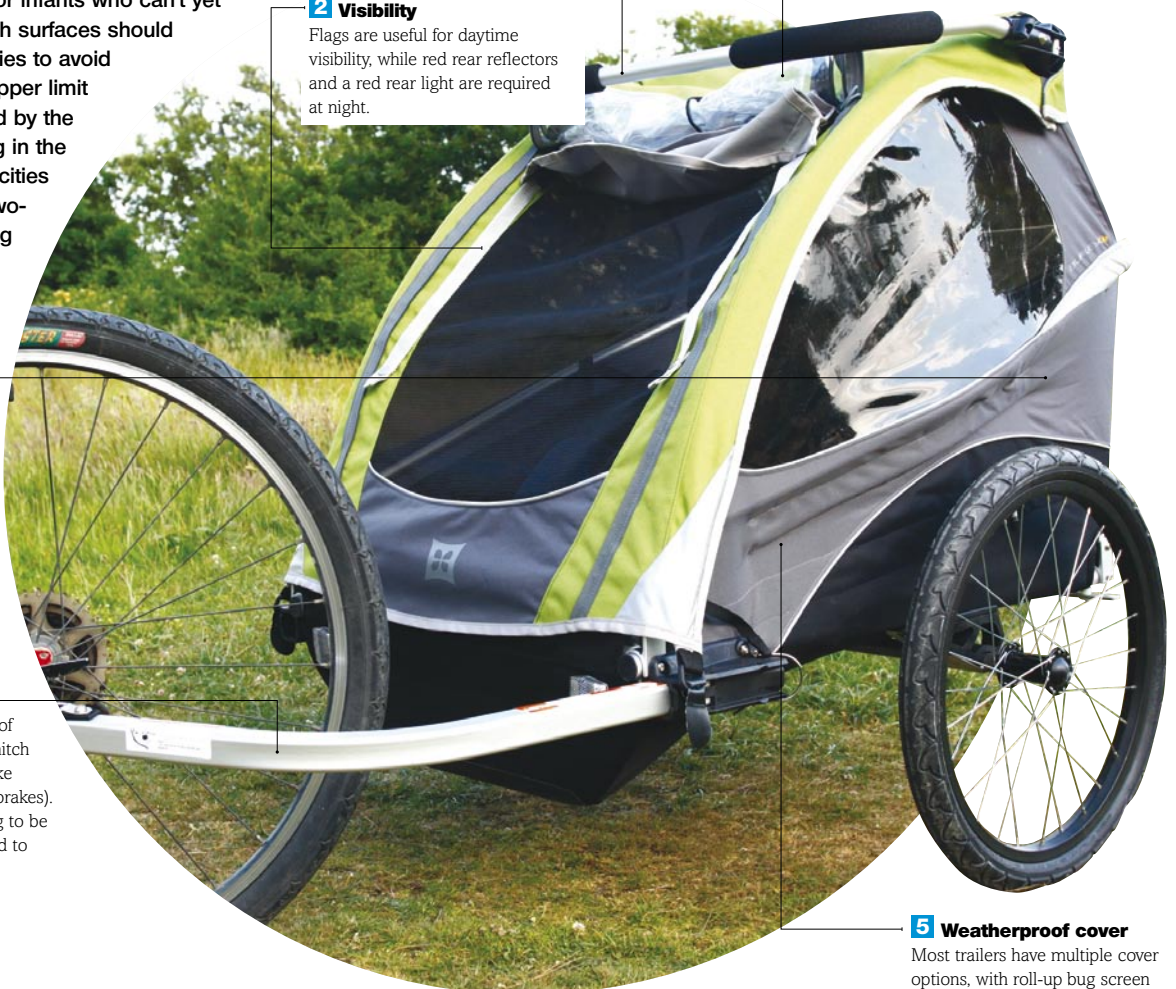
Comfortable seats and secure harnesses are essential. Look for padded straps and easy adjustability.

4 Foldability

Most trailers fold flat for storage and transport, with the wheels detaching and stowing inside.

5 Weatherproof cover

Most trailers have multiple cover options, with roll-up bug screen and rainproof outer layers.



STROLLER/
JOGGER
PARTS

Many trailers available are theoretically capable of being converted to strollers (with castoring wheels at the front) or joggers (one fixed wheel), but UK regulations mean that anything sold as a stroller must meet higher fire retardant standards than a bike trailer. As a result, conversion parts may not be available for all trailers. Popular brand Chariot are currently reworking their trailers to meet UK stroller regulations, hence their unavailability for this test.

**BURLEY D'LITE £649.99**

Burley is a big name in the world of trailers, with an extensive range, of which the D'Lite is the flagship. The frame is all aluminium with a heavy-duty canvas cover. The well-padded seats take two children (or one in the middle) but there isn't as much elbow room as the Croozer Kid For 2. There's an easily-adjustable five-point harness for each child. The hitch relies on a forged aluminium piece attached to the end of the bike's rear axle. A quick-release pin holds the drawbar to the hitch, although on the test bike there was very little clearance between the pin and the rear wheel QR nut, which made things a little awkward. Once hitched it tows easily, though. Hollow rubber axle mounts give a little bit of suspension, although not much more than you get from the tyres. It folds quickly and easily into a compact unit. The D'Lite is expensive, but Burley has cheaper options with simplified construction and fewer features. extrauk.co.uk
Compact, comfortable, and lightweight but expensive.

**WEEHOO iGO PRO £300**

Weehoo's iGo Pro bridges the gap between trailers and trailerbikes. Conventional trailerbikes only suit children old enough to hold the bars reliably and stay awake, but the iGo's semi-recumbent design and footstraps mean that children as young as two can use it. They don't have to pedal and they can safely sleep. As your child grows, the seat can be slid back along the frame. The seat is well padded and has a five-point harness. The chain runs inside plastic tubes and there's a full chainring guard. Mesh pockets store drinks and snacks within easy reach and a pair of small panniers are adequate for a jacket and a picnic. There's no cover although an optional folding sun canopy is available (£26). The seatpost hitch proved effective, simply pivoting around the seatpost on a special plastic bushing – it was stable and twist-free. It's a very long trailer, which takes some getting used to. A two-seat version, the iGo 2 Pro, is available. amba-marketing.co.uk
Unique trailer/trailerbike crossover with great longevity.

**CROOZER KID FOR 2 £375**

Croozer's Kid For 2 trailer (there's a single-seater Kid For 1 as well) is robustly built, with a steel chassis underneath and aluminium frame supporting the heavy-duty fabric cover. It's the traditional side-by-side twin wheel format with an easy-to-use axle-mounted hitch. The Croozer is wide, with bowed sides that give lots of elbow room inside. There's a useful 'boot space' behind the seats too. The downside of all the space inside is that it's a big trailer on the outside – it's significantly wider than the Burley D'Lite, which may be a consideration for storage and transport. The Croozer folds flat, although the clips that hold it open can be a little fiddly until you get the knack. The strap to keep it folded is a neat touch. An optional baby sling attachment is suitable for infants from about 12 weeks old, with the next step being an extra padded seat with a head support (10-18 months). amba-marketing.co.uk
Top-quality, if large, trailer for two children at a very reasonable price.

**TOUT-TERRAIN SINGLETRAILER £1,099**

The Singletrailer is unique: it's designed with off-road riding in mind. With one seat and a single wheel, it's no wider than the handlebar of the towing bike. The steel frame is robust yet light; the trailer weighs under 10kg, with a carrying capacity of 25kg. Tout Terrain say it'll suit children aged up to five, although my seven-year-old daughter was happy in it. It's smooth to tow and comfortable for the occupant thanks to the rear suspension, which uses a mountain bike air shock. You can ride properly rough trails with no issues. The Singletrailer mounts to the seatpost with an excellent, slop-free, ball-bearing pivot. Some trailers with seatpost pivots handle oddly in corners, but the Singletrailer is very well behaved. The passenger sits high up, which is good for seeing out and ground clearance on rough ground. It does mean that the centre of gravity is high, but there's a sturdy folding stand for loading and unloading. www.en.tout-terrain.de
Brilliant trailer that excels off-road, but extremely expensive.