

SSWSC Alpine Parent Panorama 2-10

These are guidelines for understanding and supporting your child's ski development. This document focuses on progressive development more than adherence to age. The results described in the age brackets apply to many children but not all.

2-10 years old

●Safety

- 2-6 years old - 100% of safety responsibility falls on adult.
 - Hill Management - adult is the eyes and ears of the child.
 - Basic Needs Management - parent is responsible for hunger, temperature control, etc.
 - Child should ride chairlift with adult.
- 7-11 years old - constant reminder and reinforcement of safety, surrounding environment.
 - Introduce Skier Responsibility CodeChild can experiment with riding chairlift by them self if parent is comfortable. Encourage child to voice their needs to lift operator.

●Equipment

- Boots - proper size, able to flex ankles; Too stiff of boots hinders ankle flexion and proper stance.
- Skis- recommend length. Too long of skis inhibit the athletes ability to turn.

●Terrain

- Ski children on appropriate terrain for weather, snow conditions, physical and emotional ability! Children are happy on mild terrain and familiar terrain. Parents get bored quicker then the kids.
- Cultivate the desire and ability to create speed rather on easier terrain rather than defensive braking movement to fight speed on steeper terrain.

●Patience

- Getting ready to go skiing with younger ages may take longer than actual time on the hill.
- Foster independence in your child. Empower them to carry their own equipment, pick themselves up after a fall, and participate in terrain selection, etc.

●Cross Training Activities

- Rock hopping, trail running , soccer, mtn biking, unicycling, ice skating, gymnastics, pilates/yoga, ski jumping, xc skiing, playground obstacle course (cultivating body awareness)
- A child's skiing ability directly correlates to the hours spent in cross training activities and mileage on snow.

2-3 years old



- Soft cuff boots are ideal; no rear entry boots.
- Introduction to equipment indoors, walking in skis and boots in living room & yard.
- Make sure kids have a positive association with skiing. Ride gondola for hot cocoa and ride down.
- Allow the natural physical instinct of the child to develop. Allow the child to bobble, tip, stumble, recover, jostle, and explore - slowly and on beginner terrain.
- Stay on easy beginner terrain for the season.
- Harness use is fine, but should not be used as brakes or direction, encourage child to turn for speed control.
- Remember a three year old does not have skier legs so they get tired very, very early. One run is ok! If a child is too tired to ski...go home.
- Make sure their basic needs are met- Carry food and drinks! Dress them warm.
- Set the child up for success by setting up the proper learning environment (terrain, conditions, etc) so the child can drive their own experience that does not require the adult/parent to verbally instruct or bark commands.
- Good modeling of technique.
- Encourage independence on Magic Carpet.
- Have child carry some of their equipment, some of the time.
- Get out there with your child weekly if possible for a short period.
- Safety is paramount, always be aware of speed control, surroundings, other skiers. We are the safety eyes for the child!

4 years old



- Equipment - need to be able to flex their boots and turn their skis.
- Please do not be over eager and begin “bagging” steeper runs. Learning breaking wedge movement patterns is not what we want cultivated. Child should turn for speed control.
- Lessons are fun and social.
- Treats still important. Short ski sessions, still limited endurance.
- Explore beginner terrain park and half pipe. Let the child explore on their own just keep their speeds down – turn!
- Explore mixed conditions/weather – shallow new snow, ungroomed snow, whoop-di-dos on side of cat tracks. Encourage jumping, hopping to cultivate and play with balance.
- Get out there weekly if possible.
- Pole should arrive when child can do “racing turns,” parallel turns on green and blue terrain.
- When following or leading, catch the kid in the act of doing the correct technique.
- Have child carry some of their equipment more of the time.
- Intro to XC skiing.

5 Years Old



- Equipment - need to be able to flex their boots and turn their skis.
- Glide, glide, glide! No braking wedges. Keep them on terrain where they feel comfortable to narrow their wedge. Encourage speed control by turning, not wedging.
- Mileage in uneven mixed conditions, crud, easy bumps, off piste. For example, ski from the groomed to ungroomed edge and then back to groomed.
- Kids don't get bored with terrain, parents get bored with terrain. Repetition is good.
- Take them in terrain parks and let them ski the half pipe, and race course with parental guidance. Have them follow you making round turns.
- 10,000 hours - the more you ski the more they improve...mileage is key. Child still tires easily and needs plenty of rest.
- Carry all of the equipment, all of the time.
- Hitchhiker's Wednesday Night Jumping Series and XC skiing, ice skating

6 years old



- Don't be fooled, at this age children are learning precise and correct skiing movements.
- Parents should have a purposeful plan in mind when free skiing with child (terrain choice, games to cultivate skill, consistent verbage as coach)
- Involvement in Little Vikings, Nordic jumping and XC skiing (skate skiing) - helps learn independent leg movement.
- Proper terrain is key. Need to have centered stance on terrain they ski before taking them to the next level.
- Ski moguls.
- Lead them making round turns, S turns, finishing your turns! Ski at their speed.
 - Allow child to lead and look back at their tracks. (Are they round?)
- May be using poles if making "racer turns."
- Introduce one ski skiing.
- Parent should strive to ski with their child when not in a formal program.
 - But, children are visual learners, don't pass on your bad habits!
- Cultivate and encourage broader awareness of mountain environment. Other skiers, obstacles, merging traffic, safety.
- Greatly excited by anything new.
- Big muscles crave activity at this age.
- Physical Development Opportunity:
 - Flexibility
 - Speed - Short Bursts/Reaction Time

7 years old



- Encourage independence when child packs bag for skiing, school or other activities
- Never underestimate the importance of mileage and free skiing in all weather and snow conditions beyond organized programming.
- Pole use and proper upper body form.
- Skiing all terrain (black diamonds)- this is what the strong young skiers are capable of if they have accomplished prior bullets.
- Parent should strive to ski with their child when not in a formal program.
 - Model good technique- ski above the level of your child
 - Don't be fooled, at this age children are learning precise and correct skiing movements.
 - Parents should have a purposeful plan in mind when free skiing with child (terrain choice, game to cultivate skill.)
- Local race series - Steamboat Cups-open to age 7-14
- A child's skiing ability is a directly correlated to the number of hours spent in extra curricular sporting activities and time on snow. (Dance, gymnastics, mountain biking, soccer, coreKids pilates, xc skiing, etc.)
- Critical of himself and sensitive to failure.
- Endurance is relatively low at this age.
- Physical Development Window:
 - Flexibility
 - Speed - Short Bursts/Reaction Time
 - Motor Skills

8 years old



- Limited exposure to gates on mild terrain, intro to alpine racing.
- One ski skiing.
- Should pack one's own bag by themselves for after school activities.
- 2-4 times a week on skis.
- Never underestimate the importance of mileage and free skiing in all weather and snow conditions beyond organized programming.
- All mountain skier in all conditions- continued exposure, mileage and cultivation of fun and passion for skiing and outdoors.
- Proper timing in pole use.
- Local race series - Steamboat Cups-open to age 7-14
- If child shows interest, travel to out of town race with emphasis on participation and skiing another area.
- A child's skiing ability is a directly correlated to the number of hours spent in extracurricular sporting activities and time on snow. (Dance, gymnastics, mtn. biking, soccer, xc ski, coreKids pilates, etc.)
- Appreciates correct skill performance.
- Physical Development Opportunity:
 - Flexibility
 - Speed - Short Bursts/Reaction Time
 - Motor Skills

9 Years Old



- O.K parents- be real, if your child wants to be a ski racer...have them follow a **ski racer**.
- Parents Homework- If your child is withdrawing from certain physical activities, work with them on those activities (swimming, jump rope, throwing a ball, etc.)
- Don't let your adult agenda and adult thought process interfere with the natural growth process of a child. Allow your child the experience of learning and discovering for themselves.
- Intro to alpine racing.
- Skiing 2-4 times/week.
- Never underestimate the importance of mileage and free skiing in all weather and snow conditions beyond organized programming.
- If child shows interest, travel to out of town race with emphasis on participation and skiing another area.
- Hand/eye coordination developing.
- Unaware of danger and safety of himself, which may result in increasing interest in activities involving challenges and adventure.
- Physical Development Opportunity:
 - Flexibility
 - Speed - Short Bursts/Reaction Time
 - Motor Skills

10 years old



- Increasing importance for proper ski equipment. Set child up for success.
- Intro to alpine racing - Time to let the formal program lead.
- Appropriate age to choose one primary discipline.
 - Still encourage supporting winter disciplines.
- Can still have supporting winter disciplines.
- Hand/eye coordination still developing
- Parents Homework- If your child is withdrawing from certain physical activities, work with them on those activities (swimming, jump rope, throwing a ball, etc.)
- Don't let your adult agenda and adult thought process interfere with the natural growth process of a child. Allow your child the experience of learning and discovering for themselves.
- Marked changes in muscle system causing awkwardness
- Shows fatigue easily; needs 10 hours of sleep.
- If unskilled in group games and skills, may tend to withdraw. Socially aware of their incapacibilities.
 - Parents- Have you done your homework?
- Athlete shows Interest in the development of more skills.
- Physical Development Opportunity:
 - Motor Skills (Upper Body/Lower Body Separation; Right/Left Separation; etc.)