

Your child's first day of skating



We're going to let you in on a little secret. The first time your child skates, he or she will fall. All skaters fall. Olympic medalists have fallen hundreds — even thousands — of times. The best part? Your child will get right back up.

Anything's possible when your child skates for the first time. So prepare yourself and your child for the expected and unexpected. You'll know how to plan ahead. You'll relax more. And you'll have more fun knowing you're both comfortable and safe.

BE ON TIME

Arrive 20 minutes before class kicks off to check in at the registration desk and lace up your child's skates.

BRING LOTS OF LAYERS

Comfort and moving freely are essential for new skaters. Choose sweatpants or warm-up pants instead of bulkier snow pants. Bring a jacket, too, since indoor rinks set thermostats at a brisk 50 degrees.

CHOOSE THIN SOCKS

Bulky, thick socks limit support and create unwanted bumps inside the boots. Go with lightweight socks or tights.

PROTECT THEIR HEADS

Wearing helmets is strongly recommended for all beginning skaters. Your neighborhood pro shop will give you advice as to where you can find certified helmets that provide a proper fit.

DO:

Make sure the helmet fits comfortably and snug.

Keep helmet level to protect forehead.

Keep the helmet level and immobile. Avoid tilting back or pulling low.

Secure chinstrap buckle. Check the adjustment often for protection, in case of a fall or collision.

Replace the helmet immediately if signs of damage are visible.

Clean the helmet with mild soap and water only.

Store the helmet in a cool, dry place.

Have the helmet wearer present during purchase to test and ensure a good fit.

Find recommended helmets through these classifications: ASTM F1447; Snell B-90A, B-95, N-94.



DON'T:

Wear anything under the helmet.

Attach anything to the helmet.

Wear a helmet that does not fit or cannot be adjusted properly.

Leave a helmet in direct sunlight or in a car on a sunny day.

KEEP THEIR HANDS WARM

Since kids are taught to fall on day one, gloves or mittens are imperative to prevent hands from getting all scraped up. If you forgot to bring a pair, sift through the rink's lost and found box to find some your child can borrow during class.

FITTING SKATES

Rule of thumb: The closer the fit, the more control. Find comfortable skates that keep feet snug and immobile yet give toes plenty of wiggle room. Solid support is needed because staying upright takes a lot of strength.

LACING SKATES

Tap the heel way back into the boot. Gently pull the tongue up and secure it straight up and down before tucking it against the foot. Pull the second or third sets of laces from the bottom tightly to close the boot well over the front of the foot. Laces should be snug through the ankle area and bottom two sets of hooks.

The top two hooks can be looser to keep the ankle flexible. Cross the two extra laces over hooks neatly. Don't wind



them around the skates because loose, flying bows often cause accidents. Properly laced boots should provide enough room to stick a finger between the back of the boot and the leg.

RENT SKATES FIRST, BUY LATER

Find a good fit through a pro shop that knows the ins and outs of ice skating. If you're looking to save money with used skates, check the boot's support level and blade's sharpening life.

TAKE CARE OF SKATES AND BLADES

Never walk on hard surfaces or concrete with uncovered blades. Wear hard guards to protect them. Dry blades with a towel after every use to avoid rusting.



The lifelong rewards of ice skating

Everything skaters learn on the ice soon becomes invaluable off of it.

For every child who chooses to pursue ice skating, good news: He or she will excel in ways that will carry them far in life.