

CHILDRENS LEARN TO SKI PROGRAMS: PREPARING YOUR KIDS FOR A DAY IN THE SNOW

Ski resorts are a snow covered playground for children. Whether your child is a beginner or advanced skier, specially trained instructors with youthful enthusiasm are prepared to guide them to the next level. Letting a qualified professional teach your child is the best way to ensure learning in a safe, fun, and positive environment so they develop a life-long passion for the sport.

Children's ski schools offer a wide range of lessons to all abilities. At most resorts you can expect to find full and half day group lessons as well as private lessons from 1 to 6 hours. Resorts may also offer programs for younger children that combine playtime and instruction with snacks and opportunities to take lots of breaks. Call ahead if you need day care for infants or toddlers, especially during holiday periods.

Equipment rentals (skis, boots, and poles) are generally included in most ski school packages. Be prepared to complete forms that include your child's shoe size, weight, and height. If you need to rent snow sport clothing (see list below), check with the resort or other local shops for availability.

Good preparation can go a long way in helping your child's initial impressions of skiing. Make sure to send your kids properly dressed for winter conditions, and mark their name on all clothing and personal belongings. The following items are highly recommended:

Waterproof jacket and pants	Hat or Helmet
Gloves or mittens	Goggles
Ski Socks	Sunscreen
Thermal underwear	

Regardless of where you ski, come prepared with a checklist when you register your child for ski school.

- Clarify where and when you will meet your child at the end of the day. Often resorts use a claim ticket system to ensure the person who dropped off the child is the same one picking them up.
- If you'd like to meet your child for lunch or earlier in the day you'll need to arrange this ahead of time, particularly if they are in a group lesson.
- Most resorts offer snacks and lunch as a part of a full day program. Make sure you let the staff know of any allergies or medical information they should be aware of while supervising your child for the day.
- Find out what system the ski school will use if they need to reach you during the day. They may ask for your cell phone number or offer to rent you a pager. Some resorts use message boards located at the base of the chairlifts to post information.

A beginner's lesson for children will teach them how to balance, stop and turn. They may use lifts such as the "magic carpet", rope tow, t-bar, or chairlift to access beginner terrain. If your child has skied before they will be grouped with other children of the same ability and explore terrain that is appropriate, while preparing them for the next level in skiing. Children may practice in special areas designated specifically for children's instruction only, or share terrain with adults.

At the end of the lesson you can expect the instructor will review where they skied, what your child learned, and what type of lesson, length, and level they should sign up for next time. To find out more about snow sports for children and families visit the website www.winterfeelsgood.com.