



Crowsnest Nordic Ski Club

Skills Development Program Parent Handbook

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About this Document

The Crowsnest Nordic Ski Club (CNSC) Skills Development Program Parent Handbook provides information for families registered in CNSC Skills Development Programs.

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About CNSC Skills Development Programs

All CNSC Skills Development Programs are led by National Coaching Certification Program Level I ski coaches. We adhere to the Nordiq Canada Learn to Cross Country Ski Programs.

Bunnyrabbit Program

The first level of our programming introduces cross-country skiing and the healthy lifestyle associated with it through organized activity and active play. Participants will develop a positive self-image, movement skills, an appreciation for the outdoors and new ski friendships. Bunnyrabbit Programs are generally for ages 3 to 5.

Jackrabbit Programs (Technique Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4)

The second level of our programming is the “FUNDamentals” stage of development. Objectives are for children to learn basic cross-country ski skills, including classic and skating styles and to instill a lifelong interest in the sport. Participants will develop the basics of agility, balance, coordination, and speed, as well as good ski technique habits, fun and fitness. Prerequisite for Jackrabbit Level 1 is Bunnyrabbit or equivalent skills demonstration. Each Jackrabbit level requires completion of the previous level (e.g. Level 2 prerequisite is Level 1). Jackrabbit Programs are generally for ages 6 to 9.

Learn to Train Program

As a progression from the Jackrabbit Program, Learn to Train helps participants become technically competent cross-country skiers and use their skills to explore a wide range of ski activities. Prerequisite for Learn to Train Level 1 is completion of Jackrabbit Level 4. Learn to Train Program is generally for ages 10 to 12.

Registration and Fees

CNSC Skills Development Program registration fee is \$25.00 per child payable at time of registration plus the cost of a family CNSC membership. Registration opens in early October of each year and will be accepted until November 30. Skills Development Program registration and CNSC memberships are available at www.skicrowsnest.ca.

Season Plan

The CNSC Skills Development Program consists of 7 sessions and concludes with participation in the Club's a family friendly fun Loppet, Flight of the Crows.

- Session 1 – First Saturday in January
- Session 2 – Second Saturday in January
- Session 3 – Third Saturday in January
- Session 4 – Fourth Saturday in January
- Session 5 – First Saturday in February
- Session 6 – Second Saturday in February
- Session 7 – Third Saturday in February
- Loppet – Last Saturday in February (Conclusion of the Skills Development Program)

About the Flight of the Crows Loppet

CNSC hosts an annual Flight of the Crows Cross Country Ski Loppet. This event will be held in Allison Cross Country Ski Area in the Crowsnest Pass, the same location as your sessions. Attendance at the Loppet is considered part of the Skills Development Program. The event offers kids the opportunity to show off their new skills in a family friendly race. There are several distances to choose from making the event accessible to all. Coaches will also hand out Progress Reports and award stickers after the kids finish their Loppet race with their families. Hot chocolate and snacks will also be provided. Coaches will go over race etiquette with students the week prior to the Loppet and other details regarding start times and registration.

Sessions

Location and Times

All lessons will take place at Allison Chinook Provincial Recreation Area Ski Trails. Lessons will take place at Allison Chinook Provincial Recreation Area Ski Trails. You will meet up with your group at the day use area next to the main parking lot. Visit www.skicrowsnest.ca for directions and maps.

The dates and times of our ski programs for the 2024-2025 season are:

- Saturdays from January 4, 2025, through to and including February 22, 2025
- 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Please arrive 10 to 15 minutes prior to the start of sessions to allow time to put on gear and find your group. Session times and dates may change due to weather, snow conditions, or special events such as the Flight of the Crows Loppet. Please check your email regularly for updates from coaches.

Expectations of Parents and Guardians

Our Skills Development Programs rely on the participation of parent volunteers to encourage the children and help make this a positive, fun experience for everyone. Please plan to attend weekly with your child. If you cannot attend one week, you will need to ensure another parent is there to help with your child.

Parents can also support their child's ski development outside of sessions by going for a family ski together and encouraging them to tryout their new skills. For Jackrabbit Programs, students are encouraged to ski with their families outside of lessons and to track their ski time in their Jackrabbit Booklets to receive a Sticker Award at the end of the Season.

How to Dress and What to Bring

For each session please bring:

- **Boots, Skis, Poles:** For Jackrabbit level 4 please bring both classic and skate ski sets with you to every session. Your coach will email you regarding which set you will be starting with for the session. If you are in need of equipment for the season, CNSC

offers an Equipment Loan Program for families registered in our Skills Development Programs. More information about our Equipment Loan program can be found at www.skicrowsnest.ca

- **Hat, Mittens or Gloves, and Neck Warmer/Bivy:** handwarmers are great to have on colder days but not required.
- **Warm Socks:** Please ensure your child still has room in their boots with their thicker socks. If the socks are too thick and there isn't enough space in the boot, this can restrict blood flow and make their feet colder. Wool is best.
- **Water Bottle and A Smart Ski Snack:** A Smart Ski Snack that will help the body refuel for the trails: like an apple, orange or granola bar. Please check with your coach to see if there are any allergy concerns with your group before bringing items like nuts.
- **Sunglasses Or Other Eye Protection:** Even on cloudy days, the reflection of the sun off the snow can be quite bright.
- **Dressed for the Weather:** Rain, Snow or Sunshine, you can be comfortable skiing by layering and "making a ski sandwich":
 - Layer 1: an inner layer to wick away moisture. A polyester or merino wool make a great inner layer.
 - Layer 2: a mid layer to keep the heat in and take off if you are too warm. Fleece makes a great mid layer.
 - Layer 3: an outer layer to keep the wind, snow and rain out.
- **Backpack:** A backpack to carry your snack, water bottle, and any additional items such as layers removed if the temperature warms up over the time of the session

For parents and guardians skiing with younger children, you will not be moving at as quick of a pace as you might be used to and so it's advised to dress warmer than you normally might when going for a more vigorous ski.

Absences

If you have any planned or unexpected absences, please email your coach to let them know as soon as possible. Knowing who will be away will help coaches with session planning.

About the Bunnyrabbit and Jackrabbit Booklets

On the first session of your SKP, your child will receive a Bunnyrabbit and Jackrabbit program booklet. The booklets will be used to track your child's skills development for the duration of time your child is in the program. This could be over several years depending on the age and skill development of your child (e.g., over 3 years of Bunnyrabbits or throughout all four levels of Jackrabbits). Please keep this book at home, it does not need to come to ski sessions. Please take some time to review the booklet with your child together at home.

Trail Etiquette and Winter Safety

In addition to the skills outlined in the Bunnyrabbit and Jackrabbit booklets, your child will also learn about trail etiquette and winter safety.

"My Trail Etiquette Promise"

If I practice good trail etiquette it will make skiing more fun for everyone!

- When I overtake a slower skier I can call out "track" or I can move to the left and go around them.
- When faster skiers come up behind me I will move to the right and let them pass.
- If I meet another skier head on I will pass to the right.
- If a trail is too narrow for two skiers to pass, I will wait until the other skier passes.
- I will remember that skiers coming down a hill have the right of way.
- If I need to stop, or if I fall, I will move off the trail to allow clear passage for other skiers.
- I will move off the trail if I want to visit with my ski-friends.
- I will not take my pets on the ski trails, unless they are pet friendly like the dog trails.
- I will not litter and I will pack out what I packed in.
- I will respect the custom and say a friendly 'hello' when passing other skiers.
- I will obey the trail signs and ski in designated areas only.

Winter Safety Tips

- Never ski alone.
- Dress appropriately for ski sessions. Stay dry and warm. Be prepared for bad weather or changing conditions.
- Know which trails you are allowed to ski on, and never ski outside the designated area.
- Learn what to do if you become lost.
- Find out what causes frostbite. Learn to recognize it and what to do about it.
- Re-evaluate your plans if you or other members of your group start to fatigue.
- Do not ski out of control.
- Be aware of the dangers of crossing bodies of water in winter. Proceed one person at a time and check the thickness of the ice with your poles.
- Do not ski in avalanche areas without proper training and equipment.

Inclement Weather Policy

Skills Development Programs will be cancelled at temperatures below -15C as measured/estimated at or noon on Friday before sessions and/or the night before or early morning on Saturday at the CNSC weather station. We will exercise some discretion if necessary to account for wind speed or cooling/warming trends.

Coaches will notify families via email if the session has been cancelled. Please also consider the following safety measures when skiing with young children during cold days (temperatures below -10C).

- If children are inappropriately dressed they may be excused from the session and their parent will be notified.
- A hat should be worn at all times. Ensure ears are covered to avoid frostbite.

- Children can go inside the warming hut when they say they are cold.
- Coaches will choose areas that are protected from the wind and will avoid activities in open areas.
- Coaches may allow additional time to warm-up; it takes longer to get the body warmed-up for sport activity in cold weather.
- If in doubt, coaches may cut the session short.

Communications

A minimum of one week prior to the start of your child's sessions you will receive an introductory email from your coach. Your coach will share their email with you and will regularly communicate with you throughout the Skills Development Program through email.

To reach the CNSC Youth Development Program, please email cnpcrosscountry@gmail.com.