



Parents' Guide to Snowbird Mountain School

Is my child old enough to learn to ski? Or snowboard?

Here are some things to consider:

- ◆ Is your child comfortable being with adults other than family?
- ◆ Has your child gone on field trips at school?
- ◆ Has your child been exposed to snow and winter conditions?
- ◆ Does your child participate in organized sports with other kids?

If you answered no to any of these questions, you may want to approach with caution.

What can I expect my child to learn during the program?

Younger kids may take longer to “get their wings” and be able to ski on their own. Often the preparedness of the child, size, willingness, and ability to balance, and equipment fit are the keys to a quicker beginning. Each child is an individual, so success is about having fun and wanting to come back!

Older children will often learn to turn and stop on the beginner slope by the end of the first day. Snowboarding may take a bit longer. Be supportive at the end of the lesson, and encourage your child to be happy with small successes. Just balancing while gliding on skis or a board is quite an accomplishment! Once the basic sensations have been repeated enough times, there is often an “aha” moment when a child can glide and turn.

Our instructors use an activities based approach, in which children are often familiar with the games they play, and the variable is the skis or snowboard. This will often appear that they are “just playing games” but basic skills are being absorbed by the children as they play, making the next steps come much more quickly... not to mention that the process is indeed fun!

For children who already know the basics, the groups are split by **age first and then ability and school**. This is to provide common ground for the children (we don't want young children to be riding with a group of teen-aged kids) so they will make friends and want to come back again and again. The groups often explore the mountain together, and find challenges through activities that will build skills and help them learn resort safety and etiquette.

What can I do to prepare my child for Mountain School?

- ◆ Talk about winter activities and what your child can expect. View skiing web sites together, and look at photos of the places they will be visiting. Experience other winter oriented activities together if possible with your child. The idea is to eliminate the unknown variables in the sport to make the transition from the unknown to the known easier.
- ◆ Kids should know their full name, school. Kids should know if they have allergies and what to do about them. Bring any medicines they will need, educate the staff, but remember that we are NOT licensed to administer medications, so either you will need to be there to do it, or arrange for medical personnel through our ski patrol to cover it.
- ◆ Older children should be prepared to learn safety rules (review safety etiquette called YOUR RESPONSIBILITY CODE that can be found at www.nsaa.org)
- ◆ Be sure to have your child's gear checked by a reputable shop. Be sure the bindings are set to the boots properly. Children grow very quickly, so double check... it can mean their safety.

- ◆ Be sure your child has proper **clothing, eye protection, and sun protection.**
 - ◆ Water and wind resistant, breathable insulated pants and parka.
 - ◆ Water proof gloves or mittens (mittens preferred for younger children). Remember they will be in contact with lots of snow all day long!
 - ◆ Helmets are recommended, for information on purchase and fit, visit www.lidsonkids.org .
 - ◆ Neck gaiters are a must; especially when it's snowing (and it does that a lot at Snowbird!)
 - ◆ Eye wear is critical; if you can't see, you can't ski or ride! Please be sure your child has appropriately sized goggles or sunglasses (UV protective). Snow can burn developing eyes easily, so be sure your child can tolerate them.
 - ◆ Sunscreen is even more important at high altitude. .
 - ◆ SOCKS are critical. Be sure to provide one pair of socks that fit well, are NOT cotton (this will make for cold feet!). Imagine wrinkled socks and uncomfortable feet; and be sure your child doesn't have them!
 - ◆ Mark all personal belongings!!!!
 - ◆ Make sure that all gear and clothing gets dried out between ski days... This is often forgotten, and can make the next experience very uncomfortable.
- ◆ Try to plan for a good night's rest, adequate time to eat well the day before and a nutritious breakfast. Load them up on water and/or juice or sports drinks. Altitude can be an issue for children, but if they are properly fed, rested, and hydrated, the day will be more enjoyable.

What are the goals for your child's experience?

It is important to determine what your goals are for putting your child in the ski and snowboard program. Are you hoping they will become the next Bode Miller? Are you mostly interested in providing them with a challenging and exciting experience that they will want to repeat? Be as honest in your assessment as you can be, and you will find that your expectations will be more likely to come true.

What level should my child participate in?

- ◆ If your child has skied or snowboarded before, try to be specific as to how much, and on what slopes, and where. It is important to know if he/she could turn and glide by themselves, or if they were held or used a device to hold the skis together.
- ◆ It is also important to note what resort your child went to, and how long ago. **Snowbird has challenging slopes to learn on, so be conservative.** A blue square slope at a different resort might be a green circle slope here, especially during inclement weather.
- ◆ Remember that it is always easier to graduate a child up a level than to demote them, so be conservative in your estimate, and rest assured we will move them to a more challenging group if need be.
- ◆ All classes take warm up runs in the beginning, and appropriate adjustments will happen at that time.
- ◆ Our goal for your child is first and foremost to have FUN and enjoy the company of the other kids that they are with. Check out the web site for the skill level descriptions. Just because your child has made it down a Blue run does not mean that they should be a Blue level skier or snowboarder. It is the skills/movements that they possess that allow them to ski the run that determines their skill level.

Security

- ◆ Children must be signed in and out of the program by staff members. Please be sure to follow this procedure for your child's protection.

What kinds of questions should I ask my child after the lesson?

- ◆ Ask about the best part of the day, or the favorite activity
- ◆ Ask what slopes and trails they experienced together
- ◆ Ask if they made new friends, and what they are looking forward to next time

Please direct any special needs or concerns to S.L. County staff at the time of registration. Accommodations can be made with prior notification.