

Beginner Equipment Guide

Children must be properly equipped so that they learn to enjoy the outdoors and the sport of cross-country skiing (see the [CCC Tips for Parents of Bunnyrabbits](#), or the [CCC Tips for Parents of Jackrabbits](#)). This guide is intended to give parents some assistance in obtaining the appropriate ski equipment for children.

General Advice

- Purchase equipment (especially the boots) that fits the child properly now, rather than wait for them to “grow” into it, so that they are comfortable while skiing
- Keep in mind that ski equipment retains its resale value and it’s an investment in a positive, healthy, and fun family activity
- Many stores offer an equipment exchange program, and used equipment, and the margins are very tight so there isn’t much variation in cost between stores

Bindings

Avoid a ski binding system that permits use of their regular winter boots, or even the older 3-pin boot and binding system as these have become obsolete and are very heavy compared to modern skis (putting them at a disadvantage compared to other skiers on their team).

Boots

Boots need to fit properly: after cold hands, cold feet are the next in line to get cold. Happy feet = happy athlete! Boots should have enough space to allow for warm synthetic or wool socks to be worn underneath with a bit of extra room to breathe.

Tip: You should be able to fit a finger behind the heel with the loose boot, and the foot pushed to the front of the boot, when wearing sports socks. For children who tend to get cold feet, you can pull over their ski boots a pair of big old woolen socks with the toes cut out for the ski bindings.

Skis

Classic skis are used for the traditional cross country striding motion, using either track-set or backcountry trails; skate skis are used for the modern side to side motion of skating on skis, using groomed trails; combi skis are the Goldilocks of skis, designed to perform adequately for either skiing motion and are the most common skis for Jackrabbits Levels 3 to 4.

Bunnyrabbits and Jackrabbits Level 1 to 2 should have waxable classic skis that are as tall as the child, and flexible. Jackrabbits Level 3 to 4 the length (and flex) depends on the type of waxable ski:

- Classic skis should reach just below the skiers wrist when the arm is held straight above the head
- Skate skis should be about 5 cm above the head of the skier (and have less flex than classic skis)
- Combi skis should be mid-way between the length (and flex) of a classic ski and a skate ski

To test the flex (or camber) of classic skis, have the skier stand on both skis and see if you can slip a piece of paper out from under the skis at the point where their feet are. Then have them stand on one ski, with all their weight on it, and now the piece of paper should not slip out from under the ski. For skate skis the piece of paper should not slip out from under the skis when both feet are in place.

We recommend waxable skis because they offer far more glide, and their grip can be adjusted based on the weather and during lessons. You only need the simple red/green/blue wax kits for classic skis. See our wax guide for the basics.

Poles

Bunnyrabbits is taught without poles, so please leave them at home even if they want them. They are a hazard and kids will learn better balance and technique without them. Coaches will be much happier if you enforce this rule so that they don't have to.

Classic poles (Jackrabbit Level 2 to 4) should reach under the chin when the skier is standing on the floor (or to the shoulder when on snow); skate poles (Jackrabbit Level 3 to 4) should reach the lips when the skier is standing on the floor (or to the chin when on snow). Straps must be adjustable and made of flexible material (not plastic), and ski tips must be made of metal.