

Clothing Guide

Children must be properly dressed so that they learn to enjoy the outdoors and the sport of cross-country skiing. This guide is intended to give parents some assistance in obtaining the appropriate clothing for children.

General Advice

- Avoid cotton clothing (undergarments, socks, pants, and tops) because it will get wet as children learn how to adjust their clothing to the level of activity
- Listen to your child's comments about being too hot or too cold, and watch their reaction to different clothing while outdoors, as some children run hot and others run cold (which can vary depending on the child's mood, fatigue, or state of health)
- But regardless what they say, purchase warm mitts/gloves to protect those extremities!

Layers

Layers are the key to dressing children for outdoor activities, to give the child the flexibility to adapt their clothing according to their needs that day. Without layers you can both under dress them and over dress them. An enthusiastic young skier can generate a great deal of body heat and perspiration even on the coldest days.

Head

A warm polar fleece or wool tuque or balaclava that protects their ears is essential. Headband and earmuffs can be worn on warmer days. Many children also wear neck tubes or "buffs" (not scarves which unravel during play).

Hands

A good pair or of gloves and spare mitts is critical. Usually a young skier's hands are the first body part to become uncomfortable in the cold. For this reason alone it is worth spending a bit more and purchasing quality mitts and gloves for your child. Many use shelled Thinsulate or polar fleece liners with a water repellent shell.

Body

Bunnyrabbits should wear a full snowsuit, as they don't move fast enough to generate excess body heat. Coaches and accompanying parents should dress warmly as well, as they won't be going fast! Above that age slower children should continue to be warmly dressed, but as they become more energetic and skilled they need to be dressed in layers that can be removed or replaced at will, even while on an outing.

The layer next to the skin should be made from a material that keeps moisture and perspiration away from the skin and retains its insulating qualities when wet (synthetics or wool). Whatever you do avoid cotton, which absorbs moisture and dries very slowly.

Instead of insulated snow pants or jackets, light windproof or rainproof clothing over one or two thin layers of synthetic or wool will provide sufficient warmth and more freedom of movement and still repel the snow. On windy days it may be a good idea to bring the snow pants or jacket along and use them as a warm-up pant until the class begins.

Feet

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.