LSDA Equipment Selection Recommendations for 5 to 10 yrs

Ski equipment plays a huge part in the enjoyment and success of the young skier.

If possible, families should try to size equipment very close to the child's current needs rather than buying equipment that is big enough to last 2 or 3 seasons. ***Equipment that is too big hampers skill development and may actually diminish the fun and sense of accomplishment we hope your youngster will feel***. If your child questions whether he/she wants to continue next year make sure equipment is not the hidden reason. Kids will not necessarily be able to tell you that is the reason because they do not necessarily know what skiing should feel like. All they know is that they don't enjoy their class because it is hard to do what their coach is asking them to do. Complaints of cold feet are a common sign of improper fitting ski boots.

Keep the following key points in mind when selecting equipment:

SKIS

1. Sizing: Skis height for Entry Level kids should be no longer than chest to nose for kids between 5 and 10 who are just entering the sport. For those kids who have developed their skills to Level 3 Snow Stars or higher consider the guideline for stronger skiers.

New Skiers
5 to 6 yrs – closer to chest
7 to 8 yrs – chest to shoulders
9 to10 yrs – shoulders to mouth or nose

Stronger Skiers (Snow Stars Level 3 and up)
5 to 6 yrs – chest to shoulders
7 to 8 yrs – shoulders to nose
9 to 10 yrs – nose to top of head

** If forced to compromise, less experienced skiers should stay on shorter skis

2. Ski properties: Skis that are shaped (more side cut) will assist in the progression and enjoyment of the skier. Ideally skis for kids will be suitable for shorter and longer turns. Usually "Multi-Event" or "Giant Slalom" oriented skis with a turning radius of between 11- 15 meters are optimum. The "radius" is usually printed on the ski. Avoid "Slalom" specific skis until the coach advises you that your child needs them (likely at 10yrs old at the earliest). A lifter plate between the binding and the ski is highly recommended. This will allow the skier to achieve more edge angle. Skis should be sharpened with a one-degree base bevel. This will aid the skier in holding an edge on the hard pack snow and acquiring new skills.

3. Bindings: Today's bindings and skis are generall ntegrated systems ensuring the correct binding strength is matched to the ski properties. Bindings provide a range of DIN settings to accommodate skiers of different height and weight. Ensure bindings are set properly by a certified technician at the ski shop.

BOOTS

Optimal fit is found when:

- -shin rests evenly + comfortably against the tongue
- -heel is held into heel pocket and does not slide forward out of the pocket
- -ankles bend in concert with the boot allowing skier to achieve balance through flexion in the ankles and knees

1. For young entry-level skiers the use of front buckle (2 to 4 buckles) is recommended. The use of a rear entry boot may inhibit the skier from properly bending their knees and ankles as they progress along in their skier development.

2. For proper boot sizing, do the “shell test”:
Remove the liner and have the child stand in the shell with toes touching the front of the shell. If you can wiggle 1 to 1.5 adult finger(s) between the heel and the back of the shell you have a . Any more room (e.g. 2 to 3 fingers) is too big. The child’s foot wi l slide forward forcing the child into an unbalanced backseat position on the skis. Typically child’s weight will be born by the calves resting on the back of the boot. This is very tiring, makes turning much more difficult and is hard on child’s growing knee joints and ligaments.

3. Check to make sure the child’s ankle joint lines up with or sits higher than metal hinge that holds upper cuff to the boot. If the hinge is too high (usually when boots are too big) the child will not be able to flex the boot. Heel lifts can be used to raise the ankle joints to op mum position and give skier more forward contact with tongue of boot.

4. Top of tongue should sit below the midpoint between the top of the foot and the middle of the kneecap. For kids below 70lbs, the tongue should be no higher than he 1/3 point.

5. When comparing boot options, pick the one with less cuff material (tongue/upper shell) and the one where the top buckle strap is lowest. This will allow the child to stay in a balanced position and bend as naturally as possible at the ankles.

6. Wear proper ski socks for warmth and best fit. Do so when fitting for new boots as well. Remember two socks are colder then one well fitting ski sock and two socks are no remedy for large boots.

7. Kids should be able to run and jump around (play) as naturally as possible in their boots! A close fitting boot will accomplish this.

8. Ongoing verification with coach and a mid-season visit to your ski shop for any required fitting adjustments will optimize boot performance. Ski shops can make mo boot as skier’s feet grow allowing the skier to maximize usage in the current size rather than having to move-up to the next size.

Helmets:

Make sure the helmet is marked “Alpine Ski Racing Helmet”. This ensures the helmet is certified for alpine ski racing specifically. Fit is crucial to ensure the head does not float or rotate inside the helmet.

Further suggestions:

If possible discuss your child’s ski equipment needs w h a senior Entry Level coach at your club. Various ski manufacturers have websites with recommendation charts matching specific products with we ht and age of young ski racers.

Local ski shops have printed information and sales people that can help. Use this equipment guideline to ensure you are discussing all important elements when choosing equipment.

Proper ski maintenance (sharpening, de-burring, waxing) will help skier maximize the skis properties. Consult with ski shops/coach for an appraisal of the condition hild’s skis.

Disclaimer:

This guideline was written for the benefit of Entry Level ski racers in Thunder Bay area. The writers accept no responsibility or liability for consequences of any eq pment choice resulting from this guideline.