

KIDS CAN SNOWBOARD!

TEACHING GUIDE



25
**CASI
ACMS**
1994-2019

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF
SNOWBOARD INSTRUCTORS



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CASI would like to thank all past Technical & Educational Committee members, as well as current National Technical Team members who have contributed to this project. Also, a special thanks to Big White Ski Resort and Burton Snowboards for supporting this project.

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Canadian Association of Snowboard Instructors

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching kids to snowboard can be a fun, rewarding and challenging experience.

Teaching children isn't just about the technical aspects of snowboarding.

Children make up the majority of students learning to snowboard, and as such, special attention needs to be paid to how we teach children's lessons.



DUTY OF CARE

As a snowboard instructor, when you agree to undertake the instruction of a person (adult or child), you enter into a relationship with that individual out of which the courts will impose a duty of care for the safety of that student. This commences when you first meet your student at the beginning of the lesson, and ends when the lesson is completed.

When working with children, the courts will impose and expect a greater duty of care. This duty increases as the age of your student decreases. Courts in Canada hold that the duty of care owned by a person charged with the supervision of children is that of a “careful or prudent parent”. Knowing this, it’s important to remember that the actual act of snowboarding may be only a small part of an instructor’s responsibilities during a lesson. Instructors will not have this duty of care discharged until such time that the child has been safely released into the care of another responsible adult (depending on snow school policies).



CLASS MANAGEMENT

Avoiding any incidents is the best strategy to keep everyone happy and safe.

- ⇒ Know how many students you have in your class.
- ⇒ Stop and count your students often.
- ⇒ Ensure students are warm and comfortable. Learn to recognize signs of distress (shivering, lack of talking, etc.) and ask students often if they are comfortable.
- ⇒ Know where you are on the mountain at all times.
- ⇒ Choose runs that are within your students' range of abilities.
- ⇒ Carry some form of communication device (cell phone, radio) with you, so you can inform ski patrol of any incidents.
- ⇒ Keep all students within eyesight at all times - especially with children!
- ⇒ When stopping on the trail, ensure all group members are to the side of the run, away from any potential risk of collision.
- ⇒ Know the Alpine Responsibility Code, and help to educate your students!

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

When working with children, remember who is paying for the lesson! It's your job as an instructor to put parents at ease, and build confidence in their decision to enrol their child in a lesson.

At the start of the lesson / initial meeting area, use the “**S.P.I.T.**” acronym:

SMILE:

When parents (and children) approach you at the meeting area, take a second to smile. You can easily identify some key emotions simply by looking at them. Is the child happy, scared or apprehensive? Is the parent nervous, stressed, or anxious?

PLAN:

Welcome them and plan the lesson with the parents. Remember, leaving a child with a new person can be intimidating, and many parents can feel nervous about it. Plan the lesson by discussing previous experience of the child in snowboarding, or other sports. Plan the details such as meeting time, lunch breaks, terrain or areas of the mountain you will be riding, etc.

INQUIRE:

Ask about their expectations, concerns, or other details. Give them a chance to ask any questions they may have about any aspect of the lesson plan. Be careful about promising too much – keep the technical goals simple and small for the first lessons! Ask about anything you should know about the child, such as allergies, etc.

TALK:

Not just to the parent, but to the child too! Ensure you engage the child immediately on meeting them – get down on a knee so you are at their eye level, ask their name and find out a fun detail about them (favourite food, superhero, etc.).

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS (CONT.)

At the finish of the lesson, try the “S.P.I.N.” acronym...

SKILLS:

What they have accomplished in the lesson (technical skill, terrain, safety, finding their way around, using equipment)? Where did you ride, what did you work on?

PERSONAL:

Show the parents that you got to know the child, and have an interest in tailoring any future lessons to them. Comment on any fun or memorable part of the lesson. Ask the child to describe their favourite part of the lesson.

INCIDENTS:

Make sure to let the parents know about any incidents or concerns that may have arisen in the lesson that they should be aware of (behavioural, equipment issues, etc.).

NEXT:

What will the next lesson hold in store? Tell them what level they should sign up for next (be honest and realistic), and when you would be available for another lesson. And don't forget to thank them for bringing their child to ride with you!

COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN

Children need to relate everything to something concrete, something real, in their environment. They need to see, feel, and do!

To Do...

- ✔ Use directions that are short and simple, and keep them to a minimum.
- ✔ Demonstrate movements many times during a lesson.
- ✔ Encourage children to repeat successes over and over.
- ✔ Encourage children to experiment with movements.
- ✔ Use games or fun challenges instead of technical jargon or exercises intended for adults.
- ✔ Help the younger children experience feeling by manual assistance using tools such as harnesses, tethers, hoops, or soft toys / obstacles.
- ✔ Give children ONE goal at a time (small steps).
- ✔ Give positive, specific feedback (applauding the child's successes with comments that pinpoint the details of the success).

LESSON PRESENTATION

Introducing Yourself:

- **Make eye contact with the children.** If necessary, get down on one knee or bend over to the child's level so that the children can see your face. Smile!
- **Get to know the children's interests.** Ask them about their favourite “thing”— an object, activity, person or animal. Find out what other sports or activities they enjoy.
- **Try giving each kid a nickname based on his or her interests.** This will make them feel special and important. Be prepared to adopt a nickname yourself, and be prepared to have some children object to another name.
- **Some children will be receptive to a Name Game** (e.g.: toss a foam cube or other soft object (like a glove or a hat) from one to another and have each person say either his name or the name of the person to whom he is tossing the cube).

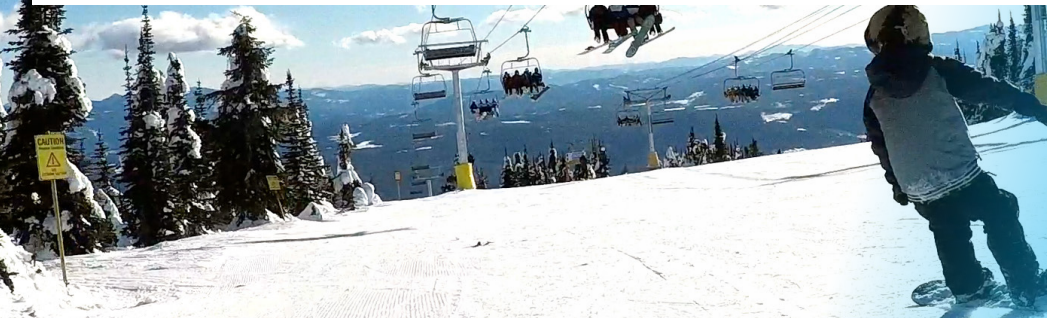


Use of Games & Activities:

- Although it is not necessary to use games throughout the entire lesson, we must keep in mind that children learn best through play.
- Make sure you consider the age of the group when deciding the games or activities you will be using during the clinic.
- Balance the games with time just to ride and enjoy the movement without structure.
- Make sure the activities/games you choose help develop a technical goal or skill.

Setting Goals:

- Try to find a balance between the child's goals and the realistic goals that can be attained in the lesson.
- Try rewarding participation in basic exercises with fun, kid-specific games and freestyle manoeuvres.
- Don't rush it! Allow kids a lot of time to feel, explore, and experiment with the movements and skills before pushing them to the next step in the progression.



TEACHING TIPS: 4 YEARS OLD (AND UNDER)

This age group represents one of the fastest growing segments of new snowboarders.

Do...

- ✓ Ensure that equipment fits, and is properly sized for them – not just a small adult board!
- ✓ Adjust your expectations! Progress will take many forms and happen in small steps. Remember, turning isn't the ultimate goal!
- ✓ Incorporate games, challenges, imitation and plenty of trial and error.
- ✓ Use the assistance of tools like Riglet Reels, harnesses, hula-hoops, and ski poles to assist with mobility and maximize practice time.



Don't...

- ✗ Don't bother having them skate or move with one foot attached. Pull them through flat terrain with both feet attached.
- ✗ Don't rush to turning! Most children in this age group will spend most of their time on the heelside edge. Encourage them to become confident with this before progressing to the toeside.
- ✗ Don't expect them to last very long – start with 15-minute sessions, and consider introducing them to equipment and basic movement indoors, on a carpeted surface.



TEACHING APPROACHES:

- Keep on-snow sessions short!
- Avoid one-footed manoeuvres – instructors should assist student with both feet attached, using tools such as hula-hoops, tethers attached to the board, harnesses/vests, ski poles, etc.
- Focus on simple movements generated from the core.
- Turning effort may be generated inclination or bending at the waist.
- Constant monitoring of physical comfort is required (clothing, energy levels, etc.) Learning will stop if they become frustrated.
- Reward attention with fun rewards like building a snowman, etc.
- Use games with lots of imagination and no rules.
- Keep instructor – student ratio low (1:1 is ideal).
- Keep instructions to one simple direction.
- Stand beside the child when demonstrating, rather than in front.
- Allow plenty of experimentation with sliding and mobility and monitor the environment (slope, terrain, crowds) to ensure risk is minimized.
- Don't rush it! Spend plenty of time on flatter terrain, developing balance.

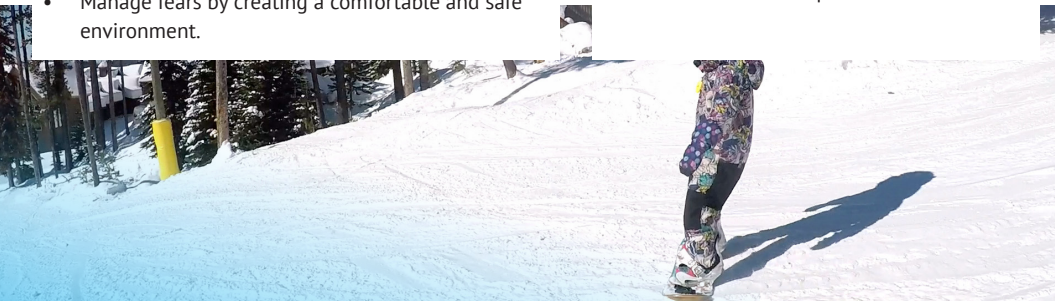
When teaching children this young, keep in mind that you will need to be creative to modify the technical info (QuickRide System, etc.) to create fun games, challenges and activities that provide students with new skills without them realizing it.

TEACHING TIPS: 5 – 7 YEARS OLD

Teaching Approaches:

- May still need rest periods.
- Allow for experimentation within the bounds of safety.
- Group kids according to size and coordination, not just age.
- Be prepared for various levels of coordination. I.E.: One-footed manoeuvres may be appropriate for some, but not others.
- Start to work to refine and vary some basic movements.
- Rules should be simple and clear.
- Manage fears by creating a comfortable and safe environment.

- Create fun and memorable experiences. Mix in what the kids want with what they need.
- Pair up in partners for some activities.
- Keep rules to a minimum and keep them simple. Keep games “win-win” – no losers.
- Allow for independent experimentation when safe.
- Keep instructions simple, and use repeated cue words often.
- Incorporate distractions into the lesson when possible (I.E.: staring into trees, etc.)
- Don’t forget to demo! Visuals are worth much more than explanations.



TEACHING TIPS: 8 - 11 YEARS OLD

Teaching Approaches:

- Less talk, more rock! These kids have almost unlimited energy.
- Give safe, but challenging goals.
- Challenge with basic freestyle tricks (ollies, flatland tricks, 180's) and more challenging terrain when appropriate.
- Feedback can focus on smaller joints.
- Incorporate some Guided Discovery into lesson presentations.
- Provide lots of feedback and promote group encouragement.
- Encourage participation for the enjoyment of an activity, as opposed to competition. If competitions are used, keep it friendly and focused on challenging or developing new skills.
- Set clear guidelines for behaviour, and stick to them. "What you permit, you promote".



TEACHING TIPS: 12 - 15 YEARS OLD

Teaching Approaches:

- Can now begin to ride with the same level of skill refinement as adults.
- Be considerate and show empathy and encouragement.
- Use a 'Whole-Part-Whole' approach: introduce the whole manoeuvre, work on a smaller part, and then put that part back into the whole.
- Students may be extra sensitive – be careful with criticism.
- Students will respond to clear expectations and opportunities to express independence.
- When possible, create same gender groups.
- Use analogies to aid understanding.



TOOL BOX

PRE-QUICKRIDE PROGRESSION: Age 4 Years Old & Under



1. Off-Snow Exploration (Equipment & Balance)

Indoors, on a carpeted surface, learn about equipment (putting boots on, using the bindings, parts of the board) and practice balancing with both feet attached on flat ground, and on a wobble board or unstable surface (like a foam pool noodle cut in half length-wise).



2. On-Snow Exploration (Balance, Sliding)

Using a tool like a retractable tether, vest/harness, hula-hoop, or ski pole, explore balance and body position while sliding. Start on flat terrain, and progress to slight inclines. Ensure that the terrain has a counter-slope to stop. If you have tools such as bindingless boards, boards with handles and sculpted Riglet Park terrain areas, use them to provide mileage in a stimulating environment.



3. Sliding / Straight Running and J-Turns

On a mellow slope, and with both feet attached to the bindings, experiment with rotational movements, and their effect on the snowboard. Start by directing the head / eyes in a new direction while sliding and allow the snowboard to pivot and turn – highlight the use of edges for speed control.

4. Mileage & Practice

Don't rush it! Take the time to practice the above skills and movements on new slopes, and allow the skills to develop gradually as students discover new movements. If available, take advantage of slope undulations, surface-level boxes or frictionless surfaces, small rollers, half- and quarter-pipes.

1. BASICS

- Handshakes, name game, nicknames
- Boot Game / Freeze Tag
- Yard Sale (find your equipment)
- Relay races (running / walking in boots)
- Obstacle Course (running / walking in boots and skating with board on)

2. SLIDING

- Experiment with movements while straight-running:
 - Tall / Small
 - Imitate an Animal
 - Freestyle Grabs (nose/ tail)
- Imagine riding a box or rail – draw shape in snow

3. CONTROL

- **Sideslipping:**
 - Gas Pedal (one-foot attached heelside edging)
 - Red Light / Green Light
 - Squish bugs under heels and toes
- **Pendulum:**
 - Markers / Targets
 - Obstacles (hoops, poles) to hop over and/or go around



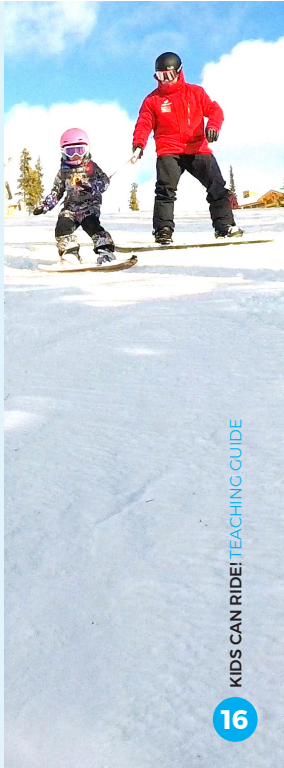


4. TURNING

- “Chicken Out” Turns (garland)
- Laser Guns (point with arms)
- Dance Exercise (instructor assistance)
- Magnet Hands (limited instructor assistance)
- Hula Hoops (around waist with hands on hoops)

5. FLOW

- Bend & Stretch (flexion / extension in traverse)
- Basketball Turns (extend at edge change, shoot, flex down)
- Turns with Elbows on Knees (low position, stability, turning with lower joints)
- Follow The Leader
- Experiment with turn shapes – open, closed, big, small



TEACHING INTERMEDIATE SKILLS

Once children can negotiate beginner terrain with ease, they will need guided mileage on their boards. Keep them busy! Use ollie contests, lines in the snow, beginner boxes and easy rollers to challenge and maintain interest. Children learn successfully through guided discovery: the instructor sets the parameters, and allows the children to experiment within the safe boundaries.

Groomed Terrain:

- Pencil Lines (carving)
- Synchro Riding (with a partner)
- Flatland Tricks (nose/tail press, rotations, etc.)
- Ollie Contest
- Hop Over Obstacle
- Follow The Leader / Cat & Mouse
- Putt-Putt – slowest speed race

Freeride / Un-Groomed Terrain:

- Water in the Goggles (quiet upper body in bumpy terrain)
- Turn around bumps
- Turn on top of bumps
- Bumps as Jumps – getting air
- Double-Up's
- Secret Run – explore safe tree/glade areas with partner
- Ride on banks and/or walls on the sides of runs
- SBX track

Freestyle Manoeuvres:

- Hop Turns – hop over the edge change
- Ollies & Nollies
- Penguin Walk - on flat terrain
- Basic boxes (surface level features only)
- Straight Airs
- Grabs
- Grab Turns
- Nose/tail presses and 'butters' on flat terrain

EQUIPMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILDREN

Kids equipment has evolved a lot recently, and now allows kids to start snowboarding earlier and more successfully.

Boots:

- Check student's boots to ensure they are tight enough, particularly in the heel so that heels aren't lifting on the toe edge.
- Boots that are too big will not allow for adequate control, and may be a safety risk if going on chairlifts (if feet can slip out).
- Ensure boots are snug, but not overly tight.



Bindings:

- Be aware of how to perform basic adjustments. Note – each resort may have specific policies regarding adjusting student's equipment.
- Look for bindings with simple closure systems that are easy for kids to use (in mitts!).
- Check stance width and angles. Kids need a slightly wider base of support. Suggested angles are +9/-9 for beginners, and slightly directional for intermediate and advanced (+15/-9).
- Check to ensure that boots / bindings are centred in the toe/heel direction on the board.





EQUIPMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHILDREN (CONT.)

Boards:

- Looks for boards that are sized appropriately for the child. Children's boards shouldn't be a smaller version of an adult board. Flex, width, and length should match the student's physical size and skill level.
- Newer riders may have more success with a shorter length, and progress to a longer board as skill increases.
- Boards that are too long and heavy will be cumbersome.
- Look for boards with top sheet traction (stomp pad or grippe texture), as well as an aggressive base bevel to minimize edge catches.
- Make sure to wax kid's boards! With their lower mass, gliding will be difficult if the board isn't tuned properly.

A logo celebrating 25 years, featuring the number '25' in a bold, sans-serif font. To the right of the '5' is a stylized graphic of a snowflake or a mountain peak with a jagged, lightning-like edge, rendered in white against the blue background.

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