

LEARN TO
SKATE
USA

POWERED BY



TOYOTA

Parent Handbook



Something happens the moment your child's skates touch the ice

It's beautiful. Surreal. Empowering. It's the experience where kids learn as much about skating as they learn about themselves.

Your child learns glides, swizzles, edges and crossovers.

Your child learns positivity, confidence and personal strength.

Lessons in skating become lessons in life.

Like learning anything new, there will be plenty of peaks and valleys your child experiences, and that's OK. It's more about the journey and the process along the way that will shape your children to one day become great people.

They will discover what interests them and be encouraged to cultivate their true passions.

You need to be there for your child. This handbook will provide the knowledge and resources you need.

It gives your child everything he or she needs to succeed in the first year and beyond.





WHAT IS Learn to Skate USA?

Learn to Skate USA powered by Toyota provides a fun and positive experience that will instill a lifelong love of skating. The curriculum offers something for everyone.

The only ice skating program endorsed by U.S. Figure Skating, USA Hockey and US Speedskating, Learn to Skate USA offers every participant a rewarding experience rooted in the lifelong benefits of ice skating. Whether you wish to enjoy the recreational benefits of skating or dream of Olympic fame, this is the place to start.

To make this program successful for your child, we ask parents and visitors with young skaters to follow a few rules:

- Please watch from the bleachers for your safety and the safety of the skaters. Any pictures or videos you wish to take should be done here, not rinkside.
- Skaters need to stay focused with their instructors, so it's important to be on time to avoid creating distractions. Have your child's skates tied 15 minutes before class begins. Then bring your child to the representative rinkside and we'll take care of the rest.

It is our goal to have your child graduate from the program, fall in love with the wonders of skating and continue on with this sport for their entire life. Thank you for enrolling in Learn to Skate USA!

**Now let's find the program
that's right for your child.**

Learn to Skate USA

The curriculum offers something for everyone, beginning with the first steps on the ice to the mastery of advanced techniques. This personalized approach allows skaters to progress at their own rate and advance after skill mastery is demonstrated. Learn to Skate USA provides built-in incentives and encouragement to keep skaters motivated while they gain confidence and achieve their goals. Upon completion of the program, skaters will be able to confidently advance to more specialized areas of skating.

To find more information about each curriculum, go to LearnToSkateUSA.com

FUNDAMENTALS



SNOWPLOW SAM 1-4

is designed for children 6 and younger to learn the joys of ice skating.



BASIC SKILLS 1-6

teaches the Fundamentals of ice skating and provides the best foundation for success. Six progressive levels introduce forward and backward skating, stops, edges, crossovers and turns.



HOCKEY 1-4 POWER SKATING

focuses on the fundamentals of skating skills, edges, turns, quickness and agility for players to be successful in practices and games.



ADULT 1-6 is for both beginning and experienced adult skaters who wish to start or improve their skating skills.



ADAPTIVE SKATING provides individuals with disabilities the opportunity to develop new skills and enhance their skating experience. Includes Special Olympics and Therapeutic.

ADVANCED PROGRAMS

SPEED SKATING 1-6

introduces skaters to the proper speed skating techniques, such as balance, weight transfer and ways to generate speed.



PRE FREE SKATE 1-6

is comprised of a variety of progressive skating skills, transitions, spins and jumps.



SYNCHRONIZED 1-4

is a team sport in which 8-20 skaters perform together. Skaters will learn exciting elements such as block, circle, line, wheel and intersection.



DANCE 1-6 emphasizes rhythm, interpretation of the music and precise steps.



PAIRS 1-4 is designed to introduce skaters to the foundational principles of unison, in shadow or mirror, using basic free skating skills.



THEATRE ON ICE 1-4 combines the grace of figure skating with the excitement of theater and dance.



ARTISTRY IN MOTION 1-4

introduces skaters to the basic principles and philosophy of choreography, presentation and performance.



Your child's first day of skating



We're going to let you in on a little secret. The first time your child skates, he or she will fall. All skaters fall. Olympic medalists have fallen hundreds — even thousands — of times. The best part? Your child will get right back up.

Anything's possible when your child skates for the first time. So prepare yourself and your child for the expected and unexpected. You'll know how to plan ahead. You'll relax more. And you'll have more fun knowing you're both comfortable and safe.

BE ON TIME

Arrive 20 minutes before class kicks off to check in at the registration desk and lace up your child's skates.

BRING LOTS OF LAYERS

Comfort and moving freely are essential for new skaters. Choose sweatpants or warm-up pants instead of bulkier snow pants. Bring a jacket, too, since indoor rinks set thermostats at a brisk 50 degrees.

CHOOSE THIN SOCKS

Bulky, thick socks limit support and create unwanted bumps inside the boots. Go with lightweight socks or tights.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

PROTECT THEIR HEADS

Wearing helmets is strongly recommended for all beginning skaters. Your neighborhood pro shop will give you advice as to where you can find certified helmets that provide a proper fit.

DO:

Make sure the helmet fits comfortably and snug.

Keep helmet level to protect forehead.

Keep the helmet level and immobile. Avoid tilting back or pulling low.

Secure chinstrap buckle. Check the adjustment often for protection, in case of a fall or collision.

Replace the helmet immediately if signs of damage are visible.

Clean the helmet with mild soap and water only.

Store the helmet in a cool, dry place.

Have the helmet wearer present during purchase to test and ensure a good fit.

Find recommended helmets through these classifications:
ASTM F1447; Snell B-90A, B-95, N-94.



DON'T:

Wear anything under the helmet.

Attach anything to the helmet.

Wear a helmet that does not fit or cannot be adjusted properly.

Leave a helmet in direct sunlight or in a car on a sunny day.

KEEP THEIR HANDS WARM

Since kids are taught to fall on day one, gloves or mittens are imperative to prevent hands from getting all scraped up. If you forgot to bring a pair, sift through the rink's lost and found box to find some your child can borrow during class.

FITTING SKATES

Rule of thumb: The closer the fit, the more control. Find comfortable skates that keep feet snug and immobile yet give toes plenty of wiggle room. Solid support is needed because staying upright takes a lot of strength.

LACING SKATES

Tap the heel way back into the boot. Gently pull the tongue up and secure it straight up and down before tucking it against the foot. Pull the second or third sets of laces from the bottom tightly to close the boot well over the front of the foot. Laces should be snug through the ankle area and bottom two sets of hooks.

The top two hooks can be looser to keep the ankle flexible. Cross the two extra laces over hooks neatly. Don't wind



them around the skates because loose, flying bows often cause accidents. Properly laced boots should provide enough room to stick a finger between the back of the boot and the leg.

RENT SKATES FIRST, BUY LATER

Find a good fit through a pro shop that knows the ins and outs of ice skating. If you're looking to save money with used skates, check the boot's support level and blade's sharpening life.

TAKE CARE OF SKATES AND BLADES

Never walk on hard surfaces or concrete with uncovered blades. Wear hard guards to protect them. Dry blades with a towel after every use to avoid rusting.



The lifelong rewards of ice skating

Everything skaters learn on the ice soon becomes invaluable off of it.

For every child who chooses to pursue ice skating, good news: He or she will excel in ways that will carry them far in life.

Keep things in perspective

POSITIVE PARENTING GETS THE GOLD

If your kids enjoy skating, they will continue skating. Part of this enjoyment comes from your positive approach toward the sport.

- Walk the fine line between encouraging and pushing too hard. Personal growth, effort, participation and pursuing goals are the true victories.
- Teach your child about commitment, self-improvement and how to deal with success and failure in a healthy way.

- Acknowledge all improvements, no matter how small.
- Listen more. Smile more. Your child will notice.
- Volunteer. Take an active role in your child's skating experiences.
- Always, always, always tell your kids how proud you are of them. Always, always, always support them.

SUCCESSFUL SKATERS GAIN AND SHARE THESE TRAITS:

- Persistence
- Perspective
- Self-confidence
- Passion
- Courage
- Concentration
- Self-worth
- Determination

DO:

Focus on effort, participation, fun and skill-building.

Practice good sportsmanship.

Teach your child to be gracious in defeat.

Support your child and other skaters with interest and enthusiasm.

Keep your emotions in check.

DON'T:

Be the coach. Just be the best parent you can be.

Compare your child to other skaters or teams.

Focus on winning.

Make negative comments to skaters, parents, officials or coaches.

Children who skate will:

- Appreciate active, healthy lifestyles.
- Develop physical skills such as endurance, stronger muscles, better coordination and flexibility.
- Develop self-esteem, self-confidence, self-discipline and self-reliance by mastering and performing skating skills.
- Learn how to manage stress, perform under pressure and test emotional and physical balance.
- Develop positive, supportive and sustained relationships with adults.
- Contribute to others through their volunteer involvements.
- Develop social skills with other children and adults.
- Learn respect for others.

LESSON ONE: Learn to love lessons



Accomplishing comes from trying. Group lessons are not about who's the best of the bunch. It's about all of the kids working as a team, pushing each other to succeed. Your child can do a few simple things to make the most out of group lessons.

BE ATTENTIVE AND BE SMART

It's just like school. Encourage your child to pay attention to the instructor and your child will go far in life.

TRY THE SKILL AGAIN AND AGAIN

Nobody expects your child to nail a drill on the first try. Your child shouldn't either. It's falling in love with the journey, not the destination, that makes mastering a skill truly enjoyable.

RECOGNIZE CLASS AND SESSION EXPECTATIONS

Parents can observe classes of all levels, skills and ages from the stands or designated areas. You should avoid standing in doorways or near the players' benches.

For beginning skaters, the first skill taught is marching across the ice. Some skaters push and glide with ease. Others will play the cautious card by taking small steps. They will learn to fall and stand up again. Instructors will spend several minutes on day one perfecting this skill.

After the first class, all beginning skaters should feel confident enough to demonstrate the ability to skate reasonably well without help. They should get up from falling, attempt to stop while moving slowly and navigate a public session well.

Repeating a class is not unusual. All skating skills need to ladder up to advance skaters to the next level, so mastering them first is necessary. Some skills come quickly. Some take more time and practice.

At season's end, instructors may provide written feedback on the skater's progress, which can include accomplishments, opportunities to improve and recommendations for the skater's next class.

MAKING UP A MISSED CLASS

Ask the Skating Director about policies regarding a missed lesson. Many group programs offer a makeup session if a similar class is offered on a day shortly after the missed class. Special exceptions may be allowed.

SET UP SUPPLEMENTAL PRIVATE OR SEMI-PRIVATE LESSONS

For those seeking more attention, consider hiring a coach for a private or semi-private lesson. A booster lesson like this can help a struggling skater achieve a specific skill. Inquire about private lessons with the Skating Director.

SCHEDULE EXTRA PRACTICE TIME

Practicing paves the road to improving. After each lesson, skaters should practice the skills taught at least once.

Use public skating sessions or ask if club-sponsored or skating sessions are open. Obtain a list of things to practice from the instructor or bring a record book to write down what needs improvement.

What comes next?

FIGURE SKATING

Bridge programs are the next step for skaters that want to pursue figure skating. Bridge programs offer advanced training in a group setting at an economical price. Bridge programs guide skaters from Learn to Skate USA classes into a U.S Figure Skating club. Once a skater is ready to take official U.S Figure Skating tests or compete beyond the Learn to Skate USA level, joining a club becomes necessary. Most figure skating clubs sponsor monthly or weekly ice sessions and test sessions with judges for skaters to advance. They also host ice shows, exhibitions, fundraising activities, social events, awards banquets and competitions. Some areas have more than one club so get information from all of them and shop around. Every club offers different membership packages and benefits. Skaters may also join U.S Figure Skating as individual members. Check with the skating director or the rink's bulletin board for more information about Bridge Programs offered and joining a local club.

Hockey-sponsored association or facility. The fun, positive atmosphere in the beginning group classes will help prepare skaters for a successful transition to a hockey program after learning the essential basics of skating. A Learn to Play program focuses on skating skills, but also teaches the basic skills of stickhandling, shooting and passing. Remember, they must learn to skate before they can learn to score. USA Hockey offers Try Hockey for Free days twice a year across the country for those who want to learn more.

For more information about USA Hockey, please go to usahockey.com or email comeplayyouthhockey@usahockey.org.

HOCKEY

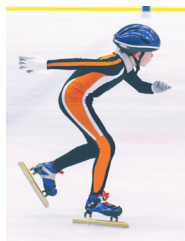
For skaters interested in hockey the next step after Learn to Skate USA classes is to move into Intro to Hockey, Learn to Play or similar programs offered by the local USA



SPEED SKATING

Ask the Skating Director or look on the rink's bulletin boards for information about your local club.

You can also check US Speedskating's website, usspeedskating.org, to find a list of clubs. Get in touch with a club coach or director and ask about rental speedskates to get started. If no speedskates are available, you may want to invest in a beginner pair. After learning how to skate, a skater can join the speedskating club and begin to learn how to go fast! Most clubs hold



weekly practice sessions with a certified speedskating coach and will play host to fun social events, camps and races.

Once a skater has mastered the basics of speedskating, they can start racing. Look on US Speedskating's website for a list of races near you. Every race has events for every age and skill level. Racing is the best way to learn the ins and outs of speedskating while challenging you to improve. As skaters progress and their training becomes more focused, they may want to work

toward competing at the national level in junior and senior races. Most skaters follow training programs that have been designed by their coaches and attend training camps throughout the country. As your level gets higher, so does your commitment level. It takes many hours of practice and hard work for skaters to reach their full potential. Whether you just want to skate for recreation or have a goal of competing in the Olympics, speedskating is a great way to have fun, stay fit and make lifelong memories.

PRIVATE COACH: Should you hire one?

There's no rush to hire a private coach. Learn to Skate USA teaches each skater the foundational skills necessary to grow and eventually accomplish more difficult and specialized skills. Each new level builds on the skills learned from the previous level. Many parents consider a private coach to push their children along faster or to play catch-up. But the best reason to hire an instructor is to help perfect skills.

Make sure you match complementary personalities to help build a solid foundation for your child. Despite their great accomplishments, championship-level skaters are not always the best choice for basic skills coaches.

Rinks and skating clubs usually have policies for distributing information regarding professionals or assigning students to them. Skating directors or head professionals take ownership in asking you questions and guiding you in undertaking the proper procedures.

All Learn to Skate USA coaches undergo meticulous background screenings to ensure a safe environment. In order to give kids the very best, all coaches complete mandatory training and testing before becoming certified instructors.

WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT TO HIRE A COACH, ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:



- Will the coach be a good role model?
- Will the coach instill healthy character traits?
- Will the coach treat my child politely and with enthusiasm?
- Does the coach possess and demonstrate ethical standards?
- Does the coach understand and adhere to safety considerations at all times?
- Does the coach have a plan to teach appropriate technical skills?
- How can I best contact the coach?
- What is the coach's educational background?
- What is the coach's instructional background, experience level and the achievements of his or her students?

Encourage your child when they do not pass a level

It happens to many skaters. Sometimes, skaters hit roadblocks along their journey. For some, certain levels simply require more time to master.

But you can't simply skip a level. Not mastering prior skills will set up future frustrations on the path to learning more challenging skills.

Learn to Skate USA progresses skating skills step-by-step. Every skating move has a prescribed passing standard and children should know what is fully expected before evaluation time. (Example: A one-foot glide needs to be held three times a skater's height in a balanced position to pass the level.)

After every class, instructors should give positive feedback about achievements along with constructive feedback for opportunities to improve in other areas. Ask the instructor questions if the passing standards seem unclear to you.

CHILDREN GO THROUGH THREE PHASES WHEN LEARNING NEW SKILLS:

- **Introductory:** Skill is new to the skater.
- **Developmental:** Skater's skill is improving and getting stronger.
- **Mastery:** Skater can perform the skill eight out of 10 times. Ideally, this is when the skater should move up to the next level.

Progress reports are written and handed out mid-session. Don't view these as scary or nerve-wracking. See these as the chance for your child to show off newly acquired skating skills gained during class. If your child is unprepared



for an evaluation, postpone it for a short time until he or she is confident to receive full feedback.

Anything that needs improvement on your child's skating report card should be treated as a positive experience. Set goals for what needs to be accomplished. Then schedule an evaluation for when your child is ready. Make sure your child is proud of his or her efforts. Victory is so much sweeter once they know they've worked hard to achieve it.

Prior to evaluation, your child can enhance his or her skills by attending public skating sessions or open practice times. Practicing skills off ice or asking an instructor for a 15-minute private lesson can also help.

Why should your kids have all the fun?

Ice skating is not just for your kids. It's for the kid in all of us.

Ice skating gives adults the freedom, strength and confidence to push themselves mentally and physically. Plus, it's a wonderful way to share lifelong memories with your kids.

Learn to Skate USA gives newcomers the basic skills to engage the ice. Skaters absent from the ice for years or decades

get the refresher courses needed to rekindle their love affair with the ice. Through our programs, participants learn and appreciate the basic elements (forward, backward, turns and stops) before advancing to more challenging skating moves.

Explore programs specifically designed for adults at LearnToSkateUSA.com

ADULT SKATERS EXPERIENCE THESE HEALTH BENEFITS:

- A stronger, more firm body.
- Improved joint flexibility and balance.
- Better endurance for all types of physical activity.
- Weight loss (skating can burn up to 650 calories per hour).
- Stress relief to help enhance mental well-being.



Keep your child connected with LearnToSkateUSA.com



If you're looking for even more opportunities for the young skater in your life, LearnToSkateUSA.com is the place to go.

- Discover the full variety of skating offered through Learn to Skate USA programs. Find the one that's right for you.
- See all the advantages of becoming a member of Learn to Skate USA.
- Find rinks closest to you.
- Learn about and participate in events in your area.
- Connect with other skaters through our Facebook and Twitter pages.

Additional resources for your skating journey

Your skating director and instructor are the best sources to answer questions. But where do you go when they are unavailable?

- LearnToSkateUSA.com: Go online to explore a variety of skating programs to find the one that's just right for your child.
- Skate Coach App: Hundreds of videos will show you how a particular skill should look and be performed.



SAFE SKATING

Ice skating can be enjoyed in many ways. Regardless of how you decide to enjoy ice skating, always show courtesy toward others. You must also be aware of the elements of risk in skating. This risk can be reduced through a fair amount of common sense and personal awareness while skaters are on the ice.

OBSERVE THESE SIMPLE RULES FOR AN ENJOYABLE AND SAFE SKATING EXPERIENCE:

1. Skaters are required to observe all ice rules, demonstrate courteous behaviors and be considerate of other skaters/coaches at all times.
2. Safe skating will be thoroughly enforced at all times.
3. Entry onto the ice must be made through specified access points.
4. Always skate in control and at a comfortable speed; be able to stop or avoid other skaters at all times.
5. As a safety precaution, skaters are asked not to chew gum on the ice.
6. General housekeeping rules: Water bottles are acceptable at most ice arenas. Please know the rink's policy before taking any beverages onto the ice.
7. Always throw your trash away in designated recepticals.
8. All beginning skaters should wear ice-approved helmets. For more information on helmets, visit LearnToSkateUSA.com.
9. After a fall, the skater should get up as quickly as possible to avoid injury to or from passing skaters.
10. Look out for other skaters and always be alert.
11. Skaters should leave the ice in order to make adjustments to skates and/or equipment.
12. Make sure the ice resurfacer doors are closed while you are on the ice.
13. Once resurfacer doors open, please leave the ice immediately.
14. Skate safe and most importantly, HAVE FUN!



Nutrition

Nutrition is key for developing skating skills and increasing strength both on and off the ice. Fueling well before and after all skating sessions is important to help you recover stronger, make and maintain lean body mass, improve performance, optimize energy levels, and can even help prevent sickness.

The window of opportunity for optimal recovery nutrition is to eat a snack or meal within the first 30 minutes after exercising, so packing a snack can help support your perfect recovery nutrition plan!

SKATERS 6 YEARS AND UNDER:

Small, well-balanced snacks are a perfect fit. Go for apples with peanut butter, yogurt, whole grain cereal and cheese sticks.

SKATERS 7-12 YEARS OLD:

Moderate amounts of carbohydrates and protein are needed to match the growing child's needs. Try an 8oz chocolate milk, cheese sticks, mandarin oranges or apples.

SKATERS 13-18 YEARS OLD:

Moderate to high amounts of carbohydrates and protein are needed to match the teenager's muscular developmental needs. Pack a 16oz chocolate milk, half a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, a protein bar or some Greek yogurt.

ADULT SKATERS:

Larger recovery snacks should be consumed when skating sessions are

longer or more difficult, otherwise a small-to-moderate sized snack can match an adult's needs. Pack yourself half a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, a protein bar or some Greek yogurt.

Your body continues to recover long after you finish skating, adapting to training, growth and other daily stressors all day long. Make sure to give your body the nutrients it needs by supplying well-balanced meals to be healthy and perform your best. Fill your plate with nutrient-dense foods such as whole grains, high-quality lean proteins and brightly colored fruits and vegetables.

**DRINK
MORE
WATER.**

Studies show that people suffer a five percent decrease in cognitive function for every one percent of dehydration.



SMALL RECOVERY SNACK

≤ 30 min.
AFTER SKATING

1-2 hours
BEFORE MEAL

MAIN MEAL AFTER SKATING**SLEEP**

Make sleep a priority. Optimal health, recovery, growth and performance all require good sleep habits. Recent studies show that the perfect amount of sleep is different for everyone, but may fall within this range:

Ages 3-6 years:

Aim for 10-12 hours per night for optimal health.

Ages 7-12 years:

Aim for 10-11 hours per night.

Ages 12-18 years:

Aim for 8-9 hours per night.

Adults:

Aim for 7-9 hours per night.

NATIONAL DYNAMIC WARM-UP

Warming up before you skate improves performance and decreases the risk of injury. A dynamic warm-up takes the body through a series of movement skills that will warm-up the joints and muscles necessary to complete on-ice skills. We invite you to warm-up the body, then lace up the skates!

1. Jogging: 1 minute
2. Neck rolls: 8 each direction (start looking down at the chin and then roll the neck clockwise/counterclockwise)
3. Ankle rotations: 8 each direction (balance on one foot, then roll the free-ankle in clockwise/counterclockwise circles)
4. Trunk twists: 8 each side (stand with the feet hip width apart, twisting at the waist, twist the torso side-to-side)
5. Knee hugs: Alternate to complete 4 on each leg (step forward and pull one knee into the chest while balancing and extending through the standing leg, hold 2-3 seconds)
6. Quad pulls: Alternate to complete 4 on each leg (step forward and grab the foot of the free leg, pulling the heel toward the buttocks. Push the hips forward for a deeper stretch, hold 2-3 seconds)
7. Glute pulls: Alternate to complete 4 on each leg (step forward and grab the free foot pulling the heel up toward the belly button to stretch the outside of the hip. Hold 2-3 seconds)
8. Walking lunges: Alternate to complete 4 on each leg (take a big step forward, bending the knee to a 90-degree angle, hold 2-3 seconds and alternate feet)
9. Straight leg kicks: 8 repetitions (step forward and kick one leg in front, reaching for the toe with the opposite hand)
10. High knee run: Complete the distance of 10 yards (running quickly, pull the knees up high toward the chest)
11. Butt kickers: Complete the distance of 10 yards (running quickly, kick the heels back toward the buttocks)
12. Grapevine: Complete the distance of 10 yards (in a sideways direction, cross the right foot over the left, next bring the left foot from behind to the side, and then cross behind with the right foot and cross over again with left. Repeat both directions)
13. Toe and heel raise: 10 repetitions (standing with the feet hip width apart, put all the weight in the heels of the foot, raising the toes off the ground. Next rock up to the toes and lift the heels. Repeat, holding each position 1-2 seconds)
14. Skips: Complete the distance of 10 yards (step forward and hop, alternating feet)
15. Jumping jacks: 10 repetitions (start with feet together and arms by the side. Jump both feet out while extending the arms over head. Bring feet back together while returning arms back to the sides of the body)

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U S SPEEDSKATING

Contact us

For questions or more information about the Learn to Skate USA program, contact the Member Services Department:

877-LTS-1400 (877-587-1400)

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