



Frequently Asked Questions

Rideau Skating Club's CanSkate/Pre-CanSkate Programs

I would like to register my child for skating lessons, how does your CanSkate program work?

The Rideau Skating Club has over 300 CanSkaters and Pre-CanSkaters register each season. We operate out of two arenas (Manotick arena and Fred Barrett arena) and offer six different CanSkate sessions per week from September to March/April.

Pre-CanSkate – This 30 or 50 minute class is designed for children 3 and 4 years of age who have little or no skating experience. Skaters are taught how to fall down and get up, skate forwards, make snow, walk backwards, etc. Skaters move on to the Stage 1 CanSkate skills once they have passed the Pre-CanSkate level.

CanSkate – This 50 minute class is designed for children 5 and older (experienced 4 year olds may register). New members do not need to have had any experience on the ice. Skaters are taught the fundamental movements of Agility, Balance and Control in a series of six 'Stages'. Each stage progresses from one to the next. Skaters receive a ribbon for each fundamental movement at every stage and a badge once all 3 fundamental ribbons are earned for a given stage. Once a skater has completed the stage 6 badge, they are proficient in all fundamental skating skills!

My child is four and has never skated before. How do I know if I should sign up for the Pre-CanSkate 30 minute class or the Pre-CanSkate 50 minute class?

The biggest question you need to ask yourself is whether your child would suit a 30 minute or 50 minute class. The skills taught on both sessions are the same, the lesson time and group activities of the CanSkate class are longer. If your child is active and has been exposed to different group classes, they will probably do well in the CanSkate session. It is also a simple change if you or your child's coach feels they would be better suited to another session once the program has started if space is available.

There seems to be different levels all on one session, how do you divide the groups?

Skaters are placed in groups according to skating ability and age. A portion of each class is the group lesson. The ice is divided up into groups and there may be as many as six different groups during one session. It usually takes a few weeks to assess all of the groups and move skaters according to their ability, so please be patient, and we will check every child to make sure they are in the right group.

Do I go on the ice with my child?

No. Parents are asked to watch their child from the stands. This allows our coaches to have the complete attention of the skaters. Our Skate Canada Certified Professional coaches have many years of experience coaching young skaters and are well equipped to take care of your child during their skating session.

Can I leave the rink during the CanSkate session?

Parents are asked to remain in the arena during their child's session. Coaches will not be able to leave the ice surface if your child needs to use the washroom, hurts themselves, etc. A parent must also be present in case of an emergency such as a power failure in the building.

How does my child move up to another Stage?

Coaches evaluate their skater's skills on a continuous basis. Skaters in Pre-CanSkate will receive a ribbon once they have completed all of the skills in this level. Our CanSkate members will receive ribbons for each of the fundamental movements of Agility, Balance and Control at each of the six stages. Once they have received the three fundamental movement ribbons on a stage, they will receive their stage badge. Sometimes this may mean changing groups, but they could also remain in the same group if the other skaters are progressing at the same rate.

How do I know how my child is progressing?

At the end of each session (Fall/Winter), you will receive a report card with a record of their accomplishments. If your child is absent on the last class, you may pick up their report card the next time you are at the rink or it can be mailed to you. Skaters start right where they left off at the beginning of the next season.

Do you provide French instruction?

We do our very best to provide French instruction upon request, but skating ability will always be our first priority. **This means we cannot guarantee French instruction.** Each session has French speaking coaches available plus our volunteer Program Assistants who help out our English speaking coaches. Please let us know at registration time if you would like a French speaking coach and we will do our best to provide one.

Does my child need a helmet?

YES!!! All Skate Canada member clubs and skating schools who offer a CanSkate program must ensure **ALL CANSKATE** and **ADULT CANSKATE** participants up to and including Stage 5 must wear a **CSA APPROVED HOCKEY HELMET WHILE ON THE ICE.** For younger skaters, a face cage is highly recommended.

What kind of skates should I buy & where do I get them sharpened?

Skates are the most important tool a skater has on the ice. Skate Canada working in conjunction with national partner Canadian Tire have developed a program to help make your child's CanSkate on ice experience both positive and fun. You can find skates, CSA approved helmets, skate guards and Skate Canada skate bags to outfit your child for their first day of skating lessons.

Another place to find all of your skating needs is the skate shop '**b-sharp Ottawa**'. B-sharp Ottawa offers a "**First Time Skater's Package**". Check it out on their Facebook page.

Figure 8/Hockey One is another place to purchase skates and skating accessories.

Here are some things to take in to consideration when purchasing skates and CanSkate supplies for your child:

- Skates should fit snugly and provide support to the ankles. We recommend lace up skates - recreational, hockey or figure. We **do not** recommend any of the moulded/plastic skates.
- **All skaters working on Stages 1 - 5 must wear a CSA approved hockey helmet for their CanSkate lessons.** Bike and ski helmets will not be acceptable. Canadian Tire offers a complete line of CSA approved hockey helmets for purchase.
- Other items to consider include a skate bag and skate guards.

Providing your child with appropriate skating equipment will help them improve their skating skills more quickly and will make their on-ice experience more enjoyable.

For skate sharpening, we recommend '**b-sharp Ottawa**' on Chartwell Ave and '**Figure 8/Hockey One**' on Industrial Ave. These shops will provide you with a good recreational sharpening.

What can we expect at skating lessons?

Skating lessons are a fun and exciting challenge for young children. We create a challenging, fun environment for skaters of all ages to reach their skating goals and improve their skills. Our Skate Canada Certified Professional Coaches are fun and enthusiastic individuals who are committed to providing quality skating programs for our members. But parents please remember that ice is slippery and hard, not all children feel comfortable on the ice right away. Our coaches are well-trained in alleviating skater's fears, just be patient and your child will soon be gliding across the ice with a smile on their face!

What kind of special events can my child expect in the CanSkate program?

Our skaters will enjoy themed days such as rodeo day and super hero day. At the end of the Fall session there is a Family Skate with Santa for each Pre-CanSkate/CanSkate class. At the end of the Winter session, there is a fun-filled Beach Day for all Pre-CanSkate/CanSkate classes.

What should my child wear to skating lessons?

Wear clothing that is comfortable, warm, and light and allows your child to move freely. Make sure to layer clothes so your child can remove or add a piece of clothing to suit changing temperatures and exertion levels. Heavy snow suits hinder skater's ability to move or get back up after falling, which can cause frustration. The coaches will be using **markers on the ice** when drawing out the skater's circuits. Coaches try to use washable markers but it cannot be guaranteed that the marker will come out of light coloured fabrics in the wash.

How do I register my child for skating lessons?

Registration is on-line at www.rideauskating.ca. Please click on the Registration tab to get to the on-line registration link.

My son/daughter plays hockey but needs help with his/her skating skills.

Should I register for CanSkate?

Yes! CanSkate is a program developed by Skate Canada to teach the fundamentals of skating. The skills learned in CanSkate can help skaters interested in pursuing hockey, speed skating, ringette and figure skating.

My child wants to learn to figure skate. Does he/she have to register for CanSkate first?

Yes. Skaters must learn the fundamentals of skating before they can start figure skating. Every child must start in CanSkate and progress through the stages to prepare them for figure skating lessons.

Can I register my child for more than one session?

Of course! The more time a skater spends on the ice, the more chance for progression! Skaters benefit from working together in a group environment. We do not offer private instruction to skaters at the CanSkate level.

Does every child have to pay the Skate Canada Membership Fee or is it one fee per family?

The \$36.00 Skate Canada annual membership fee must be paid for every skater registered with the Rideau Skating Club. This fee provides insurance for each member providing our club and skaters a safe environment in which we can enjoy skating.

Will the sessions fill up quickly?

Yes! Our CanSkate program is very popular and most classes offered will reach the maximum number of skaters before the starting date. We do start a waiting list when a session fills, but it is best to register early to guarantee a spot!

Are there credits/refunds for missed sessions due to sickness or vacation?

Credits or refunds are issued when a medical certificate can be provided by the parent. Due to the size of our program, we are not able to provide make-up classes for sessions missed due to illness or vacation. Known cancellations (due to hockey tournaments, statutory holidays etc.) are built into the schedule and fee structure.

What if my child tries a few lessons but doesn't like it, can I get my money back?

Our skating staff is trained to assist new skaters in gaining confidence and becoming comfortable on the ice. Each skater progresses at their own rate. However, if you find your child is struggling or not enjoying their class, please speak to any of our professional coaches or board members so we can work together to improve your skater's experience.

Does CanSkate run all year long, including the summer?

The Rideau Skating Club offers CanSkate from September to March/April.

More Questions?

If you have more questions, please email our CanSkate Coordinator, Margo Guerette, or our CanSkate Registrar, Helen Weeks at rideauscregistrar@gmail.com.