

# Parents & Coaches MANUAL



Canadian Heritage Patrimoine canadien

Sport Canada



ALPINE CANADA ALPIN

Canadian Alpine Ski Team  
Équipe Canadienne de Ski Alpin  
Canadian Disabled Alpine Ski Team  
Équipe Canadienne Alpin Four Les Gilets Handicapés

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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As part of Alpine Canada Alpin's goal of national development alignment, Snow Stars was created in partnership with the provincial ski associations and the Canadian Ski Coaches' Federation (CSCF) as a tool to strengthen the grassroots programs in Canada. Snow Stars is a component of the Alpine Integration Model (AIM) – a long-term development plan for Canadian ski racing that was developed and distributed in 1999.

In partnership with Alpine Canada Alpin, the Canadian Ski Coaches' Federation trains and certifies coaches for entry-level programs according to the principles and guidelines in AIM. Entry-level coaches are introduced to Snow Stars during their formal coach education training.

Alpine Canada Alpin would like to acknowledge Sport Canada/Canadian Heritage's support of this program.



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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Snow Stars, Alpine Canada Alpin's skill development program for young skiers. This seven-step program will guide child, parent, and coach through the appropriate skill progression.

The goal of Snow Stars is to encourage the development of skiers and ski racers of all ability levels in a fun and rewarding environment.

Enthusiastic and well-prepared coaches and participants play an integral role in the success of the program. This manual is a tool that provides the necessary information for parents, participants, and coaches to prepare for their involvement with Snow Stars.

## THE SNOW STARS PACKAGE

- **Manual**  
This manual gives parents and coaches all of the information pertaining to the Snow Stars program – from technical material, goals, objectives, to assessment processes and available resources
- **My Husky Snow Stars Achievements**  
Created as the primary communication tool from coach to parent/child, this booklet highlights the progression of skills
- **Stickers**  
These are recognition items for the children upon the completion of each of the Snow Stars levels
- **Snow Star poster**  
Created as a recruiting and marketing tool for clubs to showcase the Snow Stars program
- **Program certificate**  
This allows the children to track their achievements in the Snow Stars program
- **Video**  
Created as a visual aid and display of Snow Stars skill progression
- **Supplier Guide**  
This new information piece has been produced to assist parent's with sourcing official suppliers of the Canadian Alpine Ski Team. Enabling them to make educated decisions for their children's equipment needs for the 2003/2004 ski season.

## HOW DOES SNOW STARS WORK?

The Snow Stars program contains seven (7) steps that outline key skills required for children to progress from the beginner to the athletic skier, and eventually to learn the basic tactical skills needed to be a ski racer. These skills match the entry-level progression model – according to the "FUNdamentals" and "Train to Train" phases outlined in AIM – and are considered to be the building blocks for ski racers.

The system assesses children on a scale of "Bronze" (sometimes – less than 50 per cent of the time), "Silver" (often – more than 60 per cent of the time), and "Gold" (always – more than 80 per cent of the time). While each club will determine the frequency of evaluation based on the number of days their programs operate, it is generally recommended that coaches evaluate the skiers at the beginning, middle, and end of the club program. The final evaluation will be recorded in the participant's "My Husky Snow Stars Achievements" booklet.

## STRUCTURE

A certified ski coach will be partnered with Snow Stars participants for the ski season. The coach will teach skills through active, guided play and will support "show" and "do" activities. Children will be given the time to "perceive" the skill, then more time to "pattern" the task.

## OBJECTIVES

The coach will spend time developing the child's knowledge of on-snow skills. This will include the technical and tactical areas of skiing:

### Technical = competency in ski-specific motor skills

These areas include:

- Stance and balance
- Timing and coordination
- Steering and edging
- Pressure and carving

### Tactical = strategies for ski performance

These areas include:

- Turn shape (size of turn)
- Type of turn (conducive to speed on specific terrain/snow conditions)
- Speed (event-specific, maximizing speed on specific terrain)

## BENEFITS OF THE SNOW STARS PROGRAM

Skiing is a life-long sport that is practiced by people of every age, shape, size, ethnicity, and level of ability. But skiing skills are not the only benefits of this ski program. In addition, the children will learn about:

- Ski safety
- Independence
- Self-confidence
- Group/peer learning
- Cooperation
- Listening skills
- Goal-setting
- Task-focused activities

## PARENT'S ROLE

As with all of your child's endeavours, you are the key source of support and encouragement for your young Snow Star. From the moment of registration to their final graduation from the program, you can follow along with your child's achievements through the "My Husky Snow Stars Achievements" booklet which will be the main communication tool from your child's coach.

It is equally important for Snow Stars participants to be properly equipped before beginning the program. Please refer to the supplier guide for suggestions on equipment needs, sizing, and selection.

## COACH'S ROLE

Enthusiastic and well-prepared coaches play an integral role in the delivery of this program by combining coaching creativity with the Snow Stars resources. Your job is to develop the children's knowledge of on-snow skills – both technically and tactically.

Effective coaches will create a safe learning environment and allow the children to learn through task teaching and/or guided discovery.

SAY IT = auditory learners

SHOW IT = visual learners

DO IT = kinesthetic learners

Coaches must employ a variety of coaching methods in order to accommodate the various learning styles of the children. The coach facilitates the class to make movements easy to acquire, then acts as an observer who provides timely and relevant feedback. The coaches' instructions must match each child's style of learning in order for skill acquisition to take place.

Begin by reviewing the Snow Stars benchmarks with your club and peer coaches. Once this has been accomplished, we suggest you conduct a skill assessment of your children early in the season using the benchmarks as an on-snow guide. The assessment will provide you with the level of where your group is within the Snow Stars program.

Use the program to help you plan your season and to identify your goals (some of the skills you want to achieve) for the year. Without a plan, it will be difficult for you to know where you want to be at the end of the season, and whether you have met or surpassed your goals.

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT

**F**ree Skiing as many miles (vertical feet) as possible is the most simple and effective method to encourage skill development at the entry level. This section presents important aspects of how skills are developed, and provides practical guidelines that can be utilized in introducing "FUNdamental" skiing skills.

Skill development success is ENSURED by:

- Utilizing flat terrain for skill acquisition
- Utilizing a variety of terrain and snow conditions to build confidence and challenge the children
- Employing a variety of turning radius
- Employing a variety of coaching intervention methods based on learning styles
- Utilizing mental skill training techniques (breathing, goal-setting, focus, activation control, visualization)

Skill development is MAXIMIZED through:

- Knowledge of the eight (8) motor skills
- Knowledge of the planes of balance and movement
- Knowledge of the tactical approach to skill development
- A planned training program with specific goals and objectives
- Awareness of the children's abilities at the current level they are working on
- Terrain selection to enhance skill acquisition
- Terrain selection to challenge the skier (diversity and versatility)
- Drill selection (drill/skill matching)
- Supervised and unsupervised free skiing
- Drills and games in free skiing
- Obstacle courses and terrain gardens
- Giant slalom gate training
- Slalom drills

## GATES COME WITH TIME

**S**equencing training to go from free skiing into games, exercises and drills – with bamboo, foamies/stubbies, and eventually gates – requires planning and patience. Before children are introduced to a gate training environment, the coach must observe them "perceiving" and "patterning" (and in some cases "adapting") line and turn shape in free skiing.

Once the children are ready for gates, the coach must provide a practice time that promotes a high success rate in order for the youngsters to perceive and pattern the specialized movements required for gates. In addition, the coach must plan and monitor the safety of the children in the environment. The coach who plans all of these elements into the training program will be rewarded with happy and motivated skiers.

Successful progression to gate training is ENSURED by sequencing:

- Technical free skiing
- Games and exercises in gates (obstacle courses, over/under)
- Drill courses – consistent rhythm, rhythm change
- Gate training
- Competition (team environment)

EFFECTIVE training plans consider:

- Enjoyment of the skier
- Looking ahead
- Line
- Turn shape
- Rhythm

# SNOW STARS LEVELS

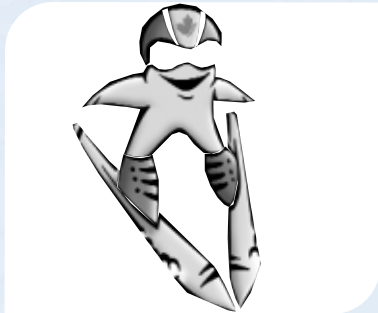
## Level 1 – Safety/Skiing

By the end of Level 1, this beginner skier will learn to:

1. Develop competent skills to ride the lift on their own (with the supervision of an adult)
2. Stop on demand
3. Maintain control and ski safely on the mountain
4. Turn around designated objects (small and large turns and maintain speed)
5. Play and explore on skis

### Goal:

Create a safe and fun environment for the skier to learn the fundamental skills and begin to appreciate playing on skis. They will learn to increase control and comfort on skis.



Objectives	Benchmarks	Environment
1. Stance and Balance	a. Rock backward and forward (4-5 times in turns)	Green
2. Timing and Coordination	a. Ski over bumps bending legs at top of bump b. Obstacle courses	Bumps/slow speeds 20 - 30 second course
3. Steering and Edging	a. Parallel (hockey) stops left/right b. Mini hops - skis off snow while turning	Green Green
4. Physical	a. Does warm-up with class	Flat terrain
5. Safety	a. Stops below the class b. Wears a helmet at all times while skiing c. Never passes when skiing one behind the other d. Basic knowledge of what to bring skiing (clothing/equipment) e. Stays with the coach f. Knows what to do if lost g. Understands the "Buddy" system	

# LEVEL 1 REPORT CARD:

<b>Skill</b>	<b>Gold (always)</b>	<b>Silver (often)</b>	<b>Bronze (sometimes)</b>
Attendance	_____	_____	_____
Rides the lift with adult	_____	_____	_____
Stops on demand, wedge	_____	_____	_____
Maintains control while skiing	_____	_____	_____
Ability to play and explore on skis	_____	_____	_____
Turns around designated objects	_____	_____	_____

# NOTES

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## Level 2 – Parallel Skiing

By the end of Level 2, the skier will learn to:

1. Move from a wedge to a parallel skier (match skis at some point in turn)
2. Stop on demand, using a wedge or parallel (hockey) stop
3. Be confident with speed on green terrain and at ease on groomed blue terrain
4. Perform vertical hops in straight running
5. Maintain a centered position on skis (some control of fore/aft balance)
6. Adapt the radius of turn to terrain and pitch of hill to encourage parallel ski development

### Goal:

The skier is confident on green terrain and is at ease on groomed blue terrain. They can demonstrate 15-20 linked parallel turns on groomed green terrain and show a centered, athletic and balanced position.



Objectives	Benchmarks	Environment
1. Stance and Balance	a. Medium speed traverse across hill, rocking forward and backward	Blue
2. Timing and Coordination	a. Ducking under tunnels, obstacles b. Exaggerated up and down movements	Blue Blue
3. Steering and Edging	a. Snowplow or partial parallel around obstacles	20 - 30 second course
4. Physical	a. Does warm-up with class b. Knows warm-up and cool-down routine	Flat terrain
5. Safety	a. Understands the Alpine Responsibility Code b. Knows club rules for mountain safety	

## LEVEL 2 REPORT CARD:

Skill	Gold (always)	Silver (often)	Bronze (sometimes)
Attendance	_____	_____	_____
Demonstrates some parallel skiing	_____	_____	_____
Maintains centered position	_____	_____	_____
Demonstrates turn versatility (according to terrain)	_____	_____	_____
Stops on demand (parallel hockey)	_____	_____	_____
Adapts radius of turn to terrain	_____	_____	_____

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## Level 3 – Body Awareness

### Fore/Aft and Vertical Movement

By the end of Level 3, the skier will learn to:

1. Adapt body position to varying moderate terrain.
2. Flex joints (hip, knee, ankle) to promote fore/aft and vertical movement.

### Goal:

The skier should demonstrate a centered athletic balance that is adjusted to the terrain (groomed blue terrain), radius of turn and speed. The skier's legs should be shoulder width apart and upper body stable. A pole plant is introduced at this level.



Objectives	Benchmarks	Environment
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1. Stance and Balance	a. Skis over bumps on varying green terrain	Green
2. Timing and Coordination	a. Linked tunnels and jumps b. Jump over obstacles c. Pole plant and jump over obstacle	Blue/Green Blue/Green Blue/Green
3. Steering and Edging	a. Traverse with small steps up the hill b. Sideslip and quick stop sideslip c. Parallel (hockey) stop d. On-snow 360's (left and right)	Blue/Green Blue/Green Blue/Green Blue/Green
4. Physical	a. Does warm-up and cool-down with class	Green/Blue
5. Safety	a. Understands/practices the Alpine Responsibility Code b. Knows club rules for mountain safety	

## LEVEL 3 REPORT CARD:

Skill	Gold (always)	Silver (often)	Bronze (sometimes)
Attendance	_____	_____	_____
Adapts body position to terrain	_____	_____	_____
Flexes hip	_____	_____	_____
Flexes knee	_____	_____	_____
Flexes ankle	_____	_____	_____
Maintains centered position	_____	_____	_____
Stops on demand (hockey)	_____	_____	_____

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## Level 4 – Body Awareness

### Lateral Movement

By the end of Level 4, the skier will learn to:

1. Flex joints (hip, knee, ankle) to promote lateral movement
2. Display pressure on the downhill ski
3. Display some parallel turns around obstacles

### Goal:

The skier should be able to demonstrate 15-20 parallel turns with a downhill ski carve at some point in the turn, a coordinated pole plant, centered athletic balance and a shoulder width stance.



Objectives	Benchmarks	Environment
------------	------------	-------------

- |                            |  |  |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Stance and Balance      | a. Balance on downhill ski while lifting tip and tail of uphill ski off the snow, traversing across hill<br>b. Introduction to black terrain | Green<br>Blue/Black                    |
| 2. Timing and Coordination | a. Pole plant exercises<br>b. Introduction to starts plus 1-2 gates on course<br>c. Introduction to a variety of speeds                      | Blue/Green<br>Green/Blue<br>Green/Blue |
| 3. Steering and Edging     | a. 'Riding the Rails'<br>b. Edge-set exercise<br>c. 'Thousand Steps'   | Green/Blue<br>Blue/Black<br>Green      |
| 4. Physical                | a. Does warm-up and cool-down with class   | Green/Blue                             |
| 5. Safety                  | a. Understands/practices the Alpine Responsibility Code<br>b. Knows club rules for mountain safety   |  |

## LEVEL 4 REPORT CARD:

Skill	Gold (always)	Silver (often)	Bronze (sometimes)
Attendance	_____	_____	_____
Downhill ski carve	_____	_____	_____
Parallel turns around marker	_____	_____	_____
Pole plant in long turns	_____	_____	_____
Shoulder width stance	_____	_____	_____

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## Level 5 – Coordination

By the end of Level 5, the skier will learn to:

1. Demonstrate timing and rhythm
2. Display proper sequence of body movements
3. Pattern and adapt linked giant slalom turns with consistent shape and speed
4. Pattern linked turns of varying radiuses with consistent shape and speed
5. Pattern pole plant action

### Goal:

Demonstrates 15 - 20 linked large radius carved turns on blue terrain.



Objectives	Benchmarks	Environment
------------	------------	-------------

- |                            |   |  |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Stance and Balance      | a. Centered athletic stance<br>b. Slow hop turns<br>c. One ski skiing with pole plant (left and right)            | Blue/Black<br>Blue/Black<br>Blue/Green               |
| 2. Timing and Coordination | a. Refinement of arm position<br>b. Single pole plant<br>c. Double pole plant<br>d. Synchronized Skiing           | Blue/Black<br>Blue/Black<br>Blue/Black<br>Blue/Black |
| 3. Steering and Edging     | a. 'Airplane' turn<br>b. Edge-set drill<br>c. Inside ski turns  | Blue/Black<br>Blue/Black<br>Blue                     |
| 4. Physical                | a. Does warm-up and cool-down with class  | Green/Blue   |
| 5. Safety                  | a. Practices the Alpine Responsibility Code at all times<br>b. Knows club rules and expectations for the mountain |  |

## LEVEL 5 REPORT CARD:

Skill	Gold (always)	Silver (often)	Bronze (sometimes)
Attendance	_____	_____	_____
Performs 15-20 linked GS turns	_____	_____	_____
Performs 15-20 linked mogul turns (on black terrain)	_____	_____	_____
Pole plant in short turns	_____	_____	_____
Stops on demand (parallel hockey)	_____	_____	_____
Varies radius of turn	_____	_____	_____

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## Level 6 – Athletic Skier

By the end of Level 6, the skier will learn to:

1. Test their abilities on all types of snow conditions
2. Test their abilities on a variety of terrains
3. Work legs together (symmetrical edging)
4. Demonstrate clean turn shape with speed

### Goal:

The skier can demonstrate a centered athletic balance, outside ski balance, good pole plant, timing and coordination, separation and carving ski. The skier can complete a 20-30 cone or bamboo course with rhythm on blue terrain and is now becoming comfortable on groomed black terrain.



Objectives	Benchmarks	Environment
------------	------------	-------------

- |                            |  |  |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Stance and Balance      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. No-pole drills</li><li>b. Centered athletic stance</li><li>c. 'Speiss' turns</li><li>d. 1- ski skiing with &amp; without poles (left and right)</li><li>e. Hip Lift</li></ol> | <p>Blue<br/>Blue/Black<br/>Blue<br/>Blue<br/>Blue</p>          |
| 2. Timing and Coordination | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Pole plant used in a variety of conditions</li><li>b. 'Speiss' turns</li><li>c. Large turns /pole basket with constant motion</li><li>d. Moguls</li></ol>                     | <p>Blue<br/>Green/Blue<br/>Blue</p>                            |
| 3. Steering and Edging     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. 'Airplane' turn</li><li>b. Edge-set drill</li><li>c. Out-side boot touch</li><li>d. Dragging poles</li></ol>  | <p>Blue/Black<br/>Blue/Black<br/>Green/Blue<br/>Green/Blue</p> |
| 4. Physical                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Does warm-up and cool-down with class</li></ol>   | <p>Green/Blue</p>  |
| 5. Safety                  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Practices the Alpine Responsibility Code at all times</li><li>b. Knows club rules and expectations for the mountain</li></ol>   |  |

## LEVEL 6 REPORT CARD:

Skill	Gold (always)	Silver (often)	Bronze (sometimes)
Attendance	_____	_____	_____
Can ski Terrain Park	_____	_____	_____
Pole plant (all terrain, all conditions)	_____	_____	_____
Skis all conditions	_____	_____	_____
Adjust turn shape for terrain	_____	_____	_____
Varies turn shape and rhythm	_____	_____	_____

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## Level 7 – Racing Skills

By the end of Level 7, the skier will learn to:

1. Adapt athletic skiing in a racing environment  
(steeper terrain, courses, faster speed, challenging conditions)

### Goal:

The skier can demonstrate 15-20 linked turns in a variety of blue and black runs and in various conditions (bumps, ice, crud, powder). The skier will be introduced to racing elements in this level and will continue to refine skiing skills.



Objectives	Benchmarks	Environment
1. Stance and Balance	a. Ski in a centered position (GS courses) b. Ski without poles (GS courses)	All All
2. Pressure and Carving	a. Ski a clean arc (GS courses) b. Ski a clean arc (tuck turn) c. Bends the ski free skiing	All All All
3. Timing and Coordination	a. Start the turn before or at the fall line b. Hands forward in GS courses	All All
4. Physical	a. Does warm-up & cool-down cool-down with/without class	Green/Blue
5. Tactics	a. Start and finish technique b. Basic tuck turns c. Comfortable in "whoop de do's" d. Comfortable on small jumps e. Comfortable with increased speed f. Basic line interpretation g. Changes of radius and rhythm h. Changes of terrain	Blue Blue Blue Blue/Black All All All All
6. Safety	a. DH stop Left and Right b. Knows basic rules for speed training c. Knows club protocol for training & racing days b. Practices the Alpine Responsibility Code at all times	Blue

## LEVEL 7 REPORT CARD:

Skill	Gold (always)	Silver (often)	Bronze (sometimes)
Attendance	_____	_____	_____
Centered position in GS courses	_____	_____	_____
Clean turn	_____	_____	_____
Hands forward	_____	_____	_____
Good line in GS courses	_____	_____	_____
Skis all conditions	_____	_____	_____

## NOTES

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## SKI RACING IN CANADA

**S**kiing and ski racing programs are offered across the country, and are organized by local ski clubs and/or ski schools.

The programs and race series are designed and supported by Alpine Canada Alpin's Alpine Integration Model (AIM). The AIM model outlines what children need and when they need it based on the principles of growth, development and maturation.

AIM is a planning tool that assists coaches, parents, and volunteers in establishing objectives in the four phases of an athlete's program. These phases are referred to as the FUNdamentals, Train to Train, Train to Compete, and Train to Win. The Snow Stars program focuses on the first two phases of the model.

**FUNdamentals:** This entry-level program is the fundamental stage in ski racing for children 5-12 years of age. During this time, they will be introduced to basic skiing skills through the Snow Stars program, develop the ABC's (agility, balance, coordination, strength/speed) of fitness, ski in different snow conditions and terrain, and have fun on skis.

**Train to Train:** Upon graduation from the entry-level program, young athletes 11-14 years of age will participate in the kinder programs. This stage is referred to as "Train to Train," and athletes will learn specific training skills for ski racing. They are introduced to warm-up and cool-down, hydration, nutrition, environment, and equipment specifics. Athletes are encouraged to ski as much as possible and adapt their skiing skills in various types of terrain. Overall, they begin to focus on how to balance school and athletics.

Skiing is a brilliant sport that offers much to the families involved. Whether you choose to be in a racing or participation program, the results are the same – a life-long love of the sport that is passed through generations.

## CONTACTS AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL

PROV. SPORT ORGANIZATION	STAFF	CONTACT	E-MAIL AND WEBSITE
<b>Newfoundland</b>	Steve May	T: 709-639-8473 F: 709-785-2881	Sd.may@nf.sympatico.ca
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	Lorraine Burch	T: 902-425-5450 F: 902-425-5606	Alpinski@sports.ns.ca
<b>New Brunswick</b>	Stephen Dixon	T: 506.451.1345 F: 506.451.1325	Nbalpine@nbnet.nb.ca www.nbalpine.nb.ca
<b>PEI</b>	Ron Herbert	T: 902-566-3899	ron.herbert@islandtelecom.com
<b>Quebec</b>	Benoit Lalande	T: 514-252-3089 ext 3461 F: 514-254-1499	benoit@skiquebec.qc.ca www.skiquebec.qc.ca
<b>Ontario</b>	James Rosewarne	T: 705-444-5111 F: 705-444-5116	jrosewarne@alpineontario.ca www.alpineontario.ca
<b>Manitoba</b>	Bob Lawrie	T: 204-925-5715 F: 204-925-5792	rlawrie@attglobal.net www.skimanitoba.com
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	Alana Ottenbreit	T: 306-780-9236 F: 306-780-9462	sask.ski@sasktel.net www.geocities.com/saskalpine
<b>Alberta</b>	Jim Davis	T: 403-286-2705  F: 403-286-2751	jim@albertaalpine.ab.ca www.albertaalpine.ab.ca
<b>BC</b>	Gordie Bowles	T: 604-737-3072 F: 604-738-7191	programs@bcalpine.com www.bcalpine.com
<b>Yukon</b>	Jim Bell	T: 867-668-7135 F: 867-668-7135	jim@hougens.com
<b>Alpine Canada Alpin</b>	<b>Cathryn Bell</b>	<b>T: 403-777-3206 F: 403-777-3213</b>	<b>cbell@canski.org www.canski.org</b>

## REFERENCE MATERIALS FOR THE COACH

Useful links for Entry-Level Coaches:

**Entry-Level Articles:** (free downloads)

Available from the Canadian Ski Coaches Federation  
[www.snowpro.com](http://www.snowpro.com)

- Canadian Approach to Ski Technique - Entry-Level Children
- Entry-Level Children: Development and Progression of Skills
- Effective Coaching at the Entry-Level
- Mental Training Tools: Entry-Level Children
- Physical Preparation for Entry-Level Children
- Equipment Selection: Special Concerns for Entry-Level Children
- Nine Steps to Basic Ski Tuning

**Available from the Provincial Ski Associations**

- Alpine Integration Model: Alpine Canada Alpin and the Canadian Ski Coaches Federation (approximate cost \$20.00)

**Available from the Coaching Association of Canada [www.coach.ca](http://www.coach.ca)**

- Straight Talk About Children and Sport: Janet Leblanc and Louise Dickson (approximate cost \$12.00)

## SKIER'S RESPONSIBILITY CODE

Skiing can be enjoyed in many ways. At ski areas you may see people using alpine, snowboard, telemark, cross country and other specialized ski equipment, such as that used by disabled or other skiers. Regardless of how you decide to enjoy the slopes, always show courtesy to others and be aware that there are elements of risk in skiing that common sense and personal awareness can help reduce. Observe the code listed below and share with other skiers the responsibility for a great skiing experience.

1. Always stay in control, and be able to stop or avoid other people or objects.
2. People ahead of you have the right of way. It is your responsibility to avoid them.
3. You must not stop where you obstruct a trail, or are not visible from above.
4. Whenever starting downhill or merging into a trail, look uphill and yield to others.
5. Always use devices to help prevent runaway equipment.
6. Observe all posted signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.
7. Prior to using any lift, you must have the knowledge and ability to load, ride and unload safely.

KNOW THE CODE. IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY. This is a partial list. Be safety conscious.

Officially endorsed by: NATIONAL SKI AREAS ASSOCIATION.