

Craftsbury Ski Programs: Frequently Asked Questions

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WINTER PROGRAMS

[Which program should my child be in?](#)

[What program can my 4-year-old do?](#)

[Wait, didn't you used to have programs for younger kids?](#)

[Okay, but my 4-year-old has been skiing for 2 years and is way faster than a bunch of the 3rd graders in BKL. She's also very mature for her age. Explain to me why she can't participate?](#)

[Why don't you have Sunday-only options for kids programs?](#)

[My child can only come one day per week but the program they want to do doesn't have a one day/week option--will you pro-rate the program fee?](#)

[We can only come on Fridays but my child's group doesn't have a practice scheduled for that day. Can my child just join whatever other group is practicing that day?](#)

[Is there a more recreational/beginner group for high schoolers this year?](#)

[We're visiting Craftsbury for a week--can my child hop into your programs for the week?](#)

[My middle-schooler hasn't cross-country skied before, but he's super competitive and a really good alpine skier. He should be in the U14 comp group, right?](#)

[Are your programs a good fit for a teenager who wants to learn how to ski for the first time?](#)

[Is my child expected to go to every practice? Is there a minimum number of practices they should go to?](#)

[What kind of competition license does my kid need to race?](#)

[I heard that club skiers can't also do school skiing. Is that true?](#)

[Can my child take the bus from Craftsbury Academy/Elementary to the Outdoor Center?](#)

[My child is planning to take the bus to the Outdoor Center most days but they can't bring their ski equipment on the bus. Can they leave it at the Center?](#)

WINTER EQUIPMENT

[What equipment do I/does my kid need for the program?](#)

[Do you rent equipment to adults?](#)

[Should my kids get waxless \(fish scale\) classic skis or waxable ones?](#)

[Do you rent skis to kids who aren't registered in Craftsbury programs?](#)

[What should we have in our wax boxes?](#)

[Can my child leave their equipment at COC?](#)

SUMMER PROGRAMS

[What do you offer for summer ski programs and when do they start?](#)

[Can you put me on an email list to give me summer program updates?](#)

[Will you be accepting new junior/high school skiers this summer?](#)

[When will registration open for summer programs?](#)

[Do you have to try out or be invited to participate?](#)

[Do we need to buy rollerskis? What about a mountain bike? Or other stuff?](#)

[Are you going to have summer training camps?](#)

[My family has some vacations planned. Is it okay if my kid\(s\) won't be at every practice?](#)
[We can only make it to one day a week of the scheduled practices. Will you pro-rate it for us?](#)

WINTER PROGRAMS

Which program should my child be in?

For kids grades 1-8, your child should be signed up for the appropriate grade. For other programs, please read through all of our [program descriptions](#) and then [contact our coaching staff](#) if you still have questions.

What program can my 4-year-old do?

You are welcome to come and ski with your children, but we do not offer structured programs for kids until they are in 1st grade.

Wait, didn't you used to have programs for younger kids?

We've tried various things for kids under 6, but they've always been primarily parent-led. After years of trying things, we have realized that 1st grade is a really good age for kids to hop into programs in a more structured environment, and before that, they're usually not ready. In addition, we simply don't have enough coaches to take on a program for younger kids at a time that would work well for most families. We are working on increasing family-led opportunities for younger kids, like the ever-popular 'critter count.'

Okay, but my 4-year-old has been skiing for 2 years and is way faster than a bunch of the 3rd graders in BKL. She's also very mature for her age. Explain to me why she can't participate?

It's really tough socially to have such a big age gap--it typically leads to at least some part of the group feeling like they're way over their heads or like they're hanging out with babies. Our programs aren't just about speed on skis. If your 4-year-old is cruising around, that's awesome! Keep her cruising and we'll be pumped to welcome her into our programs in a couple years.

Why don't you have Sunday-only options for kids programs?

We've tried this before and it hasn't worked super well for a few reasons. First, our priority is to serve our most local kids, and when we offer weekend-only options, our local contingent can get pushed out by families coming from further afield. Second, when we've had weekend-only options, practice attendance seems to be really sporadic, which leads to challenges with consistent skill development.

My child can only come one day per week but the program they want to do doesn't have a one day/week option--will you pro-rate the program fee?

No. Our program fees are already as low as they can be! We also want to discourage partial participation for those programs. If you are in need of financial assistance to join our programs, please check out our [scholarship fund](#).

We can only come on Fridays but my child's group doesn't have a practice scheduled for that day. Can my child just join whatever other group is practicing that day?

No. The groups are set up to make sure we can keep everyone engaged and safe. If you can't make our schedule work for your family, please don't sign up for programs this year.

Is there a more recreational/beginner group for high schoolers this year?

Nope--sorry. We really wanted to get this off the ground for a number of years, but attendance was never high enough to have a fun critical mass.

We're visiting Craftsbury for a week--can my child hop into your programs for the week?

Sorry, but the answer to this is generally no. When we aren't familiar with a kid and their skiing abilities, it's very hard to place them in a group where it all works.

My middle-schooler hasn't cross-country skied before, but he's super competitive and a really good alpine skier. He should be in the U14 comp group, right?

No. The U14 comp group generally consists of a bunch of kids who have spent years on skis. Even a fast learner will not be able to keep up, which means spending a lot of time alone (no fun!) and also stretching coaching resources, which makes it impossible to keep things fun, safe, and productive for all.

Are your programs a good fit for a teenager who wants to learn how to ski for the first time?

Unfortunately, not really. We tend to have very few teenagers who are first-time skiers--most of our beginners are in elementary school. It's tough for someone to be the only person learning or to be way older than everyone else in their group. We recommend that beginner teens take a few lessons with our ski shop staff prior to joining our ski programs.

Is my child expected to go to every practice? Is there a minimum number of practices they should go to?

Yes and no. We do expect skiers to attend the majority of practices in the first 3 weeks to gain familiarity with the programs, coaches, and other skiers. Those who don't show up at all in the first three weeks will lose their spots in the program. That said, a lot of our skiers do different things, whether that's music, basketball, skiing for another team--you name it. We realize it's a juggling act and they won't be able to make it all the time. Keep in mind that your young skier will have a better experience if they come to the bulk of the practices for their group.

What kind of competition license does my kid need to race?

Ah, this is confusing! And mostly relevant to the Juniors and U14s. There's a little spreadsheet [here](#) (updated in Sept 2023).

I heard that club skiers can't also do school skiing. Is that true?

Definitely not true! The vast majority of our middle- and high-school skiers who have school teams also ski for their schools. It's a balancing act to figure out how to make it work well and not be overwhelming--and also follow the rules set forth by the Vermont Principals Association. Most of the time, those who ski for their schools come to one weekday Craftsbury practice, the Sunday Craftsbury practice, and then perhaps we'll see them again during the week if their school teams come to the Outdoor Center to make use of the facilities. If you're concerned about this, talk to your school coaches and to us.

Can my child take the bus from Craftsbury Academy/Elementary to the Outdoor Center?

Some Craftsbury Academy/Elementary School students choose to take the bus to the Outdoor Center after school on the days they have practices. Craftsbury Outdoor Center staff and coaches are not responsible for children enrolled in ski programs until posted practice start times. Families who are sending children on the bus need to arrange for adult supervision of their children between when the bus drops off and practice begins. Children who are old enough to be left home alone may get off the bus without designated adult supervision, provided they are respectful and responsible and arrive at practices on time and prepared. Please note that the school bus may not have capacity for many additional children—parents must arrange this with the school and/or bus company. This is outside the purview of the club.

My child is planning to take the bus to the Outdoor Center most days but they can't bring their ski equipment on the bus. Can they leave it at the Center?

Yes. We have space in the "skate shack" (adjacent to the clubhouse) for this. Talk to coaches with questions.

WINTER EQUIPMENT

What equipment do I/does my kid need for the program?

Check out the [program description](#), which should tell you.

Do you rent equipment to adults?

No. We rent equipment to kids in our programs to (1) try to make it easier on families with growing kids who need new sizes every season; and (2) reduce the barrier to entry into the sport for kids. We do not have enough equipment to rent to the larger ski community. We also have a limited amount of adult-sized gear. BUT our Touring Center has a great supply of rental equipment at reasonable prices that you can rent for a few hours at a time!

Should my kids get waxless (fish scale) classic skis or waxable ones?

It depends on the program. BKL will be given waxless skis unless they specifically request otherwise (or coaches recommend it!), which is only a good idea if their families are very familiar with kick waxing skis. Older kids generally get waxable skis, unless they want waxless ones. Some older kids who like to ski a lot at home prefer waxless skis, as that makes it easier to go kick around the yard. U14 and older skiers need to learn how to wax and ski on waxable skis. Some of those skiers choose to rent separate waxless skis as well.

Do you rent skis to kids who aren't registered in Craftsbury programs?

No. We just don't have enough stuff! We rent a couple hundred rental setups as it is. The only exceptions: rentals are available to all members of the Craftsbury Academy ski team, and occasionally if we have leftover stuff midway through the season, we'll rent it out to local kids, but that's not very common. More and more shops around VT are doing season-long rentals, so be sure to check them out!

What should we have in our wax boxes?

We have a list of recommendations [here](#).

Can my child leave their equipment at COC?

No. We do not have the space! The only exception is for kids coming off the bus. See note above about bussing.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

What do you offer for summer ski programs and when do they start?

Our program offerings can vary a little from year to year, but you can get a pretty good sense of what is offered by reading through the [Summer Ski Programs](#) page. Even if it's not updated for the current year, you'll get a pretty good sense of things by looking at what has happened the previous year.

Can you put me on an email list to give me summer program updates?

Kind of. The best way to stay on top of news around summer programming is for you to subscribe to our [e-news](#), which will have all the updates. We don't add folks to our program-specific email lists until they're actually enrolled in our programs.

Will you be accepting new junior/high school skiers this summer?

Yes! We welcome new members in the summer. In fact, summer is the best time to join!

When will registration open for summer programs?

May 1.

Do you have to try out or be invited to participate?

Nope! In general, our summer ski programs are open to everyone. An exception is our summer college program, which requires an application.. Additionally, we have age minimums for most programs, and we encourage those who have done our winter programs to check in with their coaches about what might be the best fit for summertime.

Do we need to buy rollerskis? What about a mountain bike? Or other stuff?

Most summer programs use rollerskis, but there are different options, including renting rollerski gear from the club. Start by reading through the [program descriptions](#) to see what equipment is required. That page will also include links to where you can rent rollerskis from the club. High schoolers should also take a look at our [summer training equipment checklist](#).

Are you going to have summer training camps?

We will for BKL. For older kids in our programs, we have some training trips in the works. We are not currently planning to have COC-based junior camps open to the general public.

My family has some vacations planned. Is it okay if my kid(s) won't be at every practice?

Yes. We fully understand that people have other things going on over the summer. We do ask that you give us a heads up about your plans so that we can plan our practices accordingly. Additionally, we do expect a modicum of buy-in, especially from our older skiers. Very infrequent participation typically leaves skiers feeling out of touch with the rest of their group.

We can only make it to one day a week of the scheduled practices. Will you pro-rate it for us?

Nope. Those in need of assistance for programming fees are welcome to apply for our [scholarship fund](#), but we don't offer discounts for reduced participation.