



CANADIAN SKI TEACHING  
**TEACHING**  
**CHILDREN**

# CREDITS

## **Graphic Design, Artwork and Layout**

Suzanne Lafontaine

## **Project Concept, Design and Editing**

John Gillies

## **Photography**

André Fortin

John Gillies

## **Contributors**

Thank you all past and present members of the CSIA Education Committee who have contributed to this project. Special thanks to:

Marie-Hélène Bourbonnais

Tracey Fraser

Jane Hellyer

Marina Stewart

[www.snowpro.com](http://www.snowpro.com)

All rights reserved – Canadian Ski Instructors' Alliance

Printed in Canada

ISBN 978-2-9809659-7-5

Legal deposit: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2016

Legal deposit: Library and Archives Canada, 2016







INTRODUCTION	4
DUTY OF CARE	4
COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS	5
TIPS AND TAILS	6
COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN	8
Acknowledge feelings	10
Anger management	11
Be a good listener	11
Encourage cooperation	12
Name games	14
CLASS MANAGEMENT/STOPPING A CLASS	14
USE OF LIFTS	18
TECHNICAL REFERENCE FOR YOUNG SKIERS	22
TOOLBOX BY AGE GROUP AND ABILITY	24

# INTRODUCTION

Teaching children is a challenging, rewarding and satisfying experience. Children are complex in how they develop, both physically and cognitively. This requires a variety of teaching approaches to meet the needs of all students, all while keeping it safe and fun. A good instructor turns learning objectives into games or tasks that are appropriate to the age and skills of their students... it's an art!

# DUTY OF CARE

Courts in Canada have held that the Duty of Care owned by a person charged with the supervision of children is that of the "careful or prudent parent" in similar circumstances. This duty increases as the age and experience of the child decreases. The instructor will not have discharged his or her duty of care until such time as the child has been safely released into the care of another responsible adult, in accordance with the snow school's policies.



# COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

The parents are the paying clients! At the beginning and end of each lesson communication will be essential to put them at ease and make sure their objectives are met. Be clear of what you expect to deliver and how – “This is Taylor’s first day on skis so we will ride the magic carpet, the chairlift may be for our second lesson”.





# TIPS – Beginning the lesson



T

**Take care to prepare** – have pens, class cards, crayons, hand warmers, tissues, grooming report etc.

I

**Introduce yourself** – and the students to each other. Add things that may help students bond with each other (this is Joey's first day too...he has a dog...).

P

**Plan** – share your plan for the day with students and parents: where you will be skiing, lunch, pick-up time and location etc.

S

**Special considerations** – is there anything you need to know (Allergies, concerns, special learning attributes?).

# TAILS – End of the lesson



T

**Tell** the parents about the day (what runs you skied, lifts you took, when you had lunch etc.).

A

**Ask** the child to describe their favorite part of the day.

I

**Inform** the parents of any Incidents (arguments, separated children, wet pants etc.).

L

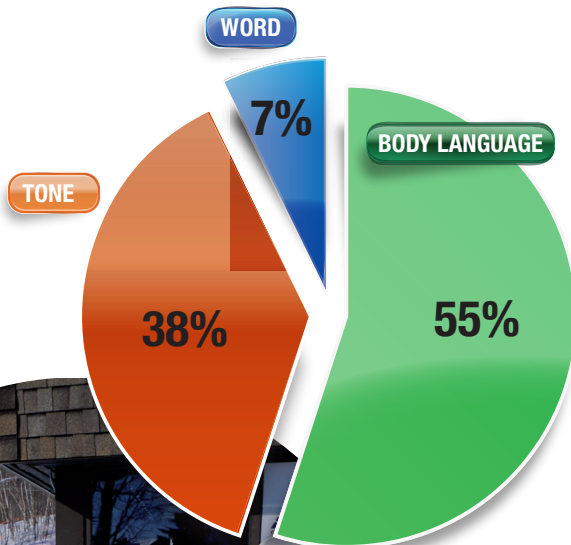
**Learned** – summarize what they learned today and what to keep working on.

S

**Smile** and say thanks for a great day! Let them know how to book another lesson.

# COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN

Certain situations will amplify feelings and lead to unwanted behaviors, like angry fits or cries. It is important to notice and identify those feelings or behaviors and find ways to encourage cooperation. This is what makes kids lessons challenging - it isn't always what you say, but how you say it.







## BE AWARE....

Children all have different personalities and feelings coming into a group lesson. Like an iceberg, what we see on the surface does not always indicate what is underneath!

APPREHENSIVE

ENERGETIC

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

HAPPY

COLD

SAD

TIRED

EXCITED

NERVOUS

SCARED

UNCOMFORTABLE

HOPEFUL

ANGRY

EASY GOING

EQUIPMENT

LOW SELF-ESTEEM

HUNGRY

AGE

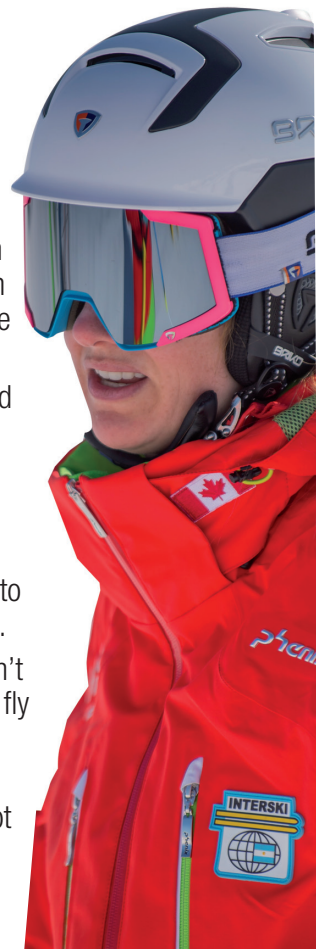
WEARY

CLOTHING ISSUES

# ACKNOWLEDGE FEELINGS – LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND!

Look for non-verbal signs that children are uneasy - crying, looking away, hanging on to parents, stiff posture, and acting out. Use these cues to start the communication process right away! Be pro-active and you will gain the confidence of the children and parents. When acknowledging feelings, you are not necessarily trying to fix the problem - just listening and trying to understand.

- Identify the child's feelings. i.e. "You look frustrated." Ask why with open-ended questions. "Can you tell me why?"
- Put the feeling into words. "Sounds like you're frustrated..., that must make you feel angry..."
- Acknowledge the child's feelings with a sound or a word. "Hmm,... yes..." Encourage them to continue, but you don't always have to have something ready to say. Sometimes safe silence is the best. Remember to keep body language calm.
- Give the child in fantasy what you can't give them in reality. Use humour! "Wouldn't it be great if we could have hot chocolate on the chairlift..." or "I wish we could fly right up above us and see everyone on the mountain, including our moms ..."
- Accept the child's feelings even as you stop unacceptable behavior. "Frank, I can see you are very angry about Taylor stepping on your skis. However, hitting is not acceptable."





## ANGER MANAGEMENT

Some events can make children feel like they are threatened, frightened, frustrated, humiliated or hurt, and this can escalate to angry fits or crisis. When this happens, it is best to give space and let the child calm down. Then, approach them gently and use the above techniques to acknowledge feelings and listen to understand. Encourage cooperation within the group to minimize other similar situations.

## BE A GOOD LISTENER

- Open Body – arms and legs uncrossed, eye contact, kneeling or bending down to their level
- Rephrasing – “So what you said was...”
- Write it down



# ENCOURAGE COOPERATION

Here are 6 tools to curb negative behavior and encourage participation. In each section read the example, and then come up with your own statement in response to the situation provided.

## 1. Describe the situation (and what you would like to occur)

“I see skis everywhere. . . . maybe we should pick them up.”

**Situation:** Your kids are not staying in a line while skiing behind you.

**Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Give information

“When we take our gloves off, our hands get cold”

**Situation:** One of your kids keeps sitting down in the middle of a run.

**Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## 3. Use reminding words

“Behind & Below” or “Wipe out!”

**Situation:** You have a child that keeps wandering off.

**Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Give choices (neither are a threat)

“Which hook would you like to hang your coat on?”

**Situation:** You are at your lunch location and want your class to put their skis on a rack.

**Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### 5. Use Humour

“Well if you don’t put your bib back on, I won’t know who you are and may call you the wrong name for the rest of the day!”

**Situation:** You would like everyone to stay seated at lunch.

**Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### 6. “I” Messages (focus on you rather than the child)

“When I see our skis left all over the place, I feel worried because someone could trip on them”.

**Situation:** A child has stopped dangerously close to the group.

**Statement:** (what you see + your feeling + explanation) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## NAME GAMES

- **Toss:** One person in the group tosses a glove, a ball, a hat, etc., to another person. The person who catches the object calls out his/her name. As the game progresses, the rules can be changed so that children call out each other's name.
- **Animal Add-On:** Each child chooses an animal with the same first letter as the first letter or sound of his/her name. For example, "Jimmy the Giraffe" or "Susie the Squirrel." The next child repeats the title of the previous one and adds his/her own.

## CLASS MANAGEMENT

- Count, count, count. Or better yet, have older children count themselves.
- Stay in close verbal and/or visual contact to make sure that the class is together.
- Ask each child to pick a "buddy" and have them keep track of each other.
- Assign a student as assistant to act as "caboose".
- Use verbal and visual signals. For example say "start your engines" and at the same time put your hands on your helmet or give the "thumbs up" sign.
- You can lead in a single line, but avoid "snake" formations if you are skiing on congested slopes.
- In controlled situations ski in pairs or threes to let skiers choose their own tracks but if safety is a concern move to the front to choose terrain and control the group's speed.
- Encourage reflection and participation in the decision making: "What should we do before we come to an intersection?" "How can we approach this jump safely in the park?" "Where should we stop next?"





## STOPPING A CLASS

- Give the students a landmark where they should stop.
- Use predetermined signals - raise a hand or pole combined with a key word. Get children involved with the use of signals.
- Stop where students are visible to approaching skiers.
- Allow sufficient space – children may have difficulty “stopping on a dime”.
- “Beyond/behind/below” - each child skis behind and just past (beyond) the person in front, and stops just below him.



## MAKE A LESSON PLAN

Build your lesson plan around the physical and cognitive age characteristics of your students, the technical objectives, and the terrain and conditions. This will let you determine the right activity and approach.

AGE SPECIFIC  
PHYSICAL  
CHARACTERISTICS

AGE SPECIFIC COGNITIVE /  
MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

MOTOR SKILL /  
TECHNICAL REFERENCE

STORY /  
INTERESTS /  
CONTEXT



CONDITIONS  
TERRAIN

ACTIVITY /  
TASK





# USE OF LIFTS WITH CHILDREN

Know and respect your area's policy concerning lifts and children. Most injuries occur either getting on or off the lift, so good communication between the operator and the instructor is imperative. Before riding any lift, take the time with the child(ren) to observe and discuss how to get on the lift, what he/she should do while riding it, and how to be safe when getting off the lift. Before getting on, provide a meeting place for when they get off so that they can regroup clear of the exit area. Since most children are strong visual learners, provide simple directions and cues. Provide adult support when students are riding lifts for the first time and tell the adults how to help.

## **Conveyor lifts**

- When getting on the lift, have students keep their skis parallel or like "french fries".
- Remind them to keep their hands by their side and to stay still while riding the carpet. Some areas have fencing along the side of the lift that could be tempting to grab.
- At the top shuffle off and move out of the way as quickly as possible. If students are not mobile on their skis, it will be important to ride behind them.
- With very young students, ride directly behind them to help.





## J-Bars/T-Bars

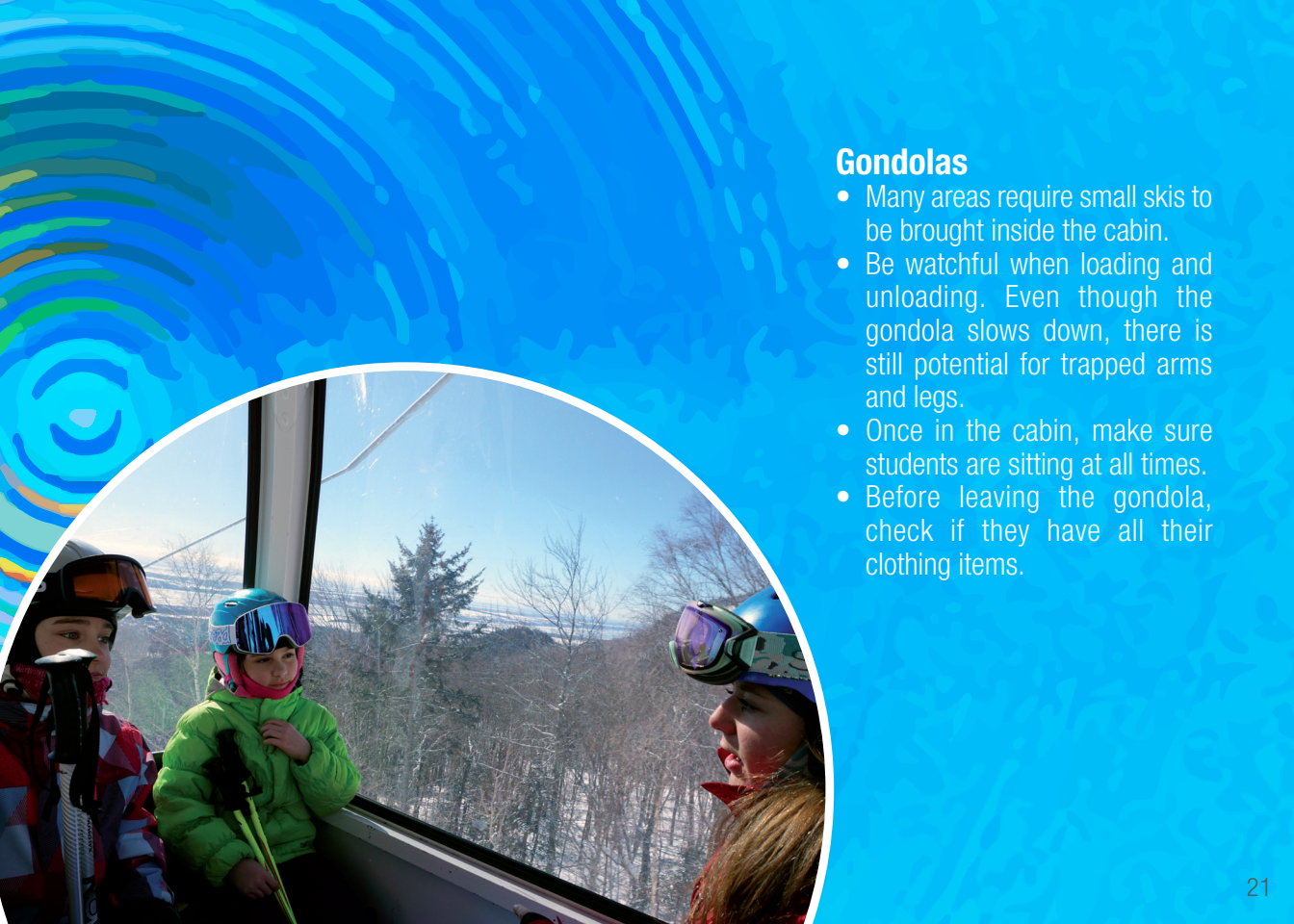
- Place one of your skis between the child's skis so that your knee or shin becomes the platter or bar for the child.
- Hold the lift with the hand closest to the bar, and wrap the other arm across the child's chest like a seat belt.
- If the child is big enough to ride beside you, hold the T-bar low enough that they can put it behind their backside. You will need both hands to steady the T-bar.



## Chair Lifts

- Have the lift attendant slow down the lift to provide extra time for loading.
- Know your area's age size restrictions for riding chairs. Younger and smaller children need to ride with an adult or responsible adolescent to ensure they can be lifted on and off the chair and have the safety bar lowered.
- Once children can ride on their own (know your area's policies) the safety bar should be lowered as soon as it is clear of the loading area and lifted only where indicated at the top.
- Students should sit back in the seat as far as they can. If you are carrying ski poles, run the poles across their laps to prevent small children from sliding under the bar.
- When getting off the lift, clear the unloading area and meet as a group at a specific safe location.
- Problems in the loading and unloading areas require the quick attention of the lift operator.





## Gondolas

- Many areas require small skis to be brought inside the cabin.
- Be watchful when loading and unloading. Even though the gondola slows down, there is still potential for trapped arms and legs.
- Once in the cabin, make sure students are sitting at all times.
- Before leaving the gondola, check if they have all their clothing items.



# TECHNICAL REFERENCE FOR YOUNG SKIERS

Use these four basic principles to guide your work. Don't be too concerned with perfect form - set goals related to speed, turn shape and put the emphasis on meeting those objectives.

## **Stay centred and mobile...**

Develop the use of ankles, knees and hips. Good alignment makes it easier to turn, and less tiring.

- student should feel shin contact in both boots
- stance acts like the suspension in a car
- balance is active, not a result of position

## **Turn with the legs ...**

Steering with the legs keeps the upper body stable and makes it easier to balance on the outside ski.

- skis can be turned and skidded on the surface of the snow
- ski design helps in direction change
- upper and lower body work independently





### **Balance on the outside ski ...**

Separation between the upper and lower body lets a skier angulate to balance and grip the snow.

- student should feel weight mostly on the outside ski when turning
- shoulders look level
- grip with the edges

### **Sequence the movements...**

Smooth and fluid movements should be developed at any level. Encourage rhythmical turns.

- link turns, use the pole plant
- play with build and release of pressure
- create rhythm and fluidity

# TOOLBOX BY AGE GROUP AND ABILITY

## 2 TO 5 YEARS OLD

(Pre-school/kindergarten)

- Preserve their energy for skiing – assist them with climbing, carrying, standing up, etc.
- Teach in short sequences.
- Use a wide track stance or wedge.
- Work one-on-one as much as possible, do not encourage competition amongst students.
- Use a warm, cheerful and gentle approach.
- Create bond with instructor.
- Gage attention, provide quick change of pace and activities.
- One task at a time.
- Use imagination and games.
- Show and help them do, play copy cat, do not teach by talking and telling!
- Stand beside student for demos, not in front.





## TACTICS AND TOOLS



### ENTRY LEVEL

- Stickers to identify left and right skis, to focus where to press or push against their skis or inside their boots, etc.
- Walking, running.
- One ski sliding.
- Red light, green light.
- Hands on knees to aid balance and provide foot awareness.
- Bamboo pole or hula hoop for control of student.
- Instructor holds tips together to help with snowplow. An “edgie-wedgie” or “ski bra” can also help.
- Follow the leader.



### BEGINNER LEVEL

- Use hands to imitate what you want the feet to do when hands and arms form a wedge, it is easier for the legs to follow.
- Use themes and imagination.
- Cones/cubes/poles/terrain gardens for a controlled turning environment.
- “Spread peanut butter” or “squish a strawberry” with outside ski.
- Hops, jumps.
- Airplane turns.
- Open turn shape – too tight will promote upper body rotation.



### INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

- Cat and mouse, “copy cat” games.
- Powerplow.
- Obstacle course.
- Terrain use – sidehills, gullies, rollers.
- “Bunny hops”.





# 6 TO 8 YEARS OLD

(school grades 1 to 3)

- Increase challenge and precision of tasks.
- Use longer sequences, but monitor energy levels for safety.
- Rest periods may still be necessary.
- Increase complexity of tasks.
- Focus on mobility of all the joints, especially the ankles.
- Will bond well with instructor and others in the group.
- A cooperative group approach with no 'losing' is recommended.
- Provide demos so they can watch and do.
- Combine concrete examples with some trial and error experimentation.
- Controlled environments to keep it safe.
- Develop awareness of risks.



● ENTRY LEVEL

## TACTICS AND TOOLS

- One ski sliding.
- Straight running.
- Stop and go.
- Varying wedge size while gliding.
- Hopping while moving.
- Exaggerated positions – tall and small.







## BEGINNER LEVEL

- Vary size of snowplow.
- Leaning side-to-side while turning.
- Hands on outside knee.
- Picking flowers on the outside of the turn.
- Opposite lean airplane turns (arms to the side, leaning over outside ski).
- Follow the leader.
- “Roller coaster” on safe rollers.



## INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

- Bouncing through the turn.
- Hops – ‘pushing’ head away from the snow rather than jumping and lifting the feet. This uses the ankles, knees and hips and develops a centred and mobile stance.
- Appropriate speed is critical for safety and success.
- Pairing, cat and mouse, follow the leader.
- Safe amount of speed on minimum terrain should be mixed with time on reasonably challenging terrain; keep in mind that stance changes will not necessarily be consistent.
- Use of shallow turns on easy terrain to work balancing skills.
- Lift inside ski while turning.
- Obstacle course.
- “Canoe game” – pretending to paddle over outside ski.
- 360s on snow.



## ADVANCED LEVEL

- More challenging terrain and turn radius mileage, experience and terrain adaptation – bumps, jumps, various snow conditions.
- Inside ski turns.
- Pole touch for older kids in this age group.
- Hockey stops.
- Side slipping on steep terrain.
- Exaggerated positions.
- Controlled skiing in easy moguls.
- “Watch and do” – maximize experience and avoid talking.
- Terrain – bumps, jumps (stress responsibility and safety).

# 9 TO 12 YEARS OLD

(school grades 4 through 7)

- Consider individual coordination and strength when establishing tasks.
- Set precise objectives.
- Longer sequences and varied mileage can be used.
- Set clear expectations and boundaries for safety and learning.
- Teach to their 'watch and do' learning style.
- Experimentation (within the bounds of safety).
- Encouraged to try things for themselves.
- Act as a mentor to help them learn when they need direction.
- Pairs and teams – Working as a group/team – taking turns choosing, leading.
- Involve them in some of the decision-making and problem solving.
- Impose consequences, and reinforce good decisions.



 ENTRY LEVEL

## TACTICS AND TOOLS

- Hopping, mobility drills.
- Pushing on flats with poles.
- Relay games/team races.
- Hands on knees.





## BEGINNER LEVEL

- Drag poles for stable upper body.
- Lift inside ski.
- Hopping, bouncing through turns.
- Obstacle courses/ pylons.
- Convex and concave terrain.



## INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

- Pole plant.
- Ski with rhythm and using different turn radius.
- Skiing to extremes – leaning against the front and back of the boots, very tall, very small, etc.
- 360s on snow.
- Air time – small, safe jumps.



## ADVANCED LEVEL

- Synchro skiing.
- Hockey stops.
- Alternate edge sets and sideslip.
- Mileage, experience and terrain adaptation – bumps, jumps, various snow conditions.
- Short radius turns.
- Pole plant.
- Tuck turns on moderate terrain.



# 13 TO 18 YEARS OLD

(grade 8 through high school)

- Precise definition of tasks.
- Increase challenge and complexity.
- Adjust tasks to individual coordination.
- Can largely be approached as adults in terms of skiing goals.
- Emphasize strengths, accept mistakes and failures matter-of-factly.
- Ask their feedback in how they learn best.
- Teach using the “whole-part-whole” approach.
- Precise feedback as much as possible.
- Can use questioning.
- Be respectful and inclusive – encourage input, give them responsibilities when possible.
- Let them be with their friends whenever possible.
- Encourage team work.



## TACTICS AND TOOLS



- Hopping, mobility drills.
- Pushing on flats with poles.
- Relay games/team races.
- Hands on knees.





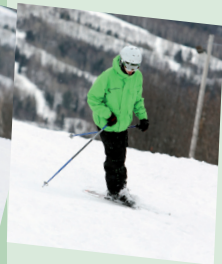
## BEGINNER LEVEL

- Drag poles for stable upper body.
- Increase speed on flat terrain.
- Lift inside ski.
- Hopping, bouncing through turns.
- Obstacle courses/ pylons.
- Convex and concave terrain.



## INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

- Faster speed on flat terrain.
- One ski turns.
- Pole plant.
- Ski with rhythm and using different turn radius.
- Skiing extremes – leaning against front / back of the boots, very tall, very small, etc.
- 360s on snow.
- Air time – small, safe jumps.



## ADVANCED LEVEL

- Rollerblade turns.
- Jump turns with pole plant.
- Terrain variations – bumps, safe jumps.
- Hockey stops with pole plant.
- Short turns.
- Javelin turns.
- Inside ski turns.
- “Switch” skiing.





*Canadian Ski Instructors' Alliance*

Canadian Ski Instructors' Alliance  
401 - 8615 Saint-Laurent Boulevard,  
Montreal (Quebec) H2P 2M9

Tel.: 514 748-2648 800 811-6428  
Fax: 514 748-2476 800-811-6427  
national@snowpro.com  
www.snowpro.com