

Fergus Falls SKATING CLUB

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Learn to Skate? The Fergus Falls Skating Club's (FFSC) Learn to Skate program is part of the U.S. Figure Skating Basic Skills Program. The program is designed to be the best beginning ice skating program that serves the needs of both the recreational and competitive skater. The curriculum is designed to keep skaters enthusiastic about learning from the time they begin lesson until the time they reach their goals. Whether their goal is to achieve Olympic fame or simply to enjoy the recreational benefits of skating, the Basic Skills Program is the place to start! The FFSC will provide a fun and safe skating experience for the beginner as well as the more advanced skater. Skaters are instructed by skating professionals who are assisted by apprentice teachers. FFSC instructors and apprentices will teach correct techniques of simple basic skating elements according to the Basic Skills Program curriculum requirements. The Basic Skills Program curriculum guidelines for Snowplow Sam, Basic Skills 1-8, Hockey 1-4, and Free Skate 1-6 are available from the FFSC Basic Skills Director or on the FFSC website. Reviewing the guidelines is a good way of learning skating vocabulary and what your child is learning in their Learn to Skate classes. Ice skating provides a wonderful opportunity for children of all ages to learn physical and mental skills to engage in a sport that is creative, challenging, and fun. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's group instruction, please contact the FFSC Basic Skills Director, Heather Dirkman at 218-770-5032.

What should my child wear to skating? Skaters enrolled in levels Snowplow Sam through Basic 6 may wear figure or hockey skates. No matter what type of skate they wear, they should fit correctly. You do not want to allow room for growing. We also do not recommend double blades. Form-fitting clothing that stretch are better than tight-restrictive or oversized clothes. It is a good idea to dress in thin layers. Please remember gloves or mittens. Hats are also encouraged. Children who have long hair are asked to tie it back so it is not a distraction while they are learning.

How do I know what class my child should be in on the ice? Each week your child is asked to wear a name tag. This name tag will help instructors identify your child and which class he/she belongs in. At the end of each class, the instructor will collect the name tags to have available for the following week. Name tags should be picked up on the table near the FFSC office.

What size of skate should my child wear? Your skate size may not be equivalent to your shoe size. A supportive boot is required for ice skating. Make sure your child's feet do not move around in the boot. The boot should feel snug and the heel should not move inside it.

How do I tie skates? Tie your skates from the toes up through the bottom hooks and lace them looser as you progress to the top hooks to provide for enough circulation and appropriate ankle flexibility.

What is the proper care for my child's skates? Skating all starts when your blade meets the ice. Skates that are not maintained properly are likely to cause problems as you learn to skate. **How often should my skates be sharpened?** There is no right answer to this question. Blades should be sharpened when they start to slip and slide uncomfortably. **Skate Guards:** Skate guards should be worn whenever the skates are being worn off of the ice. Do not use your blade covers (aka soakers) for walking protection. **How to care for your skates:** Dry your skate blades and apply a protective covering to the blades when skates are not in use (towel bags, blade covers). Do not leave your guards on the blades for storing to avoid any rust issues. Contact Steve Ness at 218-739-2512 for skate sharpening, skates, and accessories.

How do I know if skating is cancelled due to inclement weather or other circumstances? The FFSC website (www.fergusfallsskatingclub.com) and Facebook page will post any weather related announcements. Both of these resources are great places to get the most current FFSC news. Weather announcements and arena closings will be announced on KZCR or KJK radio stations. The Fergus Falls cancellation line can all be called at 218-332-5800 for the latest updates. **Although, the rule of thumb is that if school has been cancelled or closed due to weather, so has the arena and all classes have been cancelled.** Bookmark the FFSC website to your browser today! A link to the events calendar, all registration forms, competition forms, special information, skating links, and much more are on the website! ***www.fergusfallsskatingclub.com***. Another great way to stay up-to-date FFSC news and events: "Like" Fergus Falls Skating Club on Facebook!

How do I support my child? Be on time and prepared for lessons. Encourage your skater to practice and be positive! If your child enters competition, remember to teach them good sportsmanship regardless of the result.

Are there opportunities other than Learn to Skate classes for my skater to practice? Yes! Each week the City of Fergus Falls offers Open Skate times. Please see the monthly Fergus Falls Community Arena Schedule which is linked to our FFSC website for specific dates and times. Open Skate is a great time for the whole family to put skates on and enjoy the sport together!

How does my child move from one level to another? To move to the next level in the Basic Skills curriculum, skaters will be tested by their instructor at the end of each session. However, if a skater is progressing at a faster rate, the instructor will determine when it is time for the skater to advance to the next level. When a skater advances to the next level, he/she will receive a badge for the level they have completed. If a skater loses their badge and would like to replace it, a new one can be purchased for \$1.00 by contacting the Basic Skills Director, Heather Dirk-man. Testing is a measure of the skills a skater has learned. Please be sure to encourage your child to excel, but please remember that each child will meet goals and advance at their own pace. Please do not compare your child to another, instead praise them for the goals they have personally achieved.

Are volunteering and fundraising required? Yes. The FFSC is a non-profit organization which solely relies on volunteers and fundraising. Basic Skills, Private Lesson Students, and Advanced Skaters are all required to participate in one fundraiser each year. Each of these groups has specific volunteer guidelines as well. Please refer to the Volunteer Requirements Guidelines which can be found at our website or obtain a copy from the FFSC office located at the rink.

When should I hire a private lesson coach? Group lessons are a great way to learn basic skating, but you can hire a coach for supplemental or regular private lessons at any time. FFSC strongly recommends private lessons once you have passed Free Skate 3. At this point you can become an Advanced member.

Which private lesson coach is right for my child? Some things to look for in a coach are personality, teaching style, teaching experience, skating background, and technical know-how. A complete coaches list, including their qualifications, can be found on the FFSC website at www.fergusfallsskatingclub.com.

How does my child participate in a competition? Skaters can compete at every level beginning at Snowplow Sam! A great competition to start with is the annual FFSC Basic Skills Competition. The FFSC offers FREE private lessons a few weeks before the annual FFSC Basic Skills Competition for Learn to Skate skaters who would like to participate. Please see our website and upcoming newsletters for more

information as the competition date (March 12, 2016) comes closer. Other area skating clubs also host Basic Skills Competitions. Contact Laura at 218-770-5116 for more information.

When am I considered an Advanced Skater? When you pass Free Skate 3, FFSC strongly recommends that you hire a private lesson coach and purchase advanced ice blocks. If you would like, you can still continue group lessons also.

When is the annual FFSC show and what are the requirements to participate? The show will be in March each year. All skaters who participate in the spring session (January – March) of Learn to Skate are able to be participate in the show. There is no additional cost for instruction and ice, but you will be asked to pay for your child's costume(s).