Welcome to CanSkate

On behalf of the Streetsville Meadowvale Figure Skating Club, we would like to welcome you and your skater to our CanSkate learn to skate program. We are the largest skating club in Mississauga and we've been teaching skating to people of all ages and levels for more than 50 years. Our club is a not-for-profit organization, fully sanctioned by Skate Canada and is run by volunteers along with the Professional Skating Coaching staff. To help you and your skater prepare for your first lesson, we've collected information about what equipment your skater will need, how the program works, and a little more about our skating club.

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Before You Come to the Rink

All about Skates

SMFSC recommends that members look at purchasing their skates and helmets at any local Canadian Tire store. Please visit any of their stores to look at the Skates and Helmets that we have recommended and remember to get your skates sharpened by them before you leave the store.

Plastic boot skates or leather skates?

DO NOT PURCHASE PLASTIC BOOT SKATES

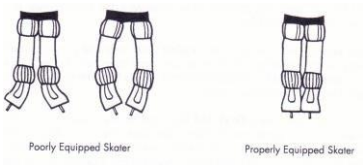
Plastic boot skates are cute and attractive for your young skater but for lessons we do not recommend plastic boots as they are inflexible and cannot be "broken in" so they will never adjust to your skater's foot. Plastic boot skates do not allow the skater to control foot movement and may cause your skater to progress at a slower rate.

Used skates vs new skates? A good quality used skate can be a better choice than a lower quality new skate, **but** check that 1) the leather, stitching, liner, rivets and eyelets are in good shape 2) the boot has good support 3) there is still sharpening room on the blade and 4) the pick on figure skates is in good condition.

Hockey skates or figure skates? Both choices are acceptable, depending on your child's interest. If your child switches from a hockey skate to a figure skate, or vice versa, a period of adjustment will be required. The blade of a figure skate is longer and wider than that of a hockey skate. Hockey blades have a more pronounced rocker (the rocker of a skate is the curvature or shape of the blade). For those skaters who are interested in figure skating, you can start with a traditional figure skate. Jackson makes a great beginner boot (Cameo) available through any Canadian Tire store.

The boot: It should offer good support. If the boot isn't strong enough it will not provide sufficient ankle support and will break down prematurely. Be aware, though, that you can also buy a skate that is too stiff for a beginner, it could be uncomfortable and difficult to break in.

The blade: Check to make sure the blade is centered, perpendicular to the bottom of the boot, and facing straight toward the front. Note the illustrations – if a child's ankles drop inward while skating, this might be fixable. If a child's ankles drop to the outside, the skates likely need to be replaced.



The size: Skates should feel slightly tighter than street shoes but not be uncomfortably tight. As a guideline, skates should be one size smaller than street shoes (a guideline only since styles and brands vary). Don't buy skates that are too big and assume that thick socks will fill the space. Skaters must be able to control the movement of the blade using their foot – a skate that is too big will make it difficult for your skater to learn and progress. The heel should feel snug in the boot and shouldn't freely slide up and down. When your child stands and bends his knees, there should be no more than a finger's width between the heel and back of the boot. They should have wiggle room for their toes, but the toes should not slide around in the boot. You can also check how the skate fits by removing the insoles and having the child stand on them,

Maintaining Sharp Blades

Why do blades need to be sharp? An unsharpened skate has a flat surface on the bottom of the blade and will easily slide sideways underneath your skater. Skaters who try to skate on dull blades will have to work harder to gain control or to get a good push off. If you see that your child's skates are slipping sideways on the ice, they likely need to be sharpened.

Sharpening: A new pair of skates must be sharpened **before** they are used at their first lesson. Figure skates have toe picks, **when sharpening figure skates do not have the bottom toe pick removed**. Higher quality figure skates should be sharpened by a specialist in figure skates, we have a sharpener that we use on a regular basis, that information is posted at the rink on the bulletin board.

What makes blades dull? Every time a skater uses his/her skates, the blades get a little duller. A general rule, beginner level blades, which are made of softer steel, should be sharpened after every 10-15 hours of skating. Skating on outdoor rinks or on crowded public skating sessions with very bumpy ice will make blades dull more quickly. The worst thing for skate blades is to walk directly on cement (not recommended under **any** circumstance). Meadowvale 4 Rinks is equipped with rubber flooring throughout the rinks, lobby and washrooms so it is safe to take your skater to the washroom without using guards.

Lacing Skates

Figure skates: Before lacing, make sure that your child's heel is snug in the heel of the boot the skates must be laced tightly to provide adequate support. Skates need to be tight so start at the toe of the skate and when you get to the hooks, lace from the bottom up around the hooks. Your skater should be able to bend their knees, if they can't then the skates are tied too tight at the top of the skate, make sure they are secure but not overly tight. Tie with a secure bow (double if you have excess lace) **do not wrap the laces around the skates.**

Hockey skates: There are several helpful online videos about skate lacing, including one from the Canadian Tire Hockey School. To help make lacing easier, loosely tie the skates all the way to the top first then, using two fingers – one from each hand- start pulling the laces tight. Maintain some pressure on the laces that have been tied so that they don't loosen as you continue to tie the rest. It is important to tie the laces all the way to the top so that they provide adequate ankle support and to securely tie the laces. **Do not wrap the laces around the back of the hockey skate.**

Taking care of your Skates

Skate guards: Wear skate guards in any area not protected by rubber mats (Ideally, you should wear skate guards even on rubber mats since the mats will accumulate dirt).

Dry blades after each use: After coming off the ice, skate blades will be cold and wet. Be sure to use a cloth to dry each skate blade carefully after each use. To prevent rust, remove skate guards (do not store skates with guards on or they will rust). Many skaters use cloth blade covers when storing skates between sessions.

Air them out: Loosen the laces to allow the boots to air out. Don't store in a closed bag.




Guard styles



Blade Covers

Helmets

Helmets are required for all skaters in our CanSkate program, only CSA approved hockey helmets are accepted in our program by Skate Canada rules and there are no exceptions.

Bicycle or other non-hockey helmets are not permitted. Skaters without an acceptable CSA hockey helmet will not be permitted on the ice.

Helmets with a cage are strongly recommended for beginners. A hockey helmet fitted with a cage can also protect the skaters face if they fall.

What to look for: Check the hardware on a helmet. While helmets do not expire, continue to check the condition of your skaters' helmet for any damage or dents. Do not buy a used helmet that is dented or cracked. The helmet fit should be snug, but not uncomfortable. Both the strap and the helmet should be adjustable**. A helmet should be worn straight on the head, with the front edge just above the eyebrows**. Do not wear a hat under the helmet or use a hairstyle (such as a ponytail) that will force the helmet upward. Below are a few Q & A's about helmets found on the Skate Canada website;

How should the hockey helmet fit?

- A hockey helmet should fit snug to prevent any shifting and maximize protection. Make sure the chinstrap can be adjusted so it gently makes contact under the chin when fastened.
- For an adjustable helmet, open it to the largest setting and gradually begin to downsize the helmet until a comfortably snug fit is achieved. The helmet should rest on the head so that the rim is one finger width above the eyebrow and making contact with the top of your head.
- Although most helmets are lined with protective foam, some helmets will feel better than others. Try on different brands of helmets for fit and comfort.
- All CSA certified helmets have a sticker indicating their certification.

Why only hockey helmets? Hockey helmets are designed to help protect against head injuries occurring on ice, whether from a fall or collision. A bicycle helmet, for example, is designed to protect against head injuries should a fall occur while riding a bicycle. It is important to ensure that when a skater is on the ice, they are protected with equipment designed for their sport or activity.

Are face masks (cages) required as well? Face masks (cages) are not mandatory; however young skaters may benefit from the added protection.

Are used hockey helmets acceptable? Hockey helmets and face protectors sold in Canada must meet safety standards set by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). If the CSA sticker is not present, throw the product away. Hockey helmets must have labelling with the date of manufacture and have a chin strap. CSA takes the position that the life span of a helmet is not easy to determine and so CSA does not give expiry dates for hockey helmets. CSA advocates that "consumers should exercise good judgement as to the suitability of a hockey helmet for play. Helmets that are cracked, have loose fitting or missing liner pieces, or that have been subjected to a severe blow should be replaced. For a hockey helmet to function effectively, it must be in very good working order and worn properly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions."

How can I identify a hockey helmet that is CSA approved? Where will the logo appear on the hockey helmet?

- The CSA approved logo will be found on the back of the hockey helmet affixed to the outer shell of the helmet. For more information about CSA standards visit www.csa-international.org

Clothing

What to wear: Clothing should provide warmth, allow for movement, and provide some protection against falls. Layering of clothes is best, as it allows a skater to remove a layer if they get overheated. Warm mittens or gloves are required, for both warmth and safety in the event of falls. We do have gloves for sale ($2.00) but we may run out during the season. We recommend that each skater have a couple of pairs of gloves in his or her skating bag.

What not to wear: No long scarves or long jackets, hockey gear is not recommended for CanSkate. While we don't recommend that skaters wear snowsuits, if your skater is a beginner they can wear a snowsuit for the **first few lessons** until they are able to stand confidently on the ice. Snowsuits restrict movement and make it too easy for skaters to fall while our staff must encourage them to stand up and get back to skating.

Your First Day

When you arrive, we have set up skaters name tags inside Rink 3 on our CanSkate bulletin board. They are in the pockets in alphabetical order by first name. You will find them in the same spot each week you attend classes. Skaters will be assigned to a group – designated by colour – and their nametag will have a sticker with the color of their group on it. These nametags are also where we keep track of your skater's progress. Before the end of each class, one of our Program Assistants will collect the nametag from your skater and we will keep the nametag for the next class.

What do the sticker colors mean? Each color corresponds to a skaters' group. We group skaters of similar skill level together for ease of instruction however the color does not correspond to CanSkate badge level. If you have skated with us before, we will use the skater's level from last season for placement. All new skaters will start the first day without a color designation on their nametag so that the coaches can assess their skills the first night and place them in a group according to their skills.

Which dressing room do I use? CanSkaters should use dressing rooms 14, 16 &17 in Rink 3 (Saturday skaters will be directed which rooms to use during their sessions by the signs on the dressing room doors). We do place signs on the dressing room doors so please check for the signs upon your arrival. **Do not use dressing Room 15 as it is used by our older skaters and Program Assistants, please respect their privacy, and don't use this dressing room**.

Where do skaters get on/off the ice? Stage 1 CanSkaters should wait at the gate at the far end of the rink entry (near the stairs to the upstairs viewing area). Stage 2 and up skaters should enter the ice at the gate closest to the office. For the first few weeks, we will likely take younger/new CanSkaters off the ice a few minutes before the session ends.

What if my skater doesn't want to stay? If a child is uncomfortable on the ice, we do encourage parents to persevere, and we are willing to work with the skaters and parents, but we cannot keep children on the ice whose actions are disruptive to the class. Check our withdrawal policy if you are having trouble getting your skater to go on the ice and continue with lessons.

Parent Roles

Parents, or the adult responsible for the skater, must remain in Rink 3 or the lobby area during all classes, our lessons are not to be considered a babysitting service.

Do not drop your skater off and leave the arena.

Please note that parents are not allowed on the ice.

Get your child ready to skate: Be sure to lace up skates properly, make sure the helmet is on correctly, and ensure that your child has gloves or mittens. Wait with them at the gate.

Watch the time: If you are in the lobby, please note the time and be sure to be in Rink 3 when the session ends. It is very upsetting for young children to come off the ice at the end of a session and not be able to find their parents.

The CanSkate Program

CanSkate Format: Streetsville Meadowvale Figure Skating Club's CanSkate program conforms to Skate Canada's latest program format. In the 2022 2023 season SMFSC was awarded with an exceeded level in the CanSkate Excellence program which means that we are in the best of the best field for Skate Canada clubs who offer CanSkate. This version of CanSkate was implemented in the 2012/13 season. It is designed to ensure the best instructional environment for your skater.

Nametags are used so that our coaches know the name of your skater to mark their progress in the program. Our nametags also provide fundamental progress; skaters are rewarded with a completed sticker on the back of their nametag so that they know they are progressing and will continue to work hard while they're on the ice.

Who's who on the ice? Our professional, Skate Canada certified skating coaches usually wear black jackets. To assist our professional skating coaches, we have Program Assistants (blue jackets) these skaters are all advanced figure skaters who have been trained in the CanSkate program. They assist with the learn to skate skills under the direction of our professional coaches.

Skaters are grouped using colours: We group skaters of similar skill level together under a designated colour. These colour designations **DO NOT** correspond to the badge colours. Skaters are divided into groups and are taught by a professional coach, with the help of a program assistant. Due to the need to keep skaters of similar stage levels together, the group's sizes will not all be the same but will vary in size from 5-12 skaters per group.

Your skater's group colour could change! There may be several group colour movements during the initial organization period. After that time, a skater might be moved to another colour group even if they have not changed their status. **These moves are NOT a demotion or a promotion, just a reorganization of the groups if we need to adjust the numbers in the groups.**

Program Format: Every time your skater steps on the ice for a CANSkate session, it will run in the same way. **Our program includes a warm up, three group lessons and a cooldown (4 lanes of skills).**

Awards – Skaters are given badges as they pass each level of the CanSkate program (through Stage 1-5). To reduce our environmental footprint, we have discontinued the printing of paper progress reports. Skate Canada CanSkate badges and fundamental ribbons (Agility Balance & Control) are given to skaters who have earned them at no charge. Badges/Ribbons awarded will be placed in the nametag organizer weekly as they are earned. Updates are available when needed, please speak to the CanSkate administrator at the end of the class if you would like an update on your skater's progress.

Missed Classes – We are unable to offer make up classes for skaters who miss a class for illness or other reasons. Skaters sign up for a specific session and cannot be accommodated on another session if they must miss a lesson, no refunds will be provided for missed classes.

Withdrawals and Refunds

Refund/Withdrawal Policy – Including Injuries

Before our sessions begin (Fall/Winter/Spring): Full refunds for cancelled registrations will be accepted 24 hours prior to the start of the session. Cancellations requested the same day that classes begin and before a skater has stepped on the ice, will be less any SMFSC Admin fee paid at registration and a $10 cancellation fee will apply.

Once a skater has stepped on the ice at our club (Meadowvale Four Rinks, Rink 3) the Skate Canada membership fee and SMFSC admin fee are non refundable.

Up to and including the third class: Refunds will be given (prorated) for lessons yet to be taken based on the date of receipt of written notice. Notice must be given in writing by emailing info@smfsc.ca. Please include the skater and parent names, skating day, and the reason for withdrawal. There is no refund for lessons completed prior to receipt of a written notice, regardless of attendance, or for any lessons that take place within 24 hours after the notification is received. **The Skate Canada membership fee and any SMFSC Admin fee are non refundable**, and a $10 cancellation fee will be deducted from any refund. Refund requests must be by written submission and will be processed at the discretion of the board of directors.

After the third class: For medical reasons only with proper documentation, a credit will be applied to your SMSC account for prorated future classes that we have been advised the skater will miss and a $10 cancellation fee will be deducted from that credit. The Skate Canada membership fee and any SMFSC admin fees are nonrefundable.

MEDICAL/INJURY REQUESTS: Requests for full refunds due to an injury will only be considered if a skater has been hurt on the ice on the first class of a session. Consideration will only be taken also if medical documentation can be provided to support a prolonged absence. All such requests should be directed to the club administrator in writing at info@smfsc.ca and will be processed at the discretion of the board of directors. SMFSC reserves the right to request additional medical documentation so we can further evaluate the injury and then evaluate the refund/credit to be provided. Any fee associated with obtaining medical documentation will be the responsibility of the member.

Summer CanSkate - Our withdrawal deadline for summer is July 1st.

Can I get a refund after the withdrawal deadline? After the final deadlines, withdrawal credits will only be considered for medical reasons, at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Credit notes for future classes are valid for one year. Deadlines for withdrawal and refunds are posted on our website under the CanSkate tab.

More questions?

We're happy to help and answer any questions you might have. Please drop us a line at info@smfsc.ca or speak to the CanSkate administrator at the rink during your CanSkate session.

What's next?

What's StarSkate?

Starskate: Skaters who complete CanSkate Stage 5 are eligible to move on to work on more advanced figure skating skills in our StarSkate program. Starskate is where a skater will begin to learn the art of figure skating.

Skate Canada's figure skating program is Starskate and to participate skaters need to complete Stage 5 in our CanSkate program. Starskaters progress through an increasingly complex series of skills via Skate Canada's nationally standardized testing system. We also complement the on-ice instruction with specialized off-ice training classes.

If your skater is interested, you can speak with our CanSkate administrator or one of our admin coaches, Leslie or Lisa at the rink. You can also email to info@smfsc.ca and our administrator will respond to you with more information.

Once a skater has completed Stage 5 and parents and skaters make the decision not to move into our StarSkate program, we can work with your skater on Stage 6 skills in CanSkate if we are within a skating session. Once the current skating session is done, then we consider them to have completed our program and parents can look at other skating programs outside of SMFSC like hockey or speedskating.