



Welcome to CanSkate

On behalf of the Streetsville Meadowvale Skating Club, we would like to welcome you and your skater to our CanSkate program. We are the largest skating club in Mississauga, 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 has partnered with **Canadian Tire at the Meadowvale Town Centre** to recommend skates for our members. Canadian Tire is a national sponsor of Skate Canada, our governing body for skating. Please visit the store in the next few weeks 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.

Molded skates or leather skates?

DO NOT PURCHASE MOLDED SKATES. Molded skates are inflexible and cannot be “broken in” so they will never adjust to your skater’s foot. Molded skates do not allow the skater to control foot movement, your skater will 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.

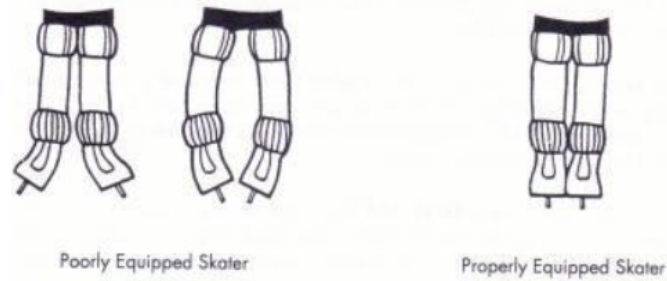
Hockey skates or figure skates?

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 are also highly rockered (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 either a traditional figure skate or a soft-entry style figure skate (i.e. Jackson Softec skate). Skaters who start with a soft-entry boot should switch to a traditional figure skate once they reach Stage 4.

Making Sure the Skates fit

The boot: It should offer good support. If it isn’t stiff 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 will 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 have to 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. He should have wiggle room for his 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.

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. When you get to the hooks, lace around the hooks, make sure they are secure but not overly tight. At the top, the lace

should be slightly loose so the skater has the flexibility to bend their knees comfortably. 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.

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 them in a closed bag.



Helmets

Helmets are required for Skaters in our CanSkate program, CSA-approved hockey helmets are required by Skate Canada and there are no exceptions. Bicycle- or other non-hockey helmets are not permitted. Skaters without an acceptable hockey helmet are not permitted on the ice.

Helmets with visors or a cage are strongly recommended: A hockey helmet fitted with a visor or a cage also protects the skater's face.

What to look for: Check the hardware on a helmet. Check the expiry date. Do not use a 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.

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, no hockey gear for CanSkate. We don't recommend that skaters wear snowsuits as they restrict movement and make it difficult to get up again after a fall.

Your First Day

All Skaters must check in! We will have a desk outside Rink 3 for check-in during the first CanSkate session. Skaters will be assigned to a group – designated by colour – and they will receive a nametag which you are to keep in your skate bag as they must wear it each week.

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 (with skating experience or no skating experience) will be placed in a stage 1 group for the first class and assessed during the opening day lesson.

Which dressing room do I use? CanSkaters should use dressing rooms 14, 16 & 17 in Rink 3. Room 15 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 closest to the office. Stage 2 and up skaters should enter the ice at the gate closest to the stair to the viewing area upstairs. 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. Do not drop your skater off and leave the arena. Please note that parents are not allowed on the ice.

Check the class list each week: As skater assessments take place (and especially in the first two weeks), there will be adjustments made to groups. Please check the bulletin board just inside Rink 3 on the right to be sure to update your child's group colour as needed.

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.
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 Skating Club's CanSkate program conforms to Skate Canada's latest program format. For those who have skated with us in the past, this program was implemented in the 2012/13 season. It is designed to ensure the best instructional environment for your skater.

Nametags: We provide skaters with nametags to wear on their jackets, due to insurance company rules, claims may not be honoured if children are wearing helmets that have stickers affixed to them. **Please keep your nametag and re-use it each week! If your skater doesn't have their nametag then the coach can't see who the skater is and will have to slow down the lesson to ask skaters their names, so nametags are important and should be worn at every class.**

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 and Helpers, who each wear a bright blue jacket. Our Program Assistants/Helpers are all advanced figure skaters who have been trained in the CanSkate program. They help 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 6 groups and are taught by a professional coach, with one or more program assistants helping. 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 colour/ grouping will 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, just a reorganization that has been necessitated by other skaters passing a level. Please check

the bulletin board each week to ensure your child's nametag has the correct colour sticker. Whenever your child is moved to a different group, update the star colour on their nametag.

Program Format: Every time your skater steps on the ice for a CANSkate session, it will run in the same way.

1. **Warm-up (first 5 minutes)** - Skaters participate in a fast track stroking session, around the perimeter of the ice surface.
2. **Lesson Period (three 12 minute lessons)** – A music cue will indicate lesson start time. Skaters will meet their program assistant leader at a pylon with their colour group flag. Their leader takes them to 3 different circuit areas, each with a different skill lesson: agility, balance, and control. At the musical cue, skaters skate a lap on the fast track before meeting their program assistant leader again at the group flag and going to the next circuit. Skaters who are not ready for the fast track will follow their group leader directly to the next circuit.
3. **Cool down (last 2 minutes of session)** – Skaters meet the designated professional coach at the far end of the ice for some cool down exercises while they move around the ice to the gate to exit.

Awards: Skaters are given badges as they pass each level of the CanSkate program (through Stage 1-5). Due to increasing costs, SMFSC will offer the fundamental ribbons for members to purchase, the cost of each ribbon is \$1, see the CanSkate administrator if you wish to purchase ribbons that your skater has earned. Report Cards are issued at the end of each session.

Private Lessons

Private lessons are available: Our professional coaches are available for 10-minute private lessons during the warm up period. Some parents like to supplement their child's group lessons with private lessons, but private lessons are not required, we suggest these lessons when a skater reaches Stage 3 in CanSkate and is looking forward to moving into our StarSkate program.

Selecting a Private Coach: Our coaches differ in style and philosophy so it's important for parents to make an informed choice on behalf of their skater. Parents know their child best and are in the best position to assess what type of coach would enhance their child's learning and development. Be sure to give some thought to your skater's learning style and personality, and then talk to a few coaches -- in addition to other skaters or parents -- to determine which coach would be the best fit for your skater. Your skater may already feel comfortable with a coach, so this is a good starting point. Before making a final decision on a coach, be sure to check on his or her availability for the sessions you wish to book, as not all coaches teach on every session. You should also clarify lesson fees and absence policy in advance.

How to set up lessons: If you decide to request private lessons, you need to arrange that directly with the coach of your choice, either by phone or e-mail (information on the website) or by meeting with them after a class. We cannot recommend a coach for you or set up a meeting with a coach. Once you have completed arrangements, fees are paid directly to the

coach. Each coach charges a lesson fee based on his or her hourly rate. Fees vary, based on technical level and years of experience, so check with the coaches to determine their fees. When to consider private lessons: We suggest that new skaters begin with group lessons and consider the addition of private lessons once they reach the Stage 3 level and are interested in moving to our StarSkate program. We strongly recommend that skaters who plan to move on to our StarSkate program start to take private lessons by the time that they reach stage 4.

How many lessons? Although some coaches may be willing to take a skater for a few lessons or as a fill-in lesson when their regular skater is away, most coaches prefer to take a skater for the whole session.

How are badges awarded if a skater has private lessons? Your child's private coach will determine if he/she is ready to pass. Please direct any questions about progress to the private coach. If you discontinue private lessons, please tell us so that we can inform the group coach. Coaching changes: Our coaches understand that some coach and student pairings do not work well. Feel free to discuss your concerns with the coach. As a courtesy to our coaches, we ask that you do not approach a new coach to make private lesson arrangements without first discussing the situation with your present private coach.

What if I need to miss a private lesson? If you are away without notice, your coach has no opportunity to fill in the lesson spot and loses income. Each coach has a policy about absences and you should be aware of the policy before you start lessons. **If you have a private coach and are going to be absent, do not call the club telephone line or send an e-mail if you will be away, please contact the coach directly.**

What's next? Pre-Junior, StarSkate & CanPower

Pre-Junior: Skaters who complete CanSkate level 5 are eligible to move on to work on more advanced figure skating skills in our StarSkate program, starting with our Pre-Junior level. Pre-Junior is a transition program between the group lesson format of CanSkate and the more independent focus of our figure skating StarSkate sessions. CanSkaters moving to Pre-Junior during the season will participate in at least one Pre-Junior group session per week, these sessions include a minimum 30-minutes of group lessons in addition to having some private lessons with their coach (you must hire a private coach to move into the Pre-Junior program). For more information about joining SMFSC's StarSkate program, please see our New to StarSkate page on our website at www.smfsc.ca, or speak to the CanSkate administrator while you are at the rink for lessons.

StarSkate: StarSkate is Skate Canada's figure skating program. To participate in StarSkate, skaters select a coach and, under their guidance, will learn jumps and spins in Freeskate, Ice Dance, and Interpretive skating. StarSkaters progress through an increasingly complex series of skills via Skate Canada's nationally standardized testing system. We complement the on-ice instruction with specialized off-ice training classes, speak to your coach to see which class is best for your skater.

CanPower: CanPower is an action-packed, high energy program that focuses on balance,

power, agility, speed and endurance. Developed by a team of hockey, figure skating and ringette experts, CanPower is the only nationally regulated power skating program in Canada. Skaters wear full hockey gear along with their stick. A mouthguard is recommended but not required. Please note: CanPower is NOT a learn-to-skate program. Skaters must be able to skate forwards/backwards and stop independently (roughly equivalent to CanSkate Level 4). Skaters who register for a CanPower session without the necessary skating skills will be offered a refund for the remainder of the sessions. SMSC does not offer a full season CanPower program, check our website for the current available sessions of CanPower.

Withdrawals and Refunds

Any refund request must be submitted in writing: 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 48 hours after the notification is received. Refund amounts are based on the date of receipt of written notice, submitted during a CanSkate session or emailed to info@smfsc.ca. Please include, skater and parent names, skating day, reason for withdrawal. Deadline dates are posted on the website under CanSkate FAQs.

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.

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.