

Becoming a Minis Instructor

Here are a few things that might help you succeed as a new Mini's Instructor

What is a Mini? - Minis are children 3 & 4 years old in full day ski lessons, group lessons have a maximum of 4 minis in a group for a daily or weekly lesson, for our season long programs the max is 5 kids.

General Day in the Life

- 8:30 – 8:45am Kids sign in for lesson
 - 9:00am – have a bathroom break – No pee no ski, get dressed
 - 9:30am – go skiing!
 - 10ish – have a quick outside break, play a game, sing a song * if needed*
 - 11:15 – 12:00 Lunch time, you supervise and serve the kids lunch, you can read a story after lunch
 - 12:00 – bathroom break - No pee no ski, get dressed
 - 12:30 back out on snow!
 - 1:30 short bathroom break/snack/water * if needed*
 - 3-3:30pm End of day! Parent pick up *Daily & AC end at 3:30, VKP & Club end at 3:00*
 - Yes this is a ski lesson but some kids need a break from skiing, playing games, singing songs are okay
- *Everything moves slowly for Mini's it can take a long time to put their clothes on, to walk in ski boots, to answer a question, to learn how to stop, to eat lunch, to pee, everything!***

Animation

- Having a few little toys (dinosaurs, stuffed animals, cars, etc) or books in your pockets will go a long way to cheer up kids or make fast friends
- We often do dress up themes in Mini's. Having an animal onesie, silly hat, tutu, fairy wings are great things to have with you
- Stickers! Kids love stickers and they can often be used as a reward
- Have some songs to sing, or fun games to play with the kids – things to keep them entertained when inside, on the gondola or taking a break from skiing
- Consider carrying a little snack in your pocket, dried fruit, cookies, something easy to share.
- Ski school is all about fun, some mini's won't learn to stop in a day/week or more so make sure you are having fun and playing games with the kids

Tears & Fears

- Some kids are sad when their parents leave, most kids are easily distracted by a colouring sheet, a small toy or even a snack. Some kids need a quiet minute to collect themselves, and we always strongly encourage Parents to say goodbye and leave so the recovery process can begin.

- Explaining to the kids when and where they will see their parents again is also really helpful, and telling them about the day you have planned helps too
- We have a lot of non-English speaking kids, this can be a challenge but remember that the kids will understand body language, hugs, smiles and hand gestures
- Ask them questions about themselves (pets, sisters, brothers, what toys they like playing with at home). They love talking about what they have and do. I find this helps sometimes when tears are around it makes them think about home and comforts them
- Keep chatting about anything and everything (talking to yourself) they end up listening even though they didn't want to in the beginning. Talk about what you are doing there and then so they can hear your thought processes (Right I need to write down all your names, this is Toby's, what colour helmet does Toby have? Ooo green. Can you tell me what colour his coat is? Etc). You might sound/feel a little crazy but it works!
- Kids can't always communicate what they need, sometimes tears mean they are hungry or tired.

Bathroom/Toilet/Loo

- Some kids need help in the bathroom and to be reminded how to properly use our facilities - sitting on a toilet, standing at a urinal, flushing and washing their hands afterwards
- Not all kids at this age can wipe their own bums, you may need to help or coach them on how to do this properly
- When some kids need to go, they mean now. Peeing on the side of the run is sometimes the best option to avoid an accident, keep rubber gloves and tissue or Kleenex in your pocket to help in these situations!
- "Code yellow" or "code brown" Accidents do happen, we have supplies of clean clothes for kids at each base location one of our support staff can help you find the clothes and wash the soiled clothes if necessary.

Talking to parents - You will have to talk to parents every day, sometimes this is really easy and other days this can be challenging

- Tell the parents how their child skied or behaved "that day" this can easily defuse a situation. You are only talking about what you witnessed on that particular day
- Focus on what the child achieved, games they played, how much food they ate, and how much fun they had. Some beginnings in Mini's are not able to stop on their own at the end of a day of lessons so focus on all of the other aspects of a day
- Talk about next time, what will their child will be learning next time they come to lessons or tell the parents what they can practice with their child the next time they take them out skiing
- Ask parents to label all equipment, if they don't do it yourself, we have sticker to write the kids names and put that on skis, helmets, everything!
- Not all parents ski or know much about skiing, you are the professional don't be afraid to educate the parents in a friendly manner on properly fitting equipment and waxing skis, or ask them if they have any questions.

- Setting expectations with parents (and Kids) at the beginning of the day or week is a great idea, letting them know what you will be doing each day will help them understand and help them reassure the kids as to what to expect.

Equipment

- Always check that kids boots are done up properly, ill-fitting equipment can make the difference between kids being able to stop or not
- To measure a child's ski height stand the child next to their skis, they should reach between their chin and forehead

Levels – Here is brief description of our levels – In mini's we usually only see kids level 1-3 with the exception of those coming through our season long programs.

- NE - I have never been on skis before.
- Level 1 ♥ - I have been on skis but I'm still learning to stop.
- Level 1 ★ - I can stop on my but I'm still learning to turn.
- Level 2 ♥ - I can stop and turn on my own. I am ready to practice on the magic carpet
- Level 2 ★ - I can link turns and follow my instructor. I am ready to ski easy green runs on the mountain.
- Level 3 - I can control my speed using turn shape on green terrain.
- Level 4 - I am able to ski parallel turns on blue runs while holding my poles in front.
- Level 5 - I am able to ski strong parallel turns on black runs and I enjoy skiing difficult terrain, bumps, and powder.
- Level 6 - I have good ski performance and strong skills in all conditions and on all terrain.

Programs – Within Mini's we have a few different programs, here is a quick outline

- **VKP** – Valley kids program –this program operates 2 days a week, either Monday's & Wednesday's starting in January and finishes end of March/early April. The program is for local kids who learn to ski as an alternative for daycare. Skiing with the same kids all season can be really fun. The group of kids and instructor is the same for the entire season. Many weeks during this program have dress up themes or activities.
- **Adventure Camp** – this is a 5 day program running from Monday to Friday each week of the season. The group of kids and instructor are the same for the entire week.
- **Daily lessons** – this is a one day lesson, some kids book in for a couple of days but the groups and instructors change daily
- **Mini's club** – Club is a 14 week program running from January to April, same kids and instructor for the season with this program too! Many of the weeks in this program have dress up or animated themes.