

GOOD STUFF for the kids & grandkids

Kids Alpine Ski Equipment: Should you Rent or Buy?

Every ski season, parents throughout ski country face the same dilemma. Should they buy or rent skis for their kids? This is a decision that should not be taken lightly.

On the one hand, you might be anxious to have your kids get involved with the sport. In the long run, owning a pair of skis will turn out to be less expensive than renting.

However, not all kids take to the sport immediately. If you invest in a pair of skis that sit in the closet, you've wasted your money.

Unfortunately, it gets even more complicated. One of the reasons that many kids end up hating skiing is because the ski and boot rental process is a total disaster. The lines are often eternal, and kids get restless. In many cases, the kids end up in equipment that does not fit correctly. As a result, they spend the entire day in the lounge.



Kid's skis should be chin high.

photo courtesy Obermeyer



photo courtesy travel.utah.com

Equipment Compromise

Here are some compromises that might offer a viable solution. Your first step is to research the various ski schools that offer specialized lift, lesson and equipment packages for kids.

Ask advice from other parents.

Sometimes, you can get valuable feedback from message forums such as Epicski.com.

If possible, visit the suggested ski areas and check out the rental areas. Is the staff truly interested in giving the kids the best fit?

Watch the kids classes on the hill. Do the kids seem comfortable? Is there more than one kid crying that his or her feet hurt? Take these observations into account before committing your child to a class.

Once your kids have attended about three sessions, you will be able to determine whether they will stay committed to the sport. Then you should consider buying equipment.

In rare cases, your kids might have found the rental equipment quite comfortable. If that's the case, check the rental shop at the end of the season. They will often sell their rental equipment at a significant discount. ♦

EQUIPMENT for kids

Nothing can be more joyful than watching toddlers make their way down the slopes. In fact, having your kids learn to ski at an early age might even help them develop better balance and movement patterns for life. However, they need to like the experience, and nothing is more detrimental to a child's enjoyment of the slopes than ill fitting equipment.

If you consider the fact that most kids have a lower pain threshold than adults, you will realize the importance of making an informed decision about their ski equipment.

While many children's ski instructors have conflicting views about kids' equipment, there are some basic points on which they agree. For example, most pros agree that skis for beginners should be about chin length. As your child's skills improve, he or she can handle a length between the chin and the nose.

Of course, if you are buying kid's ski gear at the end of the season, you will have to keep in mind that your child might have a major growth spurt in the summer. Your best bet would be to wait for the fall. ♦