

Do Kids Have To Ride Before They Ski?

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For many years, conventional wisdom has held that kids need to learn to ski before they learn to ride. But like most conventional wisdom, this is more opinion than fact. Especially in families where one or both parents rides, there is no reason to tell a child, "Nope, you gotta ski first."

Let the Child Choose

Children are more motivated when they want to do something. They'll usually put more effort into an activity that they want to do. Because parents are their first role models, very young children often want to be like their parents. Holly Andersen, a snowboarding mom who rides at Mount Snow, Vermont has a three year-old daughter who skis and rides. When Holly is with her three year-old, her daughter wants to ride and be like mom. But if her daughter is with her friends who ski, she wants to ski. As Holly puts it, "Be patient and listen to your child. Whether to ski or snowboard should be their choice."

Hire A Pro

While parents may be their child's first role model, they usually shouldn't be the child's first snowboard instructor. Nothing against parents, or their skills, but lessons give kids a strong foundation. Many ski and ride schools offer lessons for children as young as three years-old. Because snowboard instructors need to be hands-on to keep beginning kids upright, groups are often very small. Consider three lessons to get your child going. While the first lesson may be all about learning how to put on the equipment and move from point A to point B, by the third lesson, most children will be sliding successfully.

If parents want to take over where the lessons leave off, a private lesson for parent and child is a great idea. When the lesson ends, the parent can take over using tips from the pro. Parents need to remember that little kids are all about fun and may not be very serious about learning technique. As Holly puts it, "As long as my daughter is outside, having a good time and safe, learning to me right now is optional. There is no right or wrong way for her to ski or snowboard."

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