



***PSIA - Rocky Mountain Division – AASI
Rocky Mountain Ski Instructors
Educational Foundation***



3-6 Year Old Educator's Endorsement

Workbook

- Introduction
- The C.A.P. Model
- Movement Patterns: Real vs. Ideal
- Children's Teaching Cycle
- Parents
- Team Building/Problem Solving
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- Workbook
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PSIA – ROCKY MOUNTAIN – AASI

3-6 Year Old Educator’s Endorsement

Course Description:

This 2-day clinic will provide in-depth, children’s specific training for teaching 3-6 year old students. Topics include games & exercises to develop skills, movement analysis and GCT for our youngest ski area guests. Participants will receive a “Certificate of Endorsement” upon successful completion of this clinic to recognize knowledge, skill and expertise as a 3-6 year-old child specialist.

Candidates will be evaluated through a short, multiple-choice “level of comprehension” quiz and a self-endorsement sheet (filling out strengths and areas for improvement). The group facilitator will sit down with each candidate and add suggestions for areas of improvement. This will be a pass/fail event.

Course Outcomes:

- Understanding of the C.A.P. model and how it applies to working with 3-6 yr olds learning snow sports.
- Understanding 3-6 yr olds movement patterns and their application to skill development.
- Applying knowledge and understanding to be a more creative teacher.
- “Certificate of Endorsement” as a 3-6 yr old snow sport specialist.

Sample Activities:

- Review ITC/ATS as related to GCT and C.A.P. models.
- Look at movement patterns and do an indoor Movement Analysis session.
- Application of teaching models and group teaching practice.
- Daily quiz for technical understanding.

Materials Needed:

- Handouts and/or props
- Children’s Manual – recommended but not required

THE C.A.P. MODEL

The CAP model is the foundation of children's instruction in the United States. It is the key which allows instructors and coaches to enhance skill development in children.

The acronym C.A.P. stands for Cognitive, Affective, and Physical. By understanding what typically happens with children in these areas, we can tailor our teaching to suit our students' capabilities.

C.A.P Abilities in Children

| Cognitive (how they think) | Affective (how they feel, value, believe) | Physical (how they move) |
|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Verbal/linguistic abilities | Responsibility and independence | Fundamental movement patterns |
| Spatial/visual abilities | Internal beliefs/values (intrapersonal skills) | General/sport specific strengths |
| Logical/mathematical abilities | Teamwork/sportsmanship (interpersonal skills) | Body development/proportions |
| Ski specific concepts and understanding | Sense of self (self concept/esteem) | Overall fitness |
| | Motivation to ski/ride- Internal and external | Skiing/riding ability |

"This information will guide: What goals we select and the objectives we plan; the manner we choose to present information; how we guide practice tasks and check that the student understands; and how you summarize the lesson." A. Smith Boucher (JET).

The Model divides the characteristics of children into four age groups, 3-5, 6-9, 10-13, and 14-17 years old. It also stresses that these age groupings are used as references (what we see in one child at five we may still see in another at seven).

A main theme of the CAP Model is that we should teach the **whole** child, not just concentrate on their physical development, (as we might if only teaching skiing or riding movements). As children's instructors, we are really in the business of child development. To accomplish this, we need to recognize **and stimulate** the Cognitive and Affective capabilities of children in our teaching, as well as their Physical capabilities. Children will learn more effectively if you target all three areas.

C.A.P. Characteristics

Young Children (approximate ages 3-5)

- C** **Egocentric**
The world revolves around them.
Can only process one thing at a time.
No more than one verbal task
Cannot reverse direction/thought processes.
Instructor must face same direction as student when demonstrating.
Relates to the world through fantasy/pretending
Use pretend situations and themes to teach.
Use reasoning based on reality/how things look and happen.
Skis and chair lifts may appear to be “alive”
Learning to judge space/distance/speed.
Kids may run into each other when stopping as a group.
- A** **Not aware of other needs and wants/plays besides others, not with them.**
It does not matter if another child is crying, they still want attention and to have fun.
Learning to share.
May still hesitate or not want to share a toy.
Non-Competitive/playing is winning.
There should only be winners, no losers.
Likes slapstick humor.
It’s OK to be goofy!
Good is good, bad is bad moral development.
They will rarely do something they know is wrong.
- P** **Head is large in proportion to upper body, trunk longer than legs.**
Like skiing with 40 lbs. on your shoulders!
Similar strength in boys and girls.
Whole body moves as a unit.
Leg rotation is very difficult, whole body rotation is much easier.
Gross motor movements well defined, fine motor movements still developing.
Fine balancing and edging movements are difficult.
Better balance and flexibility in girls than in boys.
Girls may become more quickly balanced.

Older Children (approximate ages 6-9)

- C** **Sees the world from more than one point of view.**
Can work in a team or with others.
- Can process more than one task at a time.**
But not too many, (2 to3)
- Able to judge space, distance and time.**
Can see amount of turns required for a determined space.
- Able to understand rules and consequences, (but tend to act first)**
May disregard what they know is the right thing to do because they are excited.
- Often over estimate abilities/cognitive conceit.**
“I can do anything!”
- Able to understand concrete thinking/logic**
Can use deductive reasoning.
- A** **Developing awareness of other feelings.**
Can consider others before self.
- Becoming competitive/self worth tied to accomplishment**
Coaching should emphasize competition with self.
- Willing to take on responsibility/formulate rules.**
Wants to be a part of the decision making process.
- Knock-knock jokes, toilet talk are popular.**
Keep it appropriate.
- P** **Center of Mass is moving down.**
Balance is becoming easier.
- Fine muscle coordination developing.**
More refined movements become possible.
- “Clever as a fox” morals.**
See adults as a challenge to their own cleverness.

Tweens (approximate ages 10-13)

- C** **Able to use abstract reasoning.**
Can imagine, visualize
Can use problem solving skills.
Able to understand cause and effect relationships.
- A** **Self-esteem vulnerable/can be very self conscious.**
Use lots of positive reinforcement.
Often worried about position in group/influenced by peers.
Motivated by group praise/embarrassed if singled out.
- P** **Rapid growth/body changes.**
Strength and coordination may not match bone growth.
Center of Mass/balance change rapidly.
May not balance as well as they used to.

Teens (approximate ages 14-17)

- C** **Realizing that they are like everyone else.**
Confidence may be building.
Abstract thinking continues to develop.
Can visualize more complex images.
- A** **Can start to laugh at themselves.**
May not be so sensitive.
Couples/how do they seem to opposite sex.
Concerned with appearance.
Using conscience for moral reasoning.
- P** **Growing into an adult body.**
Can expect adult movement patterns.

Acknowledgements:

Marie Russel-Shaw – Developmental Challenges for Children
Spieler 9

VISUAL CUES TO EFFECTIVE MOVEMENTS FOR BEGINNING CHILDREN SKIERS

In teaching skiing, instructors should address the common movements that lead to more effective and efficient skiing. Adults are able to learn and develop these movements precisely and accurately. Because of less strength and coordination, children may not be able to utilize these movements with the same refinement and may substitute other movements in their place. This doesn't mean that children are incapable of effective, efficient movements, only that it may take more time, practice, and repetition to reach the same level of competency as an adult.

While the *real movements* of children may involve larger muscle groups and more gross movement patterns, these will gradually come closer to *ideal movements* as the children grow older, bigger, and more experienced. In setting lesson goals, instructors should observe the *real movements* their students are making and strive to help students come closer to the *ideal movements*. In the descriptions below, the term "younger children" refers to kids between the ages of five and seven.

Balancing Movements

- *Ideal*
 - Joints flex evenly together – ankles, knees, hips, and spine.
 - Hips are centered over the feet, ears ahead of center of feet, hands ahead of ears.
 - Outside ski bends more than the inside ski – primary weight on middle of outside ski.
- *Real*
 - Knee and hip flex greater in younger children, and ankle movements not as coordinated. Large muscle groups develop first.
 - Hips slightly behind feet, ears over heels – or ears over knees – hands in a variety of places depending on child's size and speed at which they're traveling.
 - Inside ski weighted as much as outside ski, bends toward tail.

Rotational Movements

- *Ideal*
 - Legs turn underneath upper body to guide skis through arc of turn.
 - Femur (thigh bone) rotates in hip socket.
 - Upper body remains stable and strong.
- *Real*
 - Shoulders and torso generate turn – large muscle groups are stronger.
 - Articulation of joints not well developed.
 - Entire body moves as a unit.

Edging Movements

- *Ideal*
 - Diagonal movements of feet, legs, and hips engage and release edges.
 - Shins contact both boot cuffs on a forward diagonal.
 - Edges engaged and released in one smooth movement.
- *Real*
 - Tipping of legs and body into hill and away from ski creates edge.
 - Shins have little or no contact with front of boot cuff.
 - Movements are harsh and jerky.

Pressure Control Movements

- *Ideal*
 - Body and skis flow smoothly over changing conditions and terrain.
 - Joint flexion and extension determined by changes in terrain and pitch of slope.
 - Skis bend progressively through turn; entire ski used in turn.
- *Real*
 - Bouncing and loss of contact between skis and snow.
 - Joint flexion uncoordinated; knees and hips commonly over-flexed.
 - Bend in ski comes late in turn – frequently at the tail.

Directional Movements

- *Ideal*
 - Body moves into direction of new turn for edge change.
 - Ski travels along arc – tip and tail through same path.
 - Pole swings in direction of travel.
- *Real*
 - Movement is up and back to change edges.
 - Tail of ski slides past arc of tip – pivot and skid.
 - Poor coordination of pole swing and directional guidance.

The Teaching Cycle and Kids

Introduce the learning sequence

Assess the Student

PLAY

Determine goals and plan objectives

Introduce your lesson in an atmosphere of play and fun. While warming up and freeskiing the first run, assess your students and plan your lesson.

DRILL

Present and share information

Present the drill. Make it appropriate to the age group and fun! Show them, don't tell them. Expect and praise small improvements.

Guide practice

ADVENTURE

Check for understanding

Give them a cue to remember the focus of the drill. Take the cue into an adventure out on the mountain. Take what was learned in the drill into an adventure out on the mountain.

Summarize the learning segment

SUMMARY

Summarize your lesson! Make sure older kids know the benefit of the lesson topic. Review the most fun part of the lesson. Don't forget Safety!

APPLYING THE TEACHING MODEL TO THE C.A.P.MODEL

Younger Children (3-6)

I want to have a good time
I need structure
I have a short attention span
I don't process lots of information

I want to be successful
I like to do and see
I copy and mimic well
I want constant movement
I have an active imagination

I do not need to be perfect
I need to change tasks often
I need to feel safe
I show you that I understand
I need lots of guidance
I get tired easily

I like personal attention
I need help remembering
I only remember one or two things

PLAY

Introducing learning

DRILL

*Determining goals
Presenting information*

ADVENTURE

*Practicing
Check for understanding*

SUMMARY

Summarizing the lesson

Instructor Response

Let them feel fun immediately
Set ground rules
Keep the group moving
Repeat simple directions

The smallest accomplishment is HUGE
Minimal talking is best
Use demonstrations
Use interactive activities
Be creative with fantasy

Encourage variety
Use many different activities for one skill
Set specific guidelines and boundaries
Watch how they perform
Give individual attention
Take frequent breaks

Point out my best moves
Tell me what I did today throughout the day
Speak with the parents

APPLYING THE TEACHING MODEL TO THE C.A.P. MODEL

Older Children (7-14)

I want a "coach" not a teacher
I want ownership of my day
I want to be part of the group
I like the process better than goals

I do not want to be the worst one
I like to be responsible for learning
I need to know "why"
I want to be challenged and successful

I will repeat tasks
I like to work independently
I will ask questions
I like to know when I do well

I will remember highlights of the day
I compare my achievements to my peers
I need to be reminded of what I have learned

PLAY

*Introducing the learning
Assessing the student*

DRILL

*Determine goals
Present information*

ADVENTURE

*Practicing
Check for understanding*

SUMMARY

Summarizing the lesson

Instructor Response

Create a sense of team
Let group make decisions
Be inclusive
Emphasize activities

Focus on group success
Keep them involved in the lesson
Provide rationale
Highlight positive changes

Provide lots of practice
Vary teaching styles
Encourage questions
Give positive feedback

Remind the group of their lesson
Help me fit in
Relate skills to the experience

APPLYING THE TEACHING MODEL TO THE C.A.P. MODEL

Teenagers

I want to have fun with my friends
I am feeling self-conscious
I like being treated as a young adult

I understand abstract things
I like problem-solving
I am sensitive and emotional

I am becoming more confident
I like to test my limits
My body keeps changing

I am easily embarrassed
I like feedback
I am mature

PLAY

Introducing the learning
Assessing the student

DRILL

Determine goals
Present Information

ADVENTURE

Practicing
Check for understanding

SUMMARY

Summarizing the lesson

Instructor Response

Create a team atmosphere
Do not dwell on abilities
Involve them in decisions

Use explanations, detail
Give specific reasons
Be tactful and cautious

Allow for exploration
Avoid unsafe situations
Be patient

Speak candidly
Encourage, be positive

From *Vail and Beaver Creek Children's Alpine Teaching Handbook* (2001), used with permission. This material written by Stacey Gerrish

CHILDREN AND THE TEACHING MODEL

By Alexandra Smith Boucher

The Student

| | 3 1/2 to 5 1/2 years | 6to 9 years | 10 on up |
|--|--|--|--|
| Introducing the instructor and the lesson: | Need to feel safe, secure and comfortable. They want to be with someone who will appreciate all of their efforts and accomplishments. | They want a leader to show them the tools they need to succeed but dont want to be bossed around. They are concerned with having a good time. Authority and rules are respected but also are questioned. | A ski school has young connotations, programs or clinics are easier to deal with. They are aware of sincere interest and guidance. Respect for one another is of great importance. The coach should be aware of how the students feel without being patronizing. |
| Determining the goal and planning objectives and activities: | Because skiing is a family activity it should be fun at all times. Simple one step directions let the student feel successful. | They want specifics when it comes to a game plan, what and why are important, as well as constant movement and challenge. They prefer a taste of the extreme versus being out of ones comfort zone completely. Similarities between activities assist in ownership of an activity. | Activities should build off from the known to the unknown. Goals should allow for the relearning and refinement of old skills that may be affected by rapid physical changes. |
| Presenting and demonstrations information: | Imagery and creativity are conducive to participation. The child enjoys using his senses though too much input will cause him to ignore the instructor and to turn inward. He would like to copy every move at once so specific focus on large muscle groups is helpful. | Don't talk,do. Guided discovery, target approaches and problem solving are attractive methods. The students are good mimics-they do what you do more often than what you say. | There is now an ability to deal with abstract concepts, as in what might be as well as what is. The student wants responsibility for self learning yet also wants the guidance. Observation skills are keen so demonstrations must be specific and appropriate. |
| Practicing: | Repetition leads to anticipation of what comes next. Slight variations on the task help to maintain interest. Time must be given to get used to how a move looks, feels and sounds. Approximation is preferred to perfection. | Perfection is not as important as close-enough-what's next? Feedback from the instructor is very important though the student is beginning to work with intrinsic feedback. Partners and small group practice is valuable. | Repetition of an activity is fine as long as the outcome isn't to show who can and who can't accomplish the task. Feedback is still important but the student needs to be offered alternative methods for self correction. |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Checking for understanding: | Body movements are continuously working to maintain equilibrium. Asking and answering questions are essential to how a child learns. | Distraction and disruption are signs of a lack of interest or understanding. Too many questions can lead to the feeling of being back in school. Body language can say it all. | If the instructor has established an atmosphere of mutual respect, the student will be the one who asks the questions. Sometimes signs of disinterest indicate an understanding. |
| Summary: | Chief Wanaski showed us how to take our ski trains into the Indian village and how to stop by the tepees I love to ski.. I dont want to go home. | We did a bunch of cool stuff skiing all at once and spraying snow we made our instructor take us into the bumps too.. tomorrow we are going to go on the black diamonds twice! | Our instructor wasnt so bad her hat was a bit weird but I finally got down that one trail without crashing every other turn.. I think some of the other guys will be there tomorrow so I guess I will too. |

The Teacher

| | 3 1/2 to 5 1/2 years | 6 to 9 years | 10 on up |
|--|---|--|---|
| Introduction to the instructor and the lesson: | Be aware of the students physical and mental comfort. Maintain eye contact. Establish physical boundaries so that the student isn't overwhelmed by too much open space. | Promote the concepts of fun through leaning. Why do we do what we do and why is it important for our students? | Establish mutual respect. Promote individual accomplishment as well as teamwork. |
| Determining goals and planning objectives: | Success is the primary objective. Set simple tasks and goals to ensure this. Flexibility and adaptability are essential. The child feels they are the center of the world so that the instructor must be aware of other skiers and obstacles for them. | Set up a plan that gives the student opportunities to select what will come next. Use input from the student whenever possible. The intensity of the task should be varied and explored before the terrain is. | Have a soft focus on your own goals and a hard focus on how the student gets there. The process is more important than the outcome. |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Presenting goals and planning objectives: | Present information to all of the senses. How does something look, feel or sound? Use concrete examples before abstract ideas. Command and task styles of teaching are very successful. Be aware of not overloading the student with too much information, otherwise nothing will be processed. | Keep verbal directions to a minimum. Be specific on what is to be focused on. Be aware of all styles of learning theories, especially those that allow for experimentation and exploration. | Use clear, precise demonstrations instead of exaggerated movement on skis. Terrain should be selected to facilitate self-testing of limitations before increasing the difficulty. A target approach versus a progression is a way to insure that no one is singled out as the one who needs help. |
| Practice: | Let the student experience how a move feels, looks and sounds. Allow enough time for mastery, especially of simple tasks. | Be a participant as well as the professional. After allowing for uninterrupted practice, offer positive feedback as well as alternative methods for correcting moves. A large bag of tricks is needed to provide for this variety. | Ample practice time relieves the student of performance pressure and allows for individual experimentation and exploration. Information must be given with sensitivity and understanding, too much or too little can cause embarrassment for the student and in turn cause disastrous results. |
| Checking for understanding: | Allow for exploration before assuming incorrect moves. Physical development a child goes through will affect balance and stance. | Actively listen and watch what the students are saying and doing. A variety of methods ensure more complete comprehension. | Asking questions can often break the ice so that an otherwise silent student has the chance to participate. |
| Summary: | If I pay attention to the needs of my students and allow them the time to develop at their own paces, I will have a class filled with happy kids and they will come back tomorrow. | If I show these kids ways to develop their own ability on skis, I will have a class filled with go getters and also a high return rate. | If I can help these skiers be comfortable with the physical and emotional changes they are going through and allow them time to be a team as well as an individual, they will be more open to what I have to offer. |

PARENTS IN THE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

By Marie Russell- Shaw

Parents are another partner with the child and the instructor in the learning partnership. Given that they are usually responsible for the child's involvement in winter sports. They may have many roles: as the transportation system, equipment suppliers, food service, lesson and ticket purchasing agent, tear wipers, and cheerleaders for their child's participation in skiing or snowboarding.

“PARENTS ARE THE CUSTOMERS, CHILDREN ARE THE CONSUMERS”

-John Alderson

Parents Needs

Parents need to know that the service they have purchased is of value to their child.

- Cognitive: They need to know that we will help their child with the process of learning.
- Affective: They need to trust that we care for and will take care of the child's sense of comfort and well-being. Opportunities for developing a sense of competence will be provided through the child's experiences with us.
- Physical: They need to feel that we will help the child develop movement skills which will make it possible for her to explore and enjoy the mountain environment.

Parents and the Teaching Cycle

Parents have expertise and experience that can be a valuable resource for us to help meet their child's needs. We can gain the parents help and let them know how we will meet or have met their child's needs by involving them in the teaching cycle.

Introducing the Lesson

- Establishing and building rapport. Our opportunity to interact with parents will determine the relationship we develop with them and when it is established.
 - The Never Seen Parent
 - The Before and After
 - Assistant Mileage Coach

Define general process and outcome. To begin define the process we need to exchange organization information with our partners. We need to run our pre-flight check list with our ground support (Parents) before blasting off with the kids.

The Pre-Flight Check List

- Where and when the parent can meet the child at the end of the lesson.
- Who will be meeting the child, or what is the plan for him if he's going to be on his own?
- Will he be joining us for lunch? Is there anything he shouldn't eat?
- If a break is commonly taken during the lesson to warm up, rest and/or have a drink or snack, let the parent know if the snack and/or drink is provided and again if there is anything he shouldn't eat.
- Let the parent know if there is a usual "plan B" for children who have just had enough. Is "plan B" okay with the parent or would they prefer another alternative.
- Where will the parents be if we need to contact them?
- Is there anything else that would be helpful to know about the child? Medical conditions, special situations, etc.
- Check the child's clothing and equipment before the parent leaves, so they can help remedy anything lacking or not working.

Assess the Student

- Parent can provide information about their child which will help us determine goals and plan the content of the lesson.
- Ask what they would like their child to receive from the lesson. The parents desire and the child's help guide our decisions concerning lesson goals and content.
- Listen for clues about child's motivations and learning preferences.
- Inquire about child's past experiences and accomplishments

Summarize the Lesson

- Let the parent and the child know all that was accomplished during the lesson. The CAP model can once again be a guide.
- The cognitive accomplishment might include: followed directions well or solved a problem.
- Affective accomplishment may be; made a new friend or helped other children in the group.
- Physical accomplishments are news of what terrain and conditions the child skied or rode and what movements the child learned or improved.
- In addition:
- Relate how the child's accomplishments met the parent's desires and child's needs.
- Make a recommendation for the next step for the child or other needs.
- For the "assistant mileage coach" we need to make recommendations that will help them provide beneficial practice experiences for the child.
- The comfort, challenge and "Yikes" zone
- Cues used to help refine movements. The cues shared with parents need to be movements that the parent can easily observe and determine if the child is accomplishing.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

For children's instructors/coaches, **parents are students too!** Remember, they have paid for their child's lesson and want to see that their money is being put to good use. We need to be sensitive to their needs. The best time to involve and educate them is at the end of the lesson during a quick update/conference on their child's progress.

Application to Instruction/Coaching:

Often parents have unrealistic expectations of their children's performance on snow. They may expect them to learn as fast as they did when they started skiing at age 25. For example, they often do not understand why their child likes to wedge so much and may be very concerned that they are not learning anything while wedge turning.

Children's educators need to be prepared to guide parents to a greater understanding of their child's development as skiers or riders.

- Have a clear understanding of ATS. With this understanding comes the ability to make professional decisions in your lessons and the ability to explain why you selected a specific task. **Remember, every game you play with your students must be skill based. You need to be able to justify what that skill is and how it will benefit the child's skiing or riding.**
- Know about and understand child development so that:
- Your behaviors reflect the needs of your students.
- You can help guide parents towards realistic expectations of their children.
- Be respectful of the parent's concern for their child. They need to know about the process of teaching as well as the progress and experience of their child.
- Use "I" statements when discussing a child (ex. "I feel that your child needs..."). Parents will then understand that your decisions are a reflection of your care and concern for their child's development, not an attack towards their child or abilities as a parent.
- Let them know about the safety aspects of their child's lesson.

Material developed by the JETs.

Solving Problems Together

- Parents as the Consultants

Sometimes a child will have a need that we can't find a way to meet. Asking parents for their ideas based on their expertise and experience can be a way to discover how to provide the child with what he needs. The instructor may feel their own expertise is vulnerable admitting that help is needed. Our concern for the child will be recognized over any lack of expertise. Being a professional doesn't mean we need to know everything, but it does not mean we will find the answer if we don't have it.

- A few dilemmas to consider; When the parents understanding of the effect of their actions or expectations for their child do not match what the instructor feels the child needs.
 - The Shadow Parent
 - Level 3 at Buffalo Mountain/ Level 2 at Honest Peak
 - Ski with big brother and best buddy
 - My child is the next Picabo or Bode Miller
 - My parents think this is a good idea, but I'm not too sure.
- Steps for solving problems together
 - Explore the situation: Instructor's side and Parent's side of the story
 - Define the problem
 - Generate possible solutions
 - Choose a solution
 - Develop and implement a course of action
 - Evaluate if solution is working

TIPS FOR HAVING A POSITIVE PARENT CONFERENCE

- Be respectful of the parents concerns for their child. They need to know about their child's experience and progress!
- Parents will be more satisfied with you and with the lesson, if you inform them about the process and results of their child's day.
- Use "I" statements when discussing their child. (E.g., "I feel your child needs..."). Parents will understand that your professional decisions are a reflection of your care and concern for their child's welfare, not an attack towards their child or abilities as parents.
- Give parents coaching tips to assist them as they take their children skiing. Share cue words, skill focuses and suggested terrain. Help the parents build on what their children learned in their lessons.

From *Vail and Beaver Creek Children's Alpine Teaching Handbook* (2001), used with permission. This material written by Stacey Gerrish

SOLVING PROBLEMS TOGETHER TO BUILD A TEAM

by Marie Russell-Shaw

Mind Stuffing and Compliance or Nourish Curiosity and Responsibility

- Our purpose is not to just tell kids what to do and ask them to do what they are told, but to give them tools to figure it out for themselves. We involve children in the learning process.
- Not only do we help children decide where and how to go in the winter environment, but how to interact with others. Children are developing skills to participate in the social and physical environment.
- By helping children learn to make decisions about what to do when faced with a situation, they are able to choose what to do because they know and feel it's the right thing to do, rather than because they are suppose to do it.

“Motivating children by meeting their needs.”- Maslow

We tend to pay attention to and participate in experiences that make us feel good and avoid those that make us feel bad. As human beings we have basic needs that when they are met we feel good, when they are not, we don't feel so good. If a child's needs are not met he/she will try to meet the need anyway he/she can... sometimes by choosing to something that isn't so good from our point of view. Kids make these choices because they don't know what else to do, or out of habit. We can look at these “mistakes” or disagreements as opportunities for learning.

| NEED | DESCRIPTION | HOW TO MEET IT |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Physiological | Body Comfort -the need to have all systems A-OK. Sensation -the need to receive input from the environment through our senses. | Help kids learn how to stay comfortable: fuel and clothing. Build experiences rich in VAK input. Help them discover what they are sensing. |
| Safety and Security | Care -the need to feel others care for our well being. Self Direction - the need to be responsible for self and able to make own decisions. | Build caring relationship, model what is possible. Help children learn to make own decisions through problem solving process. |
| Belonging | Affiliation - the need to relate and cooperate with other people. | Build a team. |
| Self Esteem | Achievement - The need to feel competent, capable, worthy. | Help children learn to set goals. Provide specific feedback, encouragement. |

SOLVING PROBLEMS TOGETHER

Explore the Situation and Gather Information

- Tell child what happened and why it's a problem from your point of view.
- Ask for child's view of what happened and why action was chosen.
- Listen for child's needs that are not being met.

Define the Problem to be Solved

- Diagnose the problem based on your view and the child's.

Generate Possible Solutions and Select One

- Ask the child for possible solutions. Provide suggestions if child asks.
- You may need to adjust or eliminate from the possible list any choices that might jeopardize child's well being.
- Let child choose the solution to use.

Evaluate the Results and Make Adjustments Where Needed

- Check with the child to see how plan is working and make adjustments if needed.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Select a later time to work through problem solving steps if it's not logistically possible right after occurrence, or if situation is too emotionally charged.

You may need to remind the child to use the solution.

- Ask them, "How's it going?"
- Use a cue word to remind them.
- Selectively ignore the behavior.
- Give the "Look".
- Move closer to the child, just be there.

Sometimes we have to take action to prevent child from harming self or others.

- Time Out... a safe place to go to calm down, not punishment.
- Use starts not stops: "Please, do...", "You need to..."
- Let child know that you will work with him/her to solve the problem when ready.

It takes time to solve problems together. It's tempting to just tell them what to do. Giving children the opportunity to reach a resolution of a problem on their own will help them develop self-responsibility. The same problem solving steps can be used when conflict or disagreement arises between children. When exploring the situation, each child needs to tell his/her side of the story.

"Resolving conflict is part of learning to work together."- Kohn

TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES
CREATING CONNECTIONS WITH ONE ANOTHER

Many of the activities which children commonly participate in are competitive rather than cooperative. Both types of experiences help children develop self identity and skills to interact with others, but they are different.

Activities, which encourage children to work together (cooperate) to solve a problem or develop a plan, help each of them:

- Become self responsible
- Create a sense of belonging to a team
- Enhance self esteem

Activities which encourage children to compete with one another help each of them:

- Become self responsible
- Create a sense of position within a group.
- Enhance self-esteem when achieve the goal of doing the best.

| COOPERATIVE | COMPETITIVE |
|---|---|
| Everyone Wins | Not Everyone Wins |
| Each individual must have a part in helping the group solve a problem or develop a plan for and complete a task | Opportunity to compare individual or team performance with the performance of others. Such activities include: one on one, team to team, or elimination contests. |
| The goal is finding a workable solution, or developing a plan and carrying it out. | The goal is being best fastest, strongest, most goals, etc. |
| Less skilled participate equally with more skilled children. | Less skilled have less chance for success. |
| Team Building | Individual Building Star of the Group or Stars of the League. |
| EXAMPLE: Synchro Skiing/Riding | EXAMPLE: Relay Races |

Creating Successful Cooperative Activities

- Any activity that meets the criteria on the left side of the chart above is cooperative.
- Developing these activities involve the following challenges for the coach/instructor.
- To create situations that will engage children’s interest for investigation and meet learning goals.
- To structure the situation for success. Structure the situation and provide the appropriate amount of guidance for the investigation and social skill level of the group.
- To guide (not control) the investigation process. Let them do it!

PROBLEM SOLVING

Definition: Problem solving is a technique that teaches young children the skills to solve their own problems.

The ability to problem solve enables children to:

- Be independent
- Express their individuality
- Be self-reliant
- Have a sense of responsibility

Negotiation is a process of problem solving

6 Steps Used in the Negotiating Process:

1. Help the child identify the problem.
2. Encourage the children to contribute ideas to solve the problem. (Any ideas are acceptable)
3. Restate the child's ideas positively.
4. Help the children decide which idea they prefer.
5. Help the children carry out their solutions.
6. Reinforce the process by telling them how well they solved their problems.

CAUTION! What the teacher does not do: (Is not the authority figure solving the conflict)

- Does not place blame.
- Does not try to figure out who had the toy first.
- Does not order them to take turns.
- Does not separate them, scold them, or lecture them about sharing.

Helpful Tips:

- Establish eye contact.
- Position body at child's level.
- Use a neutral tone of voice and don't become emotionally involved.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT: “All Kids are Good Kids”

There are times when children’s educators must try to influence the behavior of their students. Children’s behavior can sometimes have a negative effect on the learning environment or even become a safety hazard. Behavior management is one of the more challenging aspects of being a coach or instructor. At all times, however the instructor/coach should remember that **it is the behavior that is inappropriate, not the child.**

Application to Instruction/Coaching:

Structure creates the freedom to learn the sport of skiing. Structure helps children gain a sense of responsibility for themselves and their behavior within the guidelines you establish.

How to set up class rules:

1. Create your “Group Culture”
 - Tell the kids what to expect out of the day.
 - Make a broad theme for the group, “We will work as a team...”
2. Determine a set of rules.
 - Tell children what you expect of their behavior.
 - State rules in a positive way, “We will stay together.”
3. Praise appropriate behavior.
 - Each child is responsible for their own behavior.
 - Build self-esteem by pointing out good behavior.
4. Discuss inappropriate behavior.
 - Discuss why the behavior is inappropriate.
 - Have the group help decide on a more appropriate alternative.
5. Re-establish group rapport.
 - Remember that you value the child, you do not accept that certain behavior.
 - Realize that when a reprimand is over, it is over. Start fresh, a new beginning.

When observing inappropriate behavior in a lesson the first thing to do is:

Assess the source of the inappropriate behavior:

- Is there a physical problem causing the behavior? Cold, ill, poorly fitting equipment or a disability?
- Are there cultural differences causing the behavior?
- Is the child under stress of performance expectations?
- Can the child adjust to the new situation?
- Are the instructor’s behaviors contributing to the child’s behavior? Are the ground rules clear to everyone? The instructor/coach has a big influence on the behavior displayed in the lesson. Remember to:

***Practice What You Preach
Be a Role Model***

Be a Good Listener

Younger Children, (3-6 years):

This age group needs the instructor/coach to set the ground rules for them. Once they know what is right and wrong, they will usually follow the rules. But they need to be told what is appropriate and what is not. State the rules positively and have them all repeat them together.

3-6 Ground Rules: (Example)

- “Please stay together as a group.”
- “Please wait at the top of the carpet until I tell you to go.”
- “Please keep your hands to yourself.”
- “Please pay attention while I am speaking.”

Separation anxiety is seen in this age group. It happens when the child becomes afraid to be separated from the parents for a period of time and usually results in extensive crying and reluctance to participate in the class.

In some cases, the child may not be ready to feel comfortable away from the parent(s) and will then have trouble participating in a group lesson. A private lesson may be the answer. Many children, however, can overcome their fear of being away from Mom and Dad with proper guidance from the instructor.

- If the child is crying, ask why she/he is upset. This will let the child know that you care enough to try to solve the problem.
- Address/acknowledge the concerns of the child. Let them know that you will try to help solve the problem. Try to get the child to settle down. If appropriate, make an attempt to find the parent.
- Start to change the topic of the conversation from the problem to something more pleasant and enjoyable. Develop the conversation and try to get the child to smile a bit.
- Tell the child that while you are both waiting for Mom to show up, she/he can have more fun learning to ski than just sitting around. Make sure to take a look around at other kids having a good time skiing.
- If the child still does not want to ski, try to keep the child involved with the class. Give the child an important job to do: Official starter, (making sure the coast is clear for the others to make their run); Cheerleader, Helping others get up if they fall, checking to see if everyone’s boots are buckled, whatever! Ask them regularly if they would like to start skiing again.
- If you can keep them there, you’ll have a good chance of getting them back to class. If they leave for the sick and sad ward, you’ve lost them and potentially, their families participation in snowsports.
- Dealing with this situation becomes easier with experience. Experiment with different strategies that work for you. Never give up on a child!

4. What are the four stages of development theorized by Jean Piaget and the approximate age that children enter each stage. (You will need to look this up in the "Children's Manual")

| STAGE: | AGE: |
|--------|------|
| 1) | |
| 2) | |
| 3) | |
| 4) | |

5. Describe two commonly observed behaviors of a young child with an "egocentric" viewpoint.

6. How would you introduce a child to the concept of understanding the space around them?

7. Why would 7-12 year olds understand hypothetical situations better than 3-6 year olds?

8. What steps can be taken to help solve problems with children?

9. Explain the turning forces used by children before they have developed the full use of their fine motor skills.

10. What do the words "Play, Drill, Adventure, and Summary" mean in regards to the teaching cycle?

11. How do you develop team building with kids ages 3-6?

12. How does stance affect the skill usage for children at different stages of development?

13. How can you involve parents in the teaching cycle?

14. What is "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs"? How are they used while teaching children? (Look this up in the "Children's Manual")

15. What are the different preferences for learning?

16. List 5 props or teaching aids you use and describe how they can benefit the students?

RESOURCE LIST

1. **Children's Instruction Manual**, PSIA Publication 1997
2. **ATS Child Development**, Smith-Boucher, Alexandra, PSIA Publication 1994
3. **ATS Children's Teaching System Handbook**, PSIA Publication
4. **Vail Children's Alpine Teaching Handbook**, Vail Resorts, available through PSIA
5. **Captain Zembo's Ski & Snowboard teaching Guide for Kid's**, Alderson, John, PSIA 1996
6. **Captain Zembo's Ski Teaching Guide for Kid's**, Alderson, John, PSIA 1983
7. **Child Centered Skiing**, Peterson, Bode, Workman, PSIA Publication, 1988
Publishers Press, Salt Lake City, UT
8. **Skiing and the Art of Carving**, Post-Foster, Ellen, Turning Point Ski Foundation.
9. **Core Concepts for Snowsports Instructors**, PSIA Publication 2001
10. **The Complete Encyclopedia of Skiing**, Barnes, Bob, Snowline Press 1999

OTHER NON-SKI RELATED PUBLICATIONS

1. **In Their Own Way: Discovering and Encouraging Your Child's Personal Learning Styles**, Armstrong, Thomas, J.P. Marcher.
2. **Coaching Young Athletes**, Marten, Christina, Harvey Sharkey, Human Kinetics, Inc.
3. **A Kick in the Seat of the Pants**, Von Oech, Roger, Harper Perennial 1986