

First-Lesson Checklist

What to wear, what to bring, and the small things that make the difference between a stressful morning and a smooth one. Written by parents who've been through it.

The night before

- Charge phones and pack a small bag by the door — less scrambling in the morning.
- Lay out base layers, ski socks (not cotton), and snow pants so the morning has one less decision.
- If your child has a comfort item (fidget, headphones, a specific snack), pack it now.
- Talk through what tomorrow will look like, in whatever way works for your child — a picture schedule, a story, or just a few calm sentences.

What to wear

- A warm, moisture-wicking base layer — avoid cotton, which stays wet and cold.
- A mid layer (fleece or light sweater) under a waterproof/windproof jacket and snow pants.
- Waterproof gloves or mittens (a spare pair is never a bad idea).
- A neck warmer or buff instead of a scarf, and a helmet-friendly hat or thin balaclava.
- Ski socks that fit inside boots without bunching — tight, itchy socks are a common first-day complaint.

What to bring

- A labelled water bottle and a simple snack for the break.
- A change of dry socks and mittens, in case things get wet.
- Sunscreen and sunglasses or goggles — snow glare is stronger than most people expect.
- Any comfort items, noise-reducing headphones, or sensory tools your child usually relies on.

On the morning of

- Arrive with a little extra time — boots and gear take longer than expected the first time.
- Let your instructor know anything that would help the lesson go well: what calms your child, what to avoid, how they communicate.

- It's okay if the first session is mostly about getting comfortable in the gear. That still counts as progress.

This checklist reflects general good practice for a first day on snow. Your instructor will always adapt the plan to your child on the day — use this as a starting point, not a script.

Sunnypath — free adaptive ski lessons for autistic and neurodivergent children. Questions? sunnypathca@gmail.com · sunnypath.ca