

# **Methow Valley Nordic Team**

## *General Objectives, Developmental Phases, Skills*

*Learning stops when thinking stops. Thinking stops when connections stop. When they don't connect, participation stops.*

### **Early Childhood (ages 6-7), J6, Kochs**

#### **General Objectives, Developmental Phases**

- Learn through play and discovery
- Limited formal instruction
- Introduction to cross country skiing
- Children can learn to ski before they can comprehend what they are doing
- Ensure terrain and social dynamic is safe and a learning environment
- Encourage fun and playful activities
- Children find comfort in following a routine (same coach, structure, etc.)
- Sessions should be short and enjoyable
- Use role models frequently (head coach, older athletes, etc)
- Create a very nurturing and comfortable environment during the first 5 minutes
- Keep all instruction time minimal, keep instruction brief and simple
- Encourage cooperation with others and proper skiing etiquette

#### **Skills**

- Safety on skis (pole tips on snow, don't run into other skiers)
- Balance
- Falling down and getting up
- Rhythm
- Turning around, walking in circle, turn full circle, wedge
- Can lift skis off ground while walking in place
- Can keep skis in straight line while moving forward out of track
- Ski without poles
- Two speeds: slow and fast
- Body Positioning (tall, small, tall/small)
- Leg extension for glide
- Foot Return (don't click heels together, but get return foot all the way under the skier's body)
- Double poling: tall poles, pole with your stomach and legs, follow through pass your hips
- Weight transfer – hips over your skis
- Wax set diagonal stride (impulse)

### **Middle Childhood (ages 7-11) J5-J4, Scotts/Alsgards**

#### **General Objectives, Developmental Phases**

- Sport specific skills
- General physical fitness within a fun environment
- Teach through games and drills
- Competition introduced with emphasis on correct utilization of skills
- Keep all instruction time minimal, keep instruction brief and simple
- Encourage cooperation with others and proper skiing etiquette
- Ensure terrain and social dynamic is safe and a learning environment
- Encourage fun and playful activities

## Skills

- Body Positioning (tall, small, tall/small)
- Leg extension for glide
- Foot Return (don't click heels together, but get return foot all the way under the skier's body)
- Double poling: tall poles, pole with your stomach and legs, follow through pass your hips
- Weight transfer – hips over your skis
- Wax set diagonal stride (impulse)
- Ski uphill no poles
- Step turns on flats and downhill
- Use all techniques in appropriate terrain
- Ski uphill, herringbone
- Arms swing in rhythm
- Kick turns
- Can lift ski off ground while gliding
- Ankle and knee bend while skiing
- Wedging to control speed, wedge to stop, wedge turn, introduce hockey stop
- Ski with poles
- Skate (V1, V2, V2A, no pole skate)
- Classic Technique (diagonal stride, kick double pole, double pole)
- Basic step turns while gliding
- Glide during diagonal stride
- Tuck the down hill
- Fitness
- Racing
  - *Practice Racing* (Do stuff at practice that connects practice to the event - starts, warm-ups, cornering, race tactics, stretching, etc)
  - *Getting them ready* (Make a goal with the kids, warm up 5-10 minutes, asking them how they feel, talk about stuff, get excited for them, accelerations 3-6 reps x 5-10 seconds, speeds 3-6 reps x 5-10 seconds)
  - *Cheering them on* (be there at the race, cheer them on at start or on a hard part of the course, not always appropriate to encourage, "Go harder!" especially for younger kids, say fun stuff and let them know they're doing great)
  - *Debriefing* (check in about goal, after race, cool down 5-20 minutes, speeds 2-8 reps x 10-15 seconds, get them together and tell them how proud you are of them, ask specific questions: "What did you do well?" "What could you have done better?" "Did you have fun?" "How was your technique?" "How was your fitness?" "We're you a good sport?"

## **Herd Management**

### **The Ski By**

- As a coach, have a starting and ending point and have the group ski by you. Give feedback individually or to the whole group

### **Ski with a Task**

- Give kids an image, or a technique, or some kind of fun focus to do while they ski

### **Ski In Pairs**

- Group kids in pairs and ski a task

### **Do This/Follow Me**

- Use words like "Do This" or "Follow Me" instead of giving a lot of verbal commands

### **Down And Back, Plus One More**

- Tell athletes to ski to designated point and back. Once they get back to you, tell the fastest kids to ski to another, closer point and back while the slower kids finish the first task

### **Ski To Goal, Then Back To Last Person**

- Front skiers ski to designated point and then turn around and back to the last person, then continue skiing back to designated point

### **Leap Frog & Coach**

- You've got to get out of the front of the pack
- You've got to get out of the back of the pack
- Try to connect with each kid every day

## The 4 P's: The Art of Giving and Receiving Feedback

Think of giving feedback to your students as an art of tact and physiological acuity. Not everyone gives and receives feedback the same way. Below are four helpful tips to negotiate the feedback landscape.

- A. Preference** – Everyone likes their feedback a little bit different. Some want it direct, to the point and without any sugar coating. Others want their feedback sugar coated, inside a compliment, wrapped in glowing reviews.

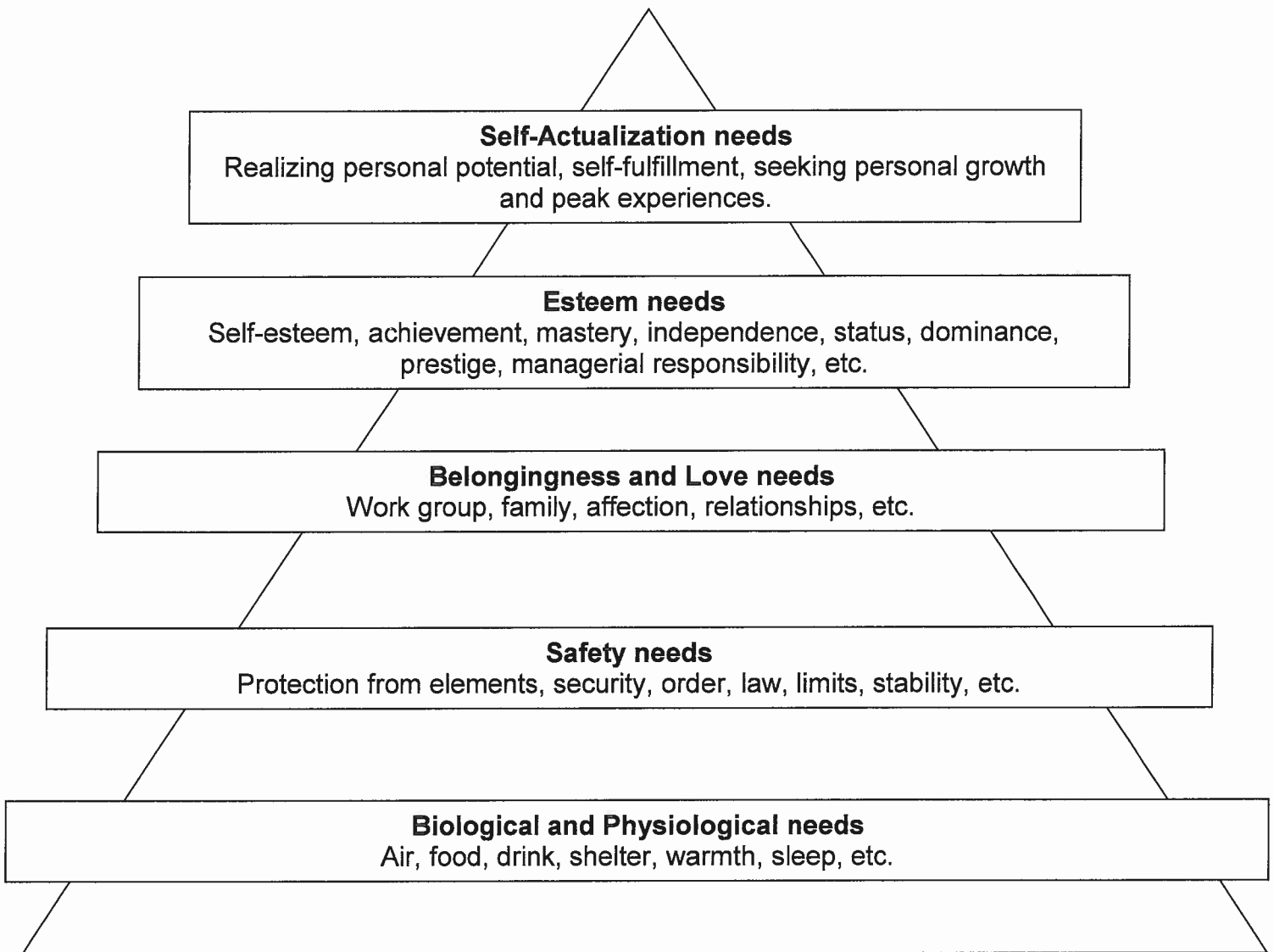
How do you know how people like their feedback? For some people you can ask. Others will tell you by their body language. Do they looking at you distrustfully? Are they smiling with welcoming body language? Are they standing away from the group, reserved and at a distance? Have they been kind of cool to your approach all day? Do they have that glazed over look because they can't possibly absorb any more today?

Let them tell you without words how they want their feedback.

- B. Public vs. Private** – this critical component requires great sensitivity and tact from instructors and coaches. Public vs. private feedback reminds us to remember we can give feedback to an individual either publicly (in front of everyone else) or privately (when no one else can see or hear). Giving feedback requires trust, which must be nurtured, cultivated and tended throughout the teacher/student relationship. Which means you don't always have to give private feedback, and although they may like public feedback, sometimes it isn't appropriate.
- C. Permission** – just because you have a great piece of advice, doesn't mean you're allowed to give it! You must first establish permission before you give feedback. I remember as a new instructor, I wanted to help everyone I saw on the trails with their skiing. But it would have been a terrible mistake to stop complete strangers on the trail and give them pointers without their permission. Trust is the cornerstone to effective feedback; establishing permission is a vital ingredient to that relationship.
- D. Paraphrase** – as a way to check understanding after giving feedback, you should paraphrase what you just said, or better yet, ask the student(s) to repeat what they heard. Asking questions about what you just discussed is another way to get your students to paraphrase what you said.

## Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Learning stops when thinking stops. Thinking often stops when one of the pieces of Maslow's pyramid is missing. You must be able to identify when your student is cold, hungry, or nervous, scared, or doesn't feel like they belong in the group, or you put him or her on the spot and destroy their self esteem. Use verbal and physical cues to ascertain where your students are on this pyramid.



## DRILLS/GAMES FOR SKATE SKIING

### Balance

1. Pole twice on each ski
2. Fold arms and ski. Then add arm drive.
3. Glide on one ski for as long as you can
4. Stand in a circle, make everyone stand one foot, on no feet, turn around, jump and turn, step turn, stand on one ski and touch the ground, stomp lightly, stomp hard, kick high, kick medium, kick low. Go around circle everyone lead one exercise.
5. Skate, skate, skate and then glide on one foot

### Body Position

6. Slide and stop backwards down a hill
7. Step turns around different **pole** configurations
8. Step turns around different **people** configurations
9. Step turns around obstacles holding a cup of hot chocolate
10. Skate backwards
11. Hold poles against waist / over your shoulder / behind your legs and ski
12. Push a skier down the track
13. Herringbone up a hill
14. Teach the tuck
15. Ski then stop! Are you in the same body position?
16. Ski like a doll connected to strings that have been cut.
17. Ski like a thief or a sniper.

### Gliding

18. Marathon Skate
19. Belly button line drill
20. Frog skate or split skate
21. Marathon skate with a pole on the ground laying in-front of your feet. The toes of each foot should touch the pole. Try marathon skating while keeping the length of the pole underneath your body. The idea is to try and keep your feet parallel to your hips, neither too far ahead nor too far behind.
22. Ski with "really, really, really" bent knees
23. 1000 steps or 1000 glides (then 100, then 50, then 20, etc)
24. The "too short and too wide" tunnel
25. Drive your knee like an elephant, then like a rhino. Rhinophant
26. Ski on spoons then on knife edges
27. Ski with your hands on your knees

### Poling

28. V-1 with one pole
29. V-1 no poles
30. V-2 no poles
31. V-2A no poles
32. Finger tip poling
33. Emphasize pole extension (pushing the pole all the way behind you at the end of your poling phase).
34. Feet together, double pole
35. Put your arms in imaginary casts so that they can't move and pole using only your upper body.
36. Pole without straps all the way through
37. Touch the sky when you pole through
38. Stretch your body when you ski

**Timing (Rhythm and Flow)**

39. Skate racer arms
40. Timing Exercises: stand together in a circle. Chant the timing aloud, like, "Pole, step, pole, step" for V1 timing. Once everyone has the timing start skiing down the track.
41. V2 timing: skis together, double pole once. Step, step with both feet to the right. Pole again. Step, step to the left. Double pole again. Repeat. Next, try to pole then step with only one foot and glide on that foot only. Pole onto the other foot and glide. Pole, glide, pole, glide.
42. Emphasize arm drive. "Stress" or syncopate the arms in all poling cycles
43. ELBOW SWING AND DRIVE
44. Ski fast, ski slow / ski short, ski long
45. "Pacer"
46. Lead skiers, call out gears (V0, V1, V2A, V2) and have every person in line shout-out the command so everyone can hear it. Switch, let each skier lead.
47. Ski in slow motion to emphasize any movement pattern (it helps technique and tempo).
48. Synchronize arms and legs
49. Ski slow but glide fast

**Games**

50. Back Stabber with clothe pins or duct tape
51. Cops and robbers
52. Crack the whip
53. Keep away
54. Catch the rabbit
55. Slow-poke revenge (ski to point, then back to last person, then back to point, the back to last person until everyone has reached the point.
56. Dribble a soccer ball with your feet down and back or play a soccer game with your hands
57. Dodge ball but you have to role the ball. Throwers stand at each end of the court, skiers are in the middle.
58. Smack a soccer ball with your hands down and back
59. First person carries the soccer ball to the poles, places it beside the pole & skis back. Next person skis to the soccer ball, picks it up, and skis it back to the next person in line. Repeat the whole cycle till everyone has gone.
60. Red light, green light
61. Fast light, slow light
62. Pole limbo—ski under pole
63. Video record without the camera
  - Ski with a partner and focus on one movement pattern and show that person how they ski
64. Follow the leader—anything goes!
65. Sharks and minnows
66. Octopus
67. Capture the flag
68. Ravens and Hawks
69. Rock, Paper, Scissors
70. M.A.D. (Movement Analysis Development)
71. Circle chase (leader is "it," can only tag the person in front of them not the person behind them. Coach should call "reverse direction" sometime during the game to keep it interesting)

**DRILLS/GAMES FOR CLASSIC SKIING****Balance**

72. Stand in a circle: everyone stand one foot, the other foot, no feet, turn around, jump and turn, step turn, stand on one ski and touch the ground, stomp lightly, stomp hard, etc. Go around circle everyone lead one exercise. While standing still, make letters with your skis (A, H, V, X, etc.)
73. Slap your ski on the snow while you ski.
74. Line-up in pairs of two facing each other. While standing on one foot, pass an object back and forth, move further back until you can just pass the object without throwing it.
75. Step turn around items scattered on the ground.
76. Line your belly button over each ski as you ski.

**Body Position**

77. Ski like Gorillas, soldiers, slouchers, elephants and rhinos, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.
78. Ski like a thief sneaking underneath laser beams.
79. Glide on one leg while polling with the opposite hand—lean forward as you pole. Switch legs.
80. Give yourself a hug and ski.
81. Balance a snowball on your neck and ski.
82. Red light, green light
83. Fall out of a helicopter that is five feet off the ground to emphasize stance
84. Teach the tuck
85. Try to smell what's for lunch when you ski.
86. With an orange in each hand, throw the orange in front of you and catch it while you ski
87. Freeze tag; show shin angle and torso angle, ski in track with partner skiing beside you, when partner says freeze, stop skiing in the track, partner checks shin and torso angle with poles
88. Hide the pearl under your foot while you ski; show the pearl under your foot while you ski
89. Walk on skis. What body part leads? Foot. Notice that you put your foot down well in front of the foot you push off. Now ski. What body part leads? Not the foot. Can we blend the two skills of walking and landing with our foot in front of our push leg and skiing our leg/core/body forward?

**Grip**

90. Jump from one foot and glide on the other foot.
91. Jog on skis
92. Think of a claw attached to your heel and step off of your heel for greater kick.
93. Draw a foot on the ground and show your students where they should step off of their foot.
94. Ski with "springs" in your legs.
95. Jump and land quietly
96. Kick double pole without poles.
97. Smear the bug (glide), then squash the bug
98. Skate ski with a jump from side to side. Skate jump and turn it into jump classic skiing
99. Jump up and hit your head in the tunnel. Now ski and hit your head. Now jump just as hard while you ski but don't hit your head.
100. One Ski Off – Kick and Land - Take one ski off and stand on your ski leg - Push off onto your non ski leg and land - Try to push off of your ski leg before your non ski foot passes your ski foot. - Be sure to not glide, only focus on kicking and landing

**Drive**

101. Ski with small shuffling steps. Next ski with small shuffling steps but with a little glide between each step. Increase glide until you get long glides with each step.
102. Cha, cha, cha; step, step, glide; quick, quick, slow; say it while you ski.
103. Ski with "really, really, really" bent knees.
104. Point your hip down the track with each glide.
105. Ski with a partner and try to hit your partner's pole with your knees
106. Preventing Tail Slap- Flex the ankle of the rear ski as it swings under you to make it land in front of your old glide ski

**Poling**

107. Arm Races: ski with your legs together and just use your arms in a diagonal stride. Don't just pull yourself down the track, but aggressively apply your stomach muscles and "crunch" over the poles down the track.
108. Hold your poles on the center of the shaft and ski to emphasize parallel arm swing.
109. Let your poles hang on your wrists, baskets behind you and ski. Don't grab the poles but let them swing freely with your arms.
110. Emphasize pole extension (pushing the pole all the way behind you at the end of your poling phase).
111. Hide your pole baskets behind your feet when you ski.
112. Reach for the sky behind you when you ski.

**Rhythm & Flow**

113. Ski fast, ski slow / ski short, ski long
114. Count Steps: ski a section, see how many steps it takes; ski the same section with fewer steps; do it again until you are taking as few as steps as possible.
115. Gently jog down the track to get proper rhythm and flow.
116. Fast light, slow light
117. Transition Relays—set up poles or markers that indicate new ski phase or movement pattern as you ski from point A to B.
118. "Pacer": lead skiers, call out gears (double-pole, kick double pole, stride fast, stride slow) and then let each skier lead.
119. Ski without poles

**Games**

120. Pole limbo—ski under pole
121. Ski like animals and make noises
122. Video record without the camera: ski with a partner and focus on one movement pattern and show that person how they ski
123. Follow the leader—anything goes!
124. Ski in slow motion to emphasize any movement pattern (it helps technique and tempo).
125. Without skis play "follow the leader", emphasizing ski technique.
126. Without skis on, bound with poles—teaches proper pole placement and complete arm swing
127. Ski no poles all terrain
128. Synchronize arms and legs
129. Simon says.
130. Line everyone up. Last person skis pass the group. Each person in line rates how bent the skier's knee's are by number or a shout or something. Then the new last person goes.
131. Sharks and minnows
132. Keep away with a glove.
133. Cops and robbers. Designate half the team as robbers and half the team as cops. Send the robbers in some small loop, give them a 10 second head start, then send the cops. The robbers are trying to get halfway around the loop then back to the "get away car" before being tagged by the cops. Guess what? You're the "get away car."
134. Down and back: double pole, stride, kick double pole, ski without poles, run, push another skier down the track and around the poles, ski backwards, etc.