

## The ABCs of Learning to Skate

Nearly 570,000 kids play hockey in Canada and hockey continues to be a defining characteristic for Canadians. Participating in some level of hockey is a big part of daily life in Canadian communities. For many families, weekends are built around going to games and practices. Follow these simple 'ABC' tips to help improve your child's early-stage skating skills:

**A is for Agility:** Everyone knows that learning to skate involves at least a couple spills on the ice, so it is important to know how to get back up quickly! Instruct the skaters to practice standing up.

Have the participants kneel on the ice and practice getting back up into a standing skating stance.

You can increase the difficulty by having participants start on their stomachs, pulling themselves onto their knees with their elbows, then standing up.

**B is for Balance:** Balance is another essential skill to develop in the beginning stages of skating.

Improve balance by asking the participants to cross the ice with their hands on their hips, lifting their knees to waist height in a 'marching' fashion.

**C is for Coordination:** Once skaters have gained their footing on the ice, it's time to incorporate more difficult skills that require coordination.

Pair participants up and provide each pair with a tennis ball. Ask the skaters to roll the ball to each other, about three or four metres apart. Skaters should bend over to pick it up and stand back up once they have received it.

These Learn to Skate tips were provided by RBC Play Hockey in partnership with Hockey Canada. RBC is proud to deliver Learn to Skate Programs in communities across the country to teach the fundamentals of skating and is committed to helping children develop the confidence and skills they need to become happy, healthy, and active for life.