

SNOWBOARDING GUIDE FOR TODDLERS/PRESCHOOLERS

Part 1: Stages of Learning, Gear, Getting Started,
Learning with a Harness



Born to be Adventurous

Created by Founder Annika Mang



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Thank You

My two children Etta and Julia

My husband Cameron Mang

Karen Ashraff from Off Road Discovery

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About the Author

Annika Mang is the founder of BorntobeAdventurous.com a website that inspires and encourages families to travel and get outdoors on adventures. She has a Bachelor in Education and Physical Education. Annika has snowboarded since she was 11 years old. She has taught kids with limited vision to snowboard and many adults to snowboard. She has now embarked on an adventure to teach her two children aged 2 and 4 to snowboard.





Snowboard Guide for Toddlers and Preschoolers

Children can start snowboarding as soon as they can stand! This short snowboard guide will cover Born to be Adventurous' top gear for young snowboarders, stages of snowboarding, tips to get them started and more! Just remember... These kiddos are young and the **most important tip when teaching the youngest ones to snowboard is to have fun**. If they have fun they are more likely to want to keep snowboarding!





Snowboarding Myths:

You might have heard that kids cannot start snowboarding until the age of 5 or older. Individuals might say that kids do not have the strength in their ankles to snowboard or that it is significantly more challenging than skiing. This is NOT TRUE and a view that is slowly starting to change at local resorts and with families.

Sure... there used to be no gear that was suitable for young children to snowboard but now that gear exists. Now, kids can hop on a snowboard as soon as they can stand!

Stages of Learning:

But... What can parents expect their children to be able to do when their child hops on a snowboard? The Stages of Learning guide below outlines **the physical capabilities of children who are snowboarding based by age from age 1-4+.**

Just remember that if you only go a few times a year it does take longer to learn.

Some children will **last for 10 minutes while others will last 2 hours.** This time will **vary from day to day.** The most important part is to **make it fun!**

Stages of Snowboarding

Age 1

Sledding stage. At this age they will slide nose first down the hill. Do not expect them to slide on an edge and they will most like last only 10-20 minutes on the snowboard.

Age 2

Sledding, some board slide. **Most children will snowboard similar to a child that is 1 year old.** There have been some older 2 year olds that do manage to board slide or even rock from side to side. These 2 year olds are going snowboarding +40 times.

Age 3

This year is fun! Children at the age of 3 **have better coordination and are able to learn how to board slide.** Learning to board slide is made easier for some kids with a harness. 3 year olds are also more capable of learning how to rock from side to side and start carving.

Age 4

4 year olds and up will continue to refine skills and be better coordinated for learning how to carve. This is a **great age to start lessons.** There increase in strength will make it easier for them to **push themselves with one foot to the lift.**





Head to Toe Outdoor Gear for Young Snowboarders

Wool Socks – Buy thick wool socks to keep those toes toasty warm.

Base Layer – Choose a long sleeve shirt/onesie and pants made of merino wool base or polyester.

Sweater – A nice thick sweater made of fleece or sweat wicking material like wool or polyester.

Pants: Pants made of fleece, merino wool or polyester.

Fleece Bunting suit – For babies use a fleece bunting suit instead of a sweater and the extra pants.

Snow Suit – For children aged 2 use a onesie. Diaper changes on the snow will be easier since you can lay them on their own snow suit for the change.

Winter jacket and Bib style snow pants – For older children choose between a two piece or a one piece. Two piece snow suits can be easier for potty breaks, just make sure to buy the snow pants with a bib to avoid getting snow up the back.



Mittens - Choose a mitten that has a long wrist and can tighten over the jacket.

Bonus. A mitt is even better if there is a zipper to open the mitten all the way up to place the hand and thumb into the mitten. Other “nice to have” features include a clip to attach the mitt to the jacket.

Toque – Choose a thinner fleece balaclava style toque for under the helmet on colder snowboarding days. This will cover the whole face including the neck area and prevent snow from creeping in.

Boots – Regular winter boots will work for younger children (age 1-2) that are snowboarding. For older children 3 ½ + snowboarding boots become necessary for extra ankle stability while carving.





Snowboarding Gear for Young Snowboarders

Helmet – Make sure the helmet fits properly and choose one with some extra insulation to keep those heads warm on cold days.

Goggles – A pair of goggles will protect the face from the wind. These are not completely necessary for a good day on the bunny hill with the littles but are a nice to have item for those colder days and especially when heading up the chair lift.

Snowboard Boots – Keep the ankle secure in snowboard boots.

Snowboard – The After School Special by Burton Riglet comes with both the board and the bindings. The well designed board is perfect for the little ones to learn how to board slide and eventually carve. Younger snowboarders (age 1-2) can use regular winter boots while a child that is 3+ is recommended to use snowboarding boots.

Sizing: Typical Sizing by age	
2 year old	80 cm (Can rent 70cm)
3-4 year old	80 cm
4 year old	80-90 cm



Riglet Reel – The riglet reel is another *nice to have* item. The reel gives the parent the option of pulling their child around on the snow. This is helpful when trying to make it to the lift and back to the chalet.

Snowboard Harness – A snowboard harness is another *nice to have* item. Most of Born to be Adventurous' suggestions for teaching a toddler (age 1-3) to snowboard start by using a harness to help out on the hill. The harness helps prevent hard face plants or hits to the head.

Note: Harnesses also can allow you to hold onto your child while going up a chair lift at the hill.

Hand warmer – Hand warmers can be put into the boots or mittens to keep those hands toasty warm on cold days!





Getting Started

When your toddler **first puts on their board** give them a chance to get used to the feeling. They may last only 10 minutes! Have a blast your first time with these 6 tips:

Pull them

Whether you have the riglet pull cord or you attach your own rope to the snowboard try pulling them around on flat ground. *For the really little ones this might be all that you do with them all year!*

Jump

New skills are all about feel so have your toddler jump with the board on flat ground.

Start small

Start on a small sled hill or partway up the bunny hill. Let them go straight down a very short distance to try it out for the first time.

Do NOT Give Instructions

Young children learn through exploration and play. By giving no instructions kids can adjust their body to keep balance on the board, crouch for more stability and may even slide on their front or backside.

Avoid big falls

Try to prevent big falls. This is their first experience and you want them to love it so that they keep asking for more!



End Early

Your child is having a blast! End the session early and have some hot chocolate and remind them that they will get to go again. Ending on a high note means that the child will still remember the great experience they had snowboarding and want to come back for more! **Don't stress out if they cry** and still end with the hot chocolate. Chances are they will remember the fun they had with you drinking hot cocoa.

Should you do lessons?

It all depends on the comfort level of the parents. Most hills offer snowboard lessons for young shredders around the age of 4. Lessons before 4 may not be that beneficial for your money spent unless you go often. The bonus of lessons is that will also give the parents a few hours to shred by themselves!



Learning to Snowboard with a Harness

The following phases are a guide for teaching your young child to snowboard. I suggest using a harness specifically for children under 4 years old. Some **children, especially if your start when they are younger, will stay in a phase for a year or two before progressing to the next phase.**

Avoid too many tips since children automatically do many of the skills with a harness on. Some helpful suggestions as they get better include :

- Lift the toes
- Look where you want to go
- Point where you want to snowboard.

Please Note: Teaching without a harness is possible especially for 4 year olds. I recommend starting with a harness for children age 3 and under to prevent those hard faceplants.

Learning to Snowboard with a Harness

Phase 1

Arms Reach- Keep your toddler within arm's reach on the harness. This way you can hold them up to prevent them from face planting and keep them up if they lean to far back. Often with a light pull on the harness the child will automatically move into board sliding.

Phase 2

Extend the Harness - Try giving an occasional light tug on the harness. This should help your little one boardslide back and forth.

Stop Helping – Use the harness as a safety net. Avoid helping them board slide.

Phase 3

Adjust the Harness – Adjust the harness so that one attachment is on the front and the other attachment is on the back. Light tugs will help them rock from front side to back side.

Phase 4

Leave the Harness and Play Follow the Leader
Have your little one follow you down the hill doing only a few carves at a time.





Teaching your child to get up while Snowboarding

Expect to help your little one up the first time you go snowboarding. Helping your little one up all the time after they have fallen can be tiring and so it is nice when they learn to get up themselves!

What Age? 4 year olds and some 3 year olds will be able to learn this skill.

When? After they have gone snowboarding a couple of times.

How? First tell them they are learning a new important skill and that is exciting! Then use these tips to teach them how:

1. Lift legs up and roll onto tummy (Ideally so legs are downhill)
2. Put hands down in front of you
3. Walk hands all the way to the feet/snowboard
4. Push up!

Once they have learned to get up on their own encourage them to get up by themselves every time they fall. Remember **there may be occasions where you will still help them** up after they have fallen.



Enjoy the Experience

Snowboarding with toddlers and preschoolers is a blast. Make sure to take some pictures and enjoy the experience together as a family.





Stay Tuned

Any questions or Feedback Contact Annika Mang at
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Make sure to sign up for the e-mail list at
BorntobeAdventurous.com so you do not miss out on any future
FREE Snowboarding Guides or news!

Stay tuned for a **second E-Book “Snowboarding with Toddlers and Preschoolers Part II”** Topics include tips for teaching your preschooler:

- to snowboard without a harness
- ride the magic carpet (lift system) by themselves
- push themselves to the life and more!

