

## **Buying the Right Figure Skates for Your Child**

Use the following guidelines when looking for figure skates for your child:

### **Buy your child's skates at a skate shop that knows figure skating and the different figure skating levels**

Purchase your child's skates from a store that deals exclusively with figure skates and is willing to work with you on finding a satisfactory fit. Find a dealer that has fit other figure skaters as well as mounted and sharpened blades properly. Don't go to a discount or department store or to a sporting goods store to buy skates for your child. Be prepared to spend at least \$150-\$250 for new skates.

### **Is buying used boots and blades okay?**

Good used skates can be okay for your child, especially in the beginning stages. If you do buy used, you may have to know a bit about the brand and model of the boot and blade you purchase. Ask your coach about suggestions on what to look for. Sometimes a good used boot and blade set is better than an inexpensive, lower-quality new boot and blade. Make sure the boot has support and the blade has some "sharpening life" left in it. Ask questions about the boot and blade if you buy at a skate swap or from another skating family.

### **Correct fit**

The foot has to fit in the boot so that there is no extra room in the boot, especially in the heel. The lacings should be about half an inch apart from the beginning to the instep and may go wider when you lace the skates to the top. Some boots have a higher arch built in than others. The skater should try on several pairs of boots if possible for a correct fit.

Most boots and blades are bought separately, but in the beginning stages of figure skating boot and blade combinations are available and acceptable.

### **Appropriate quality of the boot/blade to the level of skating and the amount of time on the ice**

A boot that is too stiff for the level of skating will not break in, and a child will not want to skate for long if the skates hurt. Explain to your child that a good boot may hurt at first and to expect a "break-in" period.

Many skate companies have a web site that describes an appropriate boot/blade combo for a particular level of skating.

### **Appropriate quality of the boot/blade combination to the size of the individual**

A small skater doing a lot of skating and progressing fast may need a higher quality boot and blade than the same size skater who puts in less ice time and less aggressive practice.

The higher quality blades are sharpened less often and have a nice flow on the ice. Again, companies publish general suggestions.

Don't skimp on your child's blade. As he or she begins to master spins and jumps, the quality of the blade will affect spins and jump quality.