LESSON PLAN # 1: A HIKE WITH POLES

Ensure the parents are informed in advance as to your expectations regarding clothing, footwear, drinks and snacks for the participants. Plan a hike that will take one to one and a half hours of walking. Include interesting point along the route, such as a beaver pond, creek or lake. Have a special activity planned for the middle or the end of the hike, such as a campfire with treats, or a game followed by refreshments.

Specific Objectives:

- 1) Introduce children to walking with poles "Ski Striding"
- 2) Develop a "team" feeling with other children.
- 3) Emphasize the importance of bringing fluids and nutritious snacks on a hike.
- 4) Improve aerobic fitness.

Key Teaching Points:

- Encourage watching of the weather by the children; develop awareness of the natural environment.
- Ensure that all participants are dressed properly for the hike.
- Encourage noticing features along the hike and ask questions about them.

- Ski Poles or hiking poles for all participants.
- Help from parents and other coaches.
- Map of the route for each of the hikers, also a guide book with information about the flora and fauna in the area.
- Refreshments/ lunch, fluids and high energy foods, extra clothes.
- One or two first aid kits, depending on the size of the group.
- Cell phones and bear spray in case of emergency.

Skill	Description	Time
Warm Up	Game: The raging river Draw two lines in the dirt. Have the children stand behind one of the lines. Pretend that in between the lines	5 min.

	there is a raging river. Ask the children to get to safety on the other side by jumping (forwards, backwards and sideways), hopping, leaping, tuck jumping, explosion (jumping jack in the air), lunging, tuck jumping etc Don't fall into the raging river!	
Stretching	 Coach leads slow rotational exercises; head, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles. Coach demonstrates a static stretch for quads and hamstrings. The children try it, holding it for 5 seconds. No bouncing. They should stretch as much as they can without pain. Relax and repeat. 	5 min.
Hike	 Coach to demonstrate the "Ski Striding" movement: walking with poles in an exaggerated stride with a heavy emphasis on a push from the toe and a push from the pole. The coach leads the group on the planned hike and creates interest by use of the trail features. Hop over dry riverbed stones, skip over long flat sections, jump over a log on the trail, and point out interesting natural features along the way. The coach also reminds the children to drink enough fluids and eat snacks at appropriate times. Please also emphasize the importance of proper nutrition and health benefits. This is also a great opportunity of the coach to talk to each of the children individually to create a personal connection and a sense of belonging. 	60-90 min.
Stretching	Lead the children in some upper and lower body stretches of side twists, forward bends, hamstring and quad stretches. Also stretch the arm muscles.	5 min.

LESSON PLAN # 2: GAME DAY

Plan a practice session with a focus on games. Be Creative! It helps to have these games in different areas/sections of the playing field, it give the idea of stations and keeps interest.

Specific Objectives:

- 1) Introduce children to a variety of fun games that incorporate strength, speed, agility, endurance and develop overall fitness.
- 2) Develop a "Team feeling"
- 3) Have FUN!

Key Teaching Points:

- Develop overall coordination and fitness by playing running games and adding challenges such as ball throwing with accuracy.
- Develop listening and concentration by having games where children must remember to follow rules closely.
- Team work and camaraderie while competing with each other.

- Help from parents and/or other coaches.
- One or two soccer balls and two nets, or something to outline a net (pylons, tree stumps etc)
- Assortment of smaller balls (about 15)
- Pylons (about 10-15)

Skill	Description	Time
Warm Up	Go for a light jog around a field or on a path. Add variations like bounding , ski striding in a classic style as well as a skate ski style – use your arms too!	5 min.
	Coach leads in various stretching exercises; head, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles. The	

Stretching	children try holding the stretch for 5 seconds. No bouncing. They should stretch as much as they can without pain. Relax and repeat.	5 min.
Speed/sprints/balancing Game: Red light/green light	Red light/green light: Mark off a playing area. The coach stands at one end of the field. The children stand in a line at the other end of the field facing the coach. When the coach yells "green light" they run forward. When the coach yells "red light" the children have to do a static balancing pose – like a classic ski pose (standing on one leg leaning forward and the arms parallel along the body towards the back). Make sure to alternate the left and right leg for balancing. Then the coach yells "green light" again with alternating "red lights" until the children are at the other end of the playing field. NOTE: To make this game even more challenging and interesting, consider having the children wear their ski boots and use old skis for this game.	10 min.
Speed/Agility Game: Racers vs. Course Marshalls	Game: Racers vs Course Marshalls: Mark off a playing area and set up pylons in a random pattern. Create two teams, one who will be the "Racers" and the others who are the "Course Marshalls". The object of the game is that the Racers will knock over the pylons and the Course Marshalls will set them upright again. They must travel around by means of the mode that you call out however: it can be bounding, ski striding two footed jumps, single leg hops (switch feet), etc. NOTE: The Racers cannot kick the pylons over and send them flying out of the area, if this happens they get penalty points. At the end of the game add up the number of pylons still standing and determine the "mightiest force".	15 min.
Speed/Agility/Strength Game: Snatch the Bacon	Snatch the Bacon: Mark off a playing area and ensure that it is quite large. Fix two "home bases" on opposite sides of the area. Form two balanced teams of children,	15 min.

Cool down and Wrap Up	Conclude the session with stretches and a round of "what was your favorite activity".	5 min.
Teambuilding Game: Zim, Zam, Zoom	Zim, Zam, Zoom: Have the children form a circle facing in. The coach is in the middle. Going around the circle, Everyone says their name clearly, one at a time, so that everyone can hear it. The coach then points at a child and says "Zim" or "Zam" or "Zoom". If the coach says "Zim", the child they pointed to had to say the name of the child on their right; if "Zam", they have to say the name of the child on their left; and if "Zoom", they have to say their own name. If the child makes a mistake or hesitates too long, they have to switch placed with the coach.	10 min.
Coordination Game: Handball	Handball: Mark off a playing area with goals at opposite sides of the area. Create two balanced teams. The objective of the game is to score by throwing the handball into a net. You can choose to have a goalie or not. The ball is transferred from one team member to the other by throwing it. Each player must pass the ball in less than 3 seconds of getting possession, and can take no more than 3 steps before needing to pass the ball to a team player. Players can only use their hands, no feet – no kicking the ball! Variation: To score, everyone on a team must touch the ball without the other team touching it. At this age level the coach needs to keep track of who has touched the ball.	15 min.
	one of which will be the "Bacon Snatchers" and the other the "Guards". Put about 10-15 balls in the middle of the playing area. The "Bacon Snatchers" will try and take a ball (bacon) to their home base – only one at a time. The Guards will try and tag them as they do so. When the Bacon Snatchers get caught they lose their ball and have to do 5 penalty moves (sit-ups, push-ups etc) before they can return to the game.	

LESSON PLAN # 3: ORIENTEERING

This session will require advance planning and preparation.

Specific Objectives:

- 1) Develop aerobic fitness
- 2) Develop a "team" by relying on each other's skills in the group.
- 3) Improve speed and agility by having kids traverse natural areas with obstacles.

Key Teaching Points:

- The group stays together at all times.
- Fair play, competition and teamwork.
- Ensure the participants take turns "reading" the map. Provide assistance only if the frustration level is getting too high or the children misinterpret the drawing.

- Help from parents and other coaches.
- Enough maps for each team. Maps would include clues to get to the next location on the route.
- Packing tape for taping clues to various locations.
- Ziplock bags to put maps in if inclement weather is expected.
- · Ropes to mark start and end zones.
- Headlamps for all participants, for supervising adults a first aid kit, cell phones and bear spray.
- · Fluids and high energy snacks.

Skill	Description	Time
Warm Up	Game of tag where the person who is "it" has the name of another ski club in the area.	5 min.
Stretching	Loosen up each part of the body; neck, shoulders, wrists, core, quads and hamstrings, calves and ankles.	5 min.

Orienteering	Place kids on balanced teams based on their ability. Teams will receive points for each challenge accomplished. The coach must pre-run the course and leave clues where needed. At each station an assistant coach, or parent, is present with the challenge for that location. Examples of challenges are push-ups, stairs, ski striding, etc. and some rest stations with activities that require creativity and teamwork like answering a question about ski waxing, ski equipment, racing rules, trail etiquette etc. Be creative!	60 min.
Cool down and recover	Stretching and some yoga to stretch out the tired muscles! Have a drink too.	5 min.

LESSON PLAN # 4: ROCK CLIMBING OR BOULDERING

Rock climbing and bouldering are a great way for children to tap into their natural climbing talents. Children have a high strength to weight ratio and as such have less trouble hauling themselves up a wall than most adults do. Rock climbing improves flexibility, strength, balance and allows children to think creatively as to how to reach the top of a wall.

If you have a climbing gym nearby, consider getting an instructor to lead the children through a session of rock climbing or bouldering. This exercises the muscles of the whole body, and forces concentration and visualization as they scale a wall.

All of these skills are important to cross country skiing and will improve their technique as their coach teaches them how to shift their weight and position their body for greater efficiency.

LESSON PLAN # 5: FOX HUNT

This session will require a bit of planning, but it is mostly free flow, since the children decide on the course route. Choose a natural or wooded area for a location.

Specific Objectives:

- 1) Allow children to explore the variety of natural features and develop aerobic fitness.
- 2) Focus on speed and agility of the Foxes" and the "Hunters" who will pursue them.
- 3) Ensure fair play and clear routes to allow for a successful game.

Key Teaching Points:

- Empower the children to set the route and take ownership over the Fox Hunt.
- Emphasize discussion and joint decision making.
- Emphasize teamwork.

- 20 Route markers. You can use pin flags or a bag of sawdust (which can be sprinkled on the trail) or something which you won't have to go back and pick up after the game is through.
- Bandanas or shirts of one colour to define one group, either the Foxes or the Hunters.
- Cell phone, bear spray.
- First aid kit.

Skill	Description	Time
Warm Up	Copy Cat game: Partner up all the children in the group. In each pair there will be one who is the "Cat" and one who is the "Copy". Ask the "Cat" to perform any physical movement that he/she would like and the other will need to imitate them as best they can. No talking! Suggest that they jump, bound, lunge, skip, run etc. Then switch the roles of the children.	5 min.
Stretching	Loosen up each part of the body; neck, shoulders, wrists, core, quads and hamstrings, calves and ankles.	5 min.

Endurance/Agility Game: Fox Hunt	Fox Hunt: Take the children on a jog around the perimeter of the territory which they are to stay in. Form two balanced groups and give one of the groups a bandana or shirt to wear. One of the groups will be the Foxes and the other the Hunters. Determine a home base location and define the end zone of the hunt; where the foxes must hide.	60 min.
	The role of the Foxes is to take the trail markers and to mark out a route for the Hunters to follow. Encourage them to go through the woods and make the route a bit of a challenge. Explain the importance of leaving good trail markers, especially at important junctions. At least one adult must accompany the Foxes to ensure that all goes accordingly. The adult is only there for supervision however, since the children themselves should, through good respectful discussion, decide on the route. The adult also needs to ensure that all the children are given the opportunity to give input.	
	Groups stay together and run through the woods. The Hunters follow the Foxes after about a 5 minute delay, and are on the trail to catch the Foxes.	
	The end of the Fox Hunt is marked by a whole pile of trail markers or other clues, and then the Hunters look for the Foxes. Once a Fox has been spotted, the Hunters all yell "Fox Hunt" and then all the Foxes sprint towards their home base (predetermined), while the Hunters try and tag them.	
	You can switch the roles of the groups and have another Fox Hunt.	
Cool Down	Give children a good rest to eat a snack and hydrate. Then lead them in a series of stretches and allow them some free time. Have them share their secrets as to finding the best hiding spots on the Fox Hunt.	5 min.

LESSON PLAN # 6: PLAYGROUND FUN

This session will focus on having a variety of stations which the children will cycle through. You can also conduct this session in a bike skills park.

Specific Objectives:

- 1) Focus on strength exercises using only the children's own body weight.
- 2) Focus on agility by moving in between obstacles at high speeds.

Key Teaching Points:

- Keeping the stations fun and fast.
- Variety in movement and exercising the whole body.
- Teamwork and individual work by friendly competition and a focus on personal best.

- Hockey sticks, tennis ball, soccer balls, ropes for agility ladder.
- Whistle for the coach.
- First aid kit and cell phone.
- Drinks and healthy snacks.
- Parents and/or other coaches, there should be one adult per station.

Skill	Description	Time
Warm Up	Animal Race Game: Determine an area of play, there needs to be a start zone and an end zone. You can mark this out with a rope. Everyone lines up at one end in the start zone and they stand side by side. The first child in the line calls out the name of an animal and demonstrates how one would move. Then the coach yells out the start with a countdown and a "go". Then all the children sprint as fast as they can while still demonstrating this particular animal movement. If a child stops the animal movement then they are disqualified. Once this race is over Coach chooses another child the present an animal.	5 min.

Stretching	Loosen up each part of the body; neck, shoulders, wrists, core, quads and hamstrings, calves and ankles.	5 min.
Stations	To start have children go through a strength station together where they are timed as to how many sit-ups, push-ups, burpees and squats they can do in 1 minute. Use this information to form teams. Separate the group into smaller ones of about 4 children each. Create at least 4 stations for your groups. Ideas for stations are as follows: 1) game of field hockey. 2) obstacle course. 3) sprint relay by running between cones and tagging off to their team mate. 4) Agility ladder: hopping forward on one foot or two between rungs and high stepping or side stepping down the ladder.	50 min.
Teambuilding Game: Tug of war	Separate the group into two equally balanced side and provide a long thick rope for tug-of-war. The adults can help to even the strength/weight differences if needed. You could have the boys vs the girls or dominant clothing colors on one side.	10 min.
Cool Down	Lead the children in some stretches of side twists, forward bends, hamstring and quad stretches.	5 min.

LESSON PLAN # 7: MOUNTAIN BIKING

This session can be conducted in a park, along river trails, or if you are lucky enough to have a mountain biking park nearby, that would be ideal. Mountain biking improves endurance, builds muscle strength, and improves cardiovascular health. If you are on varied terrain it also allows for the children to gain quick reflexes as they need to adjust and respond to those changes in the trails.

Specific Objectives:

- 1) Teach children the fun and adventure of mountain biking and discovering all the terrain they can bike over.
- 2) Strategizing as to how best ride down steep sections and learning about gear shifting and body positioning so that mountain biking is more efficient and FUN!

Key Teaching Points:

- Keeping the route fun and interesting for all the participants.
- Match the levels of ability to the trails that are chosen.
- Ensure that the whole group stays together.
- Try and vary the session by providing opportunities for working on technique, speed intervals (on less technical sections), hill climbing and longer sections on non-technical terrain for endurance.

- Maps of routes and trails to be explored
- Parents and other coaches to instruct the group and potentially separate them into different groups according to ability.
- Working mountain bikes for all participants, including helmets.
- Water and snacks.
- Bear spray and cell phones.

LESSON PLAN #8: CAPTURE THE FLAG

This session needs a forested area with lots of places to hide and sneak around.

Specific Objectives:

- 1) Focus on running and developing aerobic fitness and speed.
- 2) Develop teamwork and strategy.
- 3) Ensure that fair play and sportsmanship are enforced and monitored.

Key Teaching Points:

- Ensure that all participants are knowledgeable about the rules of capture the flag.
- Stress the importance of strategy and planning within the team.
- Mark out the territory of play and communicate where the parameters are.

- Two flags or anything that will be a clear marker of each team. (Stuffed animals will do as well)
- Water bottles and snacks
- Parent helpers or coaches.

Skill	Description	Time
Warm Up	If you have stairs nearby then make use of those and have the children do some stair running . Variations can be long lunges up and 2 footed hops down etc. If you do not have stairs you can warm the children up by having them lunge walk around and hopping on one or two legs as well. You can have a fun competition to see who can keep it up for 30 seconds to one minute.	5-10 min
Stretching and Strength	Have the children find a partner and do some stretching together.	10 min.

	 Facing each other sitting on the grass with legs outstretched to have the soles of their feet touching; have them hold hands or wrists and alternately pull each other forward. Have children stand back to back with arms linked. Make sure that the children are evenly matched for height and weight. Have the children lift each other up off the ground by alternating in bending over. Have the children stand in a line and take turns leap frogging over each other. Supervise closely if there is great difference in height of the children. 	
Game: Capture the Flag	 Capture the Flag: Establish two teams which are balanced for speed, age and skill. Explain the rules of the game. Ensure that each team understands where their territory is and where the boundaries are. Create a neutral space between the two established territories. Have each team hide their flag or flag substitute item, make sure that the other team cannot see where the item is or that they were spying as it was hidden. Rules: To win the game the opposing team must capture the other's flag and bring it back to their territory. If a team member is captured in the neutral territory, or the opposition's territory, the flag will be taken back and the person will be sent to a "jail" in the territory of the opposition. To be released from "jail" a team member must touch that prisoner. 	45 min
Cool Down	Lead the children in a series of stretches and talk about what strategies they used in their teams, where the great hide outs are and what their favorite part of the game was.	5 min

LESSON PLAN # 9: FROSTY RACE DAY GAME

Select an open area with designated boundaries.

Specific Objectives:

- 1) Building aerobic capacity and speed.
- 2) Focus on understanding of your role, and quick decision making.

Key Teaching Points:

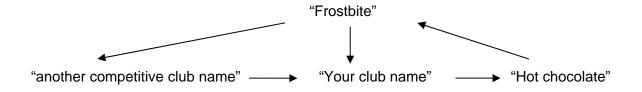
- Children assume the roles of "frostbite", "another competitive Club" (choose a name), "your Club name" and "hot chocolate".
- Mark out the territory and ensure that all the children understand the rules of the game.

- Cards with a picture of each of the roles that the children could assume. Ensure that the picture will also have a description of what this "character's" goals are; who it chases and who it is chased by. Use this template to aid you in the game.
- Parents and other coaches to help the children if they get confused and help them strategize.

Skill	Description	Time
Warm Up and Stretches	Take the children on a light jog around the territory where you will be playing. Ask the children if any of them have ever participated in a cross-country ski race before. Find points of interest and do stretches there.	15 min.
Game: Frosty Race Day	Coach to hand out the "character" cards to all the children in appropriate proportions. Explain each character in turn and their needs for success. Explain the rules for survival: 1) Each child/character must try and collect as many cards from the appropriate characters as possible to survive. Explain who will be chasing who. 2) Explain that the character card must be visible at all times. It helps to hole-punch each card and attach an	45 min.

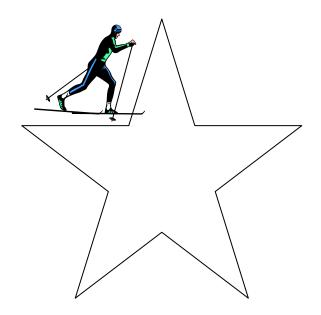
	elastic to it so that it can be secured around a wrist or arm. Laminating the cards help to ensure longevity. 3) If a card gets taken, a child who gets tagged is "disqualified" and they can come to see the coach who can solve disqualified status by giving them another card with perhaps another character. 4) "Hot chocolate" get to have a head start over the rest of the characters so that they can hide or have some distance of safety.	
Cool Down	Let each child lead you and the group on a jog through the territory and allow them to share one thing about a strategy they had for success or a great hiding place they found in this game. Have a stretch and allow kids to lead some of the stretches too.	15 min

See diagram below to understand who chases who:



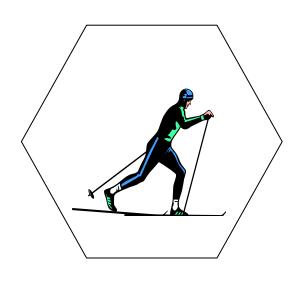
The above figure shows the relationship between all the characters and as such who will chase and tag who. As the "character" is tagged their card is removed. See below for cards that you can print off and give out to the children.





Your Clubs Name





Rival Club's name

LESSON PLAN # 10: CANOEING OR KAYAKING

This session is another way in which the children can gain fitness and strength in a different environment. If your local pool does not support this type of activity, you can try canoeing or kayaking on a warm calm day on a shallow lake. PDF's (personal floatation devices) are mandatory and wetsuits are recommended. Ensure that you are using a waiver for outings such as this.

Specific Objectives:

- 1) Gain upper body strength especially in the shoulders and the upper back as well as core strength in twisting and stabilizing the canoe or kayak.
- 2) Improved Cardiovascular fitness.

Key Teaching Points:

- Increased muscle strength, particularly in the back, arms, shoulders and chest, from moving the paddle.
- Increased torso and leg strength, as the strength to power a canoe or kayak comes mainly from rotating the torso and applying pressure with your legs.
- Reduced risk of wear-and-tear on joints and tissues, since paddling is a low impact activity.
- Raise awareness about water safety and balance, coordinating paddle strokes and paddling sides with partners in the canoe or kayak.

- Canoes, kayaks and paddles, enough for all participants.
- PFD's for all participants.
- Snack and water.
- Instructors in canoeing or kayaking, and/or very experienced parent paddlers. Ensure that the ratio of adults to children is about 1:4.

LESSON PLAN # 11: OBSTACLE COURSE

This session will need some preparation by the coach who will need to plan a course or route and find or construct challenges for the kids along the way.

Specific Objectives:

- 1) Work on a variety of skills like balance, endurance and agility.
- 2) Gain comfort and confidence in a variety of terrain.

Key Teaching Points:

- Allow children to find physical challenges all around them.
- Ensure that all activities are safe.
- Explore the area and use upper and lower body exercises.
- Ensure that children stay together in a group.

- Parent helpers or other coaches.
- Skipping ropes.
- First Aid kit and bear spray
- Water for hydration and nutritious snacks.
- Cones, tunnels, hoops, balls, bean bags, buckets, pinneys, etc

Skill	Description	Time
Warm up and stretches	Have the children skip along an open area. They can travel around while skipping, try a double spinning etc. If skipping is difficult for them they can start by hopping over the ropes and then you can raise them. Follow up by stretching all the major muscle groups in static stretches, holding each for at least 10-15 counts.	10 min.
Obstacle Course	The idea of having an obstacle course for the children is that they use a variety of movements like balance, jumping, pulling, reaching, throwing, running and	50 min.

	weaving.	
	A course can be set up on a field using a variety to props to help create interest or variety of movements, or you can use natural features in a wooded area and incorporate playground or terrain park features. To create even more interest you can form two teams of equal skill and ability and then have them go head to head. Have one child from each team start the course and go through all the features and then tag off to the	
	next child on their team. This is great for teambuilding and motivation. If teams do not seem to be evenly matched, make adjustments to the team make up so that it is a fair match up.	
	A good idea is to build on a skill each time the team has gone through a round of the course. You could have them do certain sections backwards, hopping on one leg, lunging, ski striding, adding a challenge keeps it interesting for everyone.	
	Allow kids to have some input into the course set-up and change up. They have a keen eye for fun too.	
	Allow for breaks in between the rounds so that kids can have a drink of water and a snack.	
Free Time	Having some unstructured play is good for the children to explore the area and make up their own games. Ensure that they stay in a confined area where you can properly supervise them.	15 min
Cool Down and Stretch	Lead the children in some upper and lower body stretches of side twists, forward bends, hamstring and quad stretches. Also stretch the arm muscles.	5 min

LESSON PLAN # 12: SCAVENGER HUNT

This session will require a bit or pre-work and coordination, to pre-run the course and leave clues and stashes or goodies in different places. It is a great end-of-season session.

Specific Objective:

- 1) Teamwork and cooperation in solving clues and finding objects along the way.
- 2) Speed and endurance in completing the scavenger hunt in a specific time frame

Key Teaching Points:

- Staying together as a team and helping each other.
- Power of observation and problem solving use all the skills of the group.
- · Explain the rules of the Scavenger Hunt.

- Parents and other coaches.
- List of items to find.
- Bags for each team to store the collected items.
- Prizes for the teams at the end of the Scavenger Hunt.

Skill	Description	Time
Warm up and stretches	Take the children on a light jog around the perimeter of the area in which you will be having the Scavenger Hunt. It would be great if this area was the same as where they ski in the winter. Then have the children play a game of tag (boy's vs. girls, if appropriate) and lead them in a series of stretches.	10 min.
Scavenger Hunt	Separate the children into small groups of about 4 participants each. Ensure that each group has a list of all the items to find. Explain that they must stay together at all times.	60 min.
*	Have the children gather at least 20 different items, try to make them ski-related. At the end of the time limit have the children gather back and give them all a chance to have some water and	

	a snack. Or provide them with a treat for all their hard work.	
	In the meantime, tally up the number of items that each team was able to find and give points for those and some for creativity too.	
	Celebrate the success of the hunt and give out a small prize to each child who participated.	
Cool Down	Lead the children in some upper and lower body stretches of side twists, forward bends, hamstring and quad stretches. Also stretch the arm muscles.	10 min.

LESSON PLAN # 13: GYMNASTICS

Gymnastics will increase strength, flexibility, strength and coordination, all very important in cross country skiing. The children will also learn balance and power and find new ways to move their body. If your local gymnastics club has coaches who are interested in conducting a session for your participants, consider this session for a rainy day.