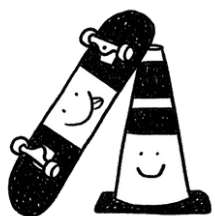
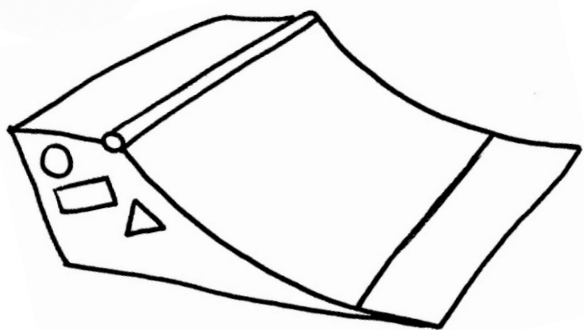


# SKATE LIKE A PRO

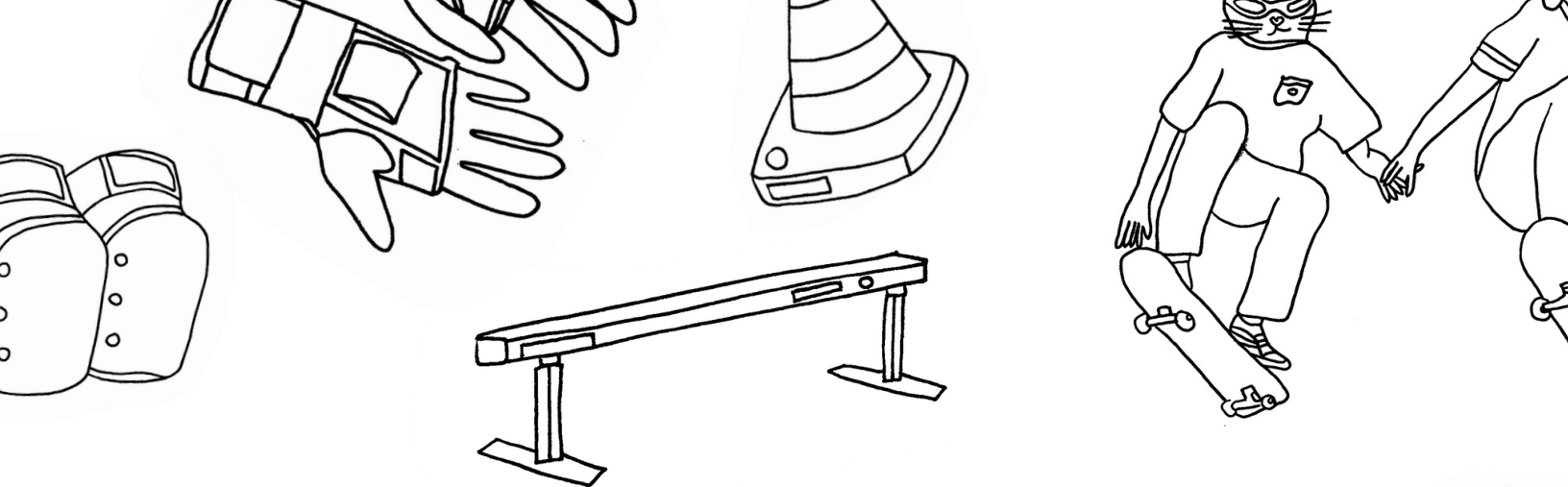


## TOOLKIT

2ND EDITION, 2021







# WELCOME TO YOUR SKATE LIKE A GIRL TOOLKIT!

We're excited to get started, but first we wanted to thank everyone who helped make this document possible. Our partners, community members, and staff went above and beyond putting this toolkit together, we wanted to take a moment to recognize all of their time, energy, and hard work.

1st Edition Written and edited by Cassie Bliley, Soph Elden, Kristin Ebeling,  
and Kwame Salmi-Adubofour.

2nd Edition Written and edited by Alexa Berriochoa, Erin Hansen, and Ronnie Toms.

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Big shout out to Ashley Masters, Terence Stilin-Rooney, and Kim Woozy for your words, support, and edits. Shout out to Benji Haungs, founder of Skate Like a Girl Portland, for creating the first iteration of the Skate Coaches manual, the foundation upon which our best practices were built. Thank you to Meg for revamping the Pronouns and Advocacy & Ally pages. Thank you to Miles Schulman for your initial ideas. Additional thanks to everyone who provided photos and art, it brought this project to life.

Photos by Taylor Ballard, Troy Nebeker, Leslie A. Zukor, Adrian Yanez, Norma Ibarra, Olga Aguilar, Megan Clements, Kim Woozy, Soph Elden, Kristin Ebeling, and Daniel Tran.

Art by Jess Wu

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This Toolkit was written in collaboration with our partners at Up2Us Sports. Their unique and innovative youth development content was essential when putting this project together. A special thanks to Mariana Folco, Andres De La Peza, Ryan Brown, and Adrienne Moore for their unwavering support.



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# WHY THIS TOOLKIT?

**Skateboarding encourages** innovation, determination, and resilience; attributes that are best acquired through experiential learning and authentic conversations. However, when it comes to creating a more inclusive community, we all know there are many barriers to success.

This toolkit was created to help establish a **base curriculum** that facilitators can use as their “go-to” manual when planning out their Skate Like A Girl skateboarding program. With help from our long-time staff and facilitators, we have gathered the best tips and practices to help you work with individuals of different learning styles, successfully facilitate a positive learning environment, and plan games and activities in various program models. Take this document as a guide rather than a set of strict expectations.



## WHAT ARE WE ABOUT?

### MISSION

To create an inclusive community by **promoting confidence, leadership, and social justice** through skating.

### VALUES

We value **experiential learning** and **civic participation**, by providing continual opportunities to be involved in the skateboarding community.

### VISION

**Empower young people**, especially women & trans folks, to grow into strong, confident leaders who promote and implement social equity.

### WE DON'T COACH, WE FACILITATE!

- **Use fewer words**; we value experiential learning.
- **Give bite-sized tips** along the way, not all at once.
- **Slow it down** to give your students space and time to practice.
- **Set your student up** to be their "own coach" and support their peers!

#### The Skate Like A Girl Toolkit offers the facilitator:

1. The knowledge to safely facilitate skateboarding.
2. Access to games and ideas for a class curriculum.
3. Behavior management tips to meet youth where they are.

# BEHAVIOR CODE



\* **Setting up basic ground rules** helps students know what to expect, how to act, and who to look for when they need guidance.

Establishing them on the **first day** of your program, session, or event allows everyone to be on the same page. Coming up with these guidelines as a group can help build community and a sense of trust. By working together, we make sure that everyone is held accountable for their actions.

## 3 NON-NEGOTIABLES

1. **NO UNSUPERVISED ACTIVITY**
2. **NO PHYSICAL VIOLENCE**
3. **NO VERBAL HARASSMENT**

### SETTING UP COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

Community agreements are social contracts agreed upon by participating students and facilitators. As a group, agree on consequences. A common consequence of a violation of the agreement might be sitting out for five minutes to calm down. The consequence should be clear and simple.

Here are some examples from real community agreements that you might consider, though clearly they won't all result in a consequence:

- One Diva, One Mic
- We skate on our feet / No "butt-boarding"
- Stay in view of the facilitator or coach
- Respect the gear
- Ask for breaks: bathroom, water, snack, rest
- Shout **"BOARD!"** when your skateboard flies out from under you
- Be safe and wear safety gear
- Ask for help
- Support the people around us
- Take care of each other's personal space
- **HAVE FUN!**

### PRACTICE CONSENT

**Always ask participants before touching their bodies**, never take pads off of a skater without asking consent first. Understand that as a facilitator you are in a position of power, and it's important to allow skaters to advocate for themselves by always respecting their options.

### ENSURE ADVOCACY AND ALLYSHIP

**Address moments of harm without vilifying anyone.** We believe that hurt people hurt people. Setting boundaries is important. Boundaries are simply what is okay and what is not okay. Some examples are "I don't want my picture taken" or "I don't want any help".

We all have gaps in our awareness, norms that we haven't unpacked, and things that reinforce problematic behavior that we do unintentionally. Becoming **aware of our implicit bias** allows us to take more beneficial actions in the future.

### INTRODUCING PRONOUNS AT CIRCLE TIME

Allow learners to define how they would like to be referred to. The best way to do this is at the beginning of the session while the whole group is gathered. (Sharing pronouns is optional. Anyone may choose to not declare their pronouns if they wish.) The most common pronouns are "she, her, hers" "he, him, his," and "they, them, theirs."

See more on page 5.

# CONSENT

**Teaching consent** to youth is very important, however, depending on the age the topics and lessons will need to be taught and covered differently.

**As a skate facilitator there are activities where you will need to ask your participant for consent**, like holding your skaters' arms for support, or helping them with their pads.

Understanding why consent is critical for the participants' safety and comfort is one of the facilitator's most important responsibilities.

These things can become routine facilitators, but it's important to not fall into complacency when it comes to checking with your participant to make sure they feel safe, comfortable, and autonomous.



## EARLY EDUCATION

The most important aspect of consent for preschool-age children is to develop a shared vocabulary around the concept of consent, but particularly when we're focusing on our bodies, personal spaces, and physical touches.

Most children won't use a word like "consent" to indicate approval. If they don't want to be touched they may communicate that in other ways. Facilitators should learn to be attentive to the participant's ways of expressing consent.

Children need to understand that they can express hurt. Do not tell them that they are not allowed to cry, for example.

Model consent for the learners by offering them choices for interactions involving physical contact, such as, "would you like a high-five? It's also okay if you don't" This removes social pressure and their decision becomes autonomous. (7)

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

What does it mean to give consent?

What does consent sound like?

What should you say when you do *not* want to give consent?

What kinds of things should we seek consent for?

In addition to touching and physical space, we might seek consent for sharing something told in secret. Continually utilize and practice consent with your skaters and afford them the opportunity to make consent choices for themselves.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

At this age, an emphasis on talking with a trusted adult is important, because the students may be receiving information from multiple unreliable sources, and it is good to ensure that they have someone to ask clarifying questions to. Discussing consent between two people is important, as well as having youth practice responses to enforce their own boundaries. (7)

# PRONOUNS

**At Skate Like a Girl**, we are committed to creating spaces where everyone feels physically and emotionally safe. In order to not misgender the people we serve and to refer to everyone accurately and in a way that feels good to them, we ask everyone to share their pronouns during our group circle time at the beginning of class. If someone does not wish to share their pronouns and opt to just use their name instead, that is completely okay. Asking to share pronouns is a best practice we've adopted in every program we run in all 3 chapters, Seattle, Portland, and the SF Bay Area, and has been widely embraced by all.

## What are pronouns?

### (And why are they important?)

Pronouns are simply what we call other people when we don't call them by name. Without pronouns we'd be saying things like, "Alex is going out to Alex's car and Alex will be right back." Instead we say "his car" or "they'll be right back." We use pronouns a lot.

**Pronouns are how we gender people most regularly through casual conversation.** If someone is constantly having people refer to them inaccurately, such as saying, "he is taking a break" when they have shared that they are identifying as "they/them." It can result in discomfort, emotional harm, and damaging to the trust and connection we are looking to build in our community.

## How can I do my best with pronouns?

If you learn someone's pronouns and they are different than what you're expecting or used to, their pronoun may not come easily to you at first. It's important to practice. Practice referring to that person with their pronouns not just when they are around, but all the time. This will help you get used to it and begin to build that muscle memory. Just like landing that kickflip, you've got to practice, practice, practice.

**When you mess up, correct yourself as soon as you can and move on.** "Riley is at her- *I mean their-* desk." No need to apologize and make things weird, just keep moving forward. Don't hesitate to remind other people when they mess up, if they haven't corrected themselves. It's important to help others practice too.

People can be curious and ask questions. "Why do you use they/them pronouns? Are you a *boy* or a *girl*?" Nobody should be made to feel obligated to answer these questions. It's important to intervene and remind the person being questioned that they don't have to answer them.

## Why do you ask pronouns?

In English, he/him and she/her are gendered pronouns. We use them casually to refer to people when we aren't using their name. It is one of the most important ways that we interact with people and their gender.

At Skate Like a Girl we have lots of different types of people in our community. We have trans and non-binary folks, girls and boys with all different types of clothing, hair styles, and ways of expressing themselves. Rather than assume we know someone's pronouns, **we invite everyone in our community to share their pronouns, if they wish, so that we can refer to them accurately and in a way that feels good to them.** Everyone deserves to be seen and valued for who they are and affirming people's gender and pronouns is one way we are committed to doing that.

## Bonus questions:

### Aren't we all just male or female?

### Why shouldn't we assume people's pronouns?

Gender, like many things, is a bit more complicated than at first glance. The reason we don't assume pronouns is because we know there are many people in our community whose pronouns and gender get assumed incorrectly. We want to do right by those folks. In order to do that we have decided to move away from assumptions and ask everyone to share their pronouns. **We believe it creates a more thoughtful and proactive community.**

While we won't go into depth here, know that biological sex is much more complicated than male/female and that gender, (how you understand yourself), is separate from biological sex (your hormones, chromosomes, and anatomy). When we're talking about pronouns, gendered language, and other ways we affirm people, we're talking about gender (how one understands themselves to be) and not biological or anatomical sex.



# ADVOCACY & ALLYSHIP

**Our goal** at Skate Like A Girl is to create a safe and positive environment based in care and connection. We know that sometimes negative and harmful comments and actions happen, between participants, participants to staff, and even between staff members. These negative interactions may be related to body size, gender identity, race/ethnicity, other aspects of identity, or numerous other factors.



## WE WANT OUR COMMUNITY TO:



**SUPPORT AND  
BE ALLIES**



**BE SUPPORTED TO BE  
THEIR BEST SELVES**



**BE RESILIENT IN  
THEIR MISTAKES**



**BE ABLE TO SET AND RESPECT  
APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES**



**AFFIRM PEOPLE FOR WHO THEY ARE  
AND THE DIFFERENT GIFTS  
THEY BRING TO OUR COMMUNITY**

## THINGS WE BELIEVE HELP US SUPPORT THESE VALUES:



### HIGHLIGHT WHAT YOU WANT

(RATHER THAN WHAT YOU DON'T WANT)

Instead of telling someone, "stop doing X," when possible, frame it in the positive. "Get off of your board" compared to "***I need you to have both feet on the ground right now.***" This method provides a way for someone to succeed and not just avoid failing.



### HURT PEOPLE HURT PEOPLE

No kid is a 'bad kid' and no person is a 'bad person.' When people are failing to treat people appropriately it is often because that person has an unmet need. Finding out what is going on for them can be part of addressing the harm that they caused.



### BOUNDARIES ARE IMPORTANT

Boundaries are simply **what is okay** and **what is not okay**. We often have different norms or boundaries than people will experience in other places. Making it clear what is okay and what is not okay is part of how we keep our community supportive, healthy, and positive.



# LESSON PLAN

At Skate Like a Girl, all of your clinics are about the participant. Think about their “take away”! You can ensure that skaters are getting the most out of their session by providing a **"Goldilocks Challenge"**. These are tricks that aren't too easy or too hard, just the right touch of difficulty to leave someone with the self-confidence that they were able to do it! It is your job as a skate coach to facilitate your students learning, pushing them along and ensuring feelings of support.



## BEFORE SKATING, CIRCLE UP

**Introduce yourself with your name and pronouns**, as well as a silly ice breaker question "Would you rather eat nothing but bananas forever or have bananas for fingers? Go around the group so that everyone is offered a chance to share, if they want to.

- Ensure you know your skaters' names and pronouns.
- Get a feel for the participants by asking relevant questions related to their feelings and skating experience.
- Set up basic boundaries and/or community agreements.

## The 5-Finger Check-in



### 1 finger

I don't feel confident about skating



### 5 fingers

I feel super confident about skating

## FIGURING OUT STANCE

The best location to start your students is on grass or flat ground. Line up students and ask them to stand with their skateboard between their legs. For new skaters, explain basic terms: nose, tail, and bolts.

Ask students to put their “front foot” on the nose’s bolts, ideally the lower 2 bolts.

## BOARD CONTROL PRACTICE

Ask students to lift their foot that's on the ground, so that they are balancing with one foot on their boards.

Ask students to put pushing foot back down, and slide the board back and forth.



## PUSHING

Verbally explain the push, and then demonstrate it.

EXAMPLE:

*"This is pushing position. This is the stance we use to move ourselves and gain speed."*

*"Watch me as I demonstrate"*

*"Now it's your turn to try. When I say go, push to the other side of the black top. Go!"*

When your students try, have them start with smaller pushes before big ones. Use "Heart over your Knee" cue to make sure kids are centering their weight over the foot on the board rather than the foot on the ground. *"Has anyone ridden a scooter before? Can you show me how you ride an imaginary scooter? Okay, what is different about riding a scooter and pushing on a skateboard?"*

## TIPS:

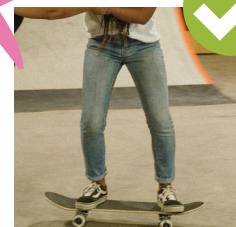
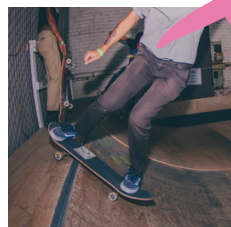
- Emphasize that both knees need to be bent and their body stay centered over the board. Remind them that “control is the goal!”
- Point out the importance of not putting their front foot on the nose of the board for the risk of falling forward.
- Sometimes kids will choose a stance to push and cruise but learn to do tricks in the *opposite* stance. Stress the importance of picking a front foot and sticking to it, in order to avoid backtracking later!

## CRUISING POSITION

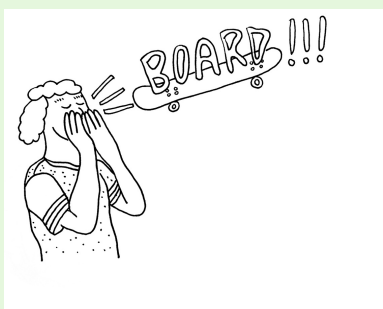
Once pushing is mastered, have students learn how to enter the "cruising stance." Do this stationary first, and slowly add speed as students master board control and foot position. Remind skaters they can use their arms to balance.

- 1: Skater is in pushing position
- 2: Place back foot perpendicular on back bolts
- 3: Pivot front foot to match the angle of back foot
- 4: Bend knees low like sitting in a chair and use arms for stability

## TECHNIQUE:



The skater should be bending their knees away from each other instead of toward each other.



Instruct the students to yell "**BOARD!**" when their skateboard shoots out!

## STOPPING

The easiest way for beginners to stop is to **jump off with both feet**. Make sure your student jumps with both feet at the same time to avoid The Splits.

If your students are ready to learn how to stop without jumping, teach them the how to **drag their heel** across the ground to come to a slow stop. If they're not quite ready for that, introduce using **slow-down 'pushes'** to bring your self to a stop by touching your foot to the ground to slow down little by little.

Once you've gone over all the above skills you can give students an opportunity to practice pushing, cruising, and stopping along a straight line, and back over a determined space.

## DROP-DOWNS

After your students can push, cruise, and stop, they can learn the drop-down. Drop-downs are especially helpful in teaching kids to get into their **trick position** without having to pivot their foot. Learning to be comfortable with this stance will allow them to practice tic-tacs, drop-ins and eventually ollies!

1. Back foot on the tail with front wheels in the air so the board is in an upright position.
2. Cover the front bolts matching the angle of your back foot without applying pressure so the board is still upright with both feet on.
3. Slam down the front wheels to bring all four wheels to the ground landing in trick position.

Once they can do a drop-down, if it feels appropriate, have them practice doing it in reverse — putting pressure on the tail from their trick position to set them back up into an upright position.

This exercise will practice control and set students up for more useful techniques, like tic-tacs, drop ins, and ollies!

## FOOT POSITIONS:



CRUISING



TRICK



## TIP:

Kids have are often reluctant to slam the front wheels hard enough to do a drop-down. This can lead to them falling backwards if they spend too much time balancing on the back wheels alone. **Encourage kids to put the front truck down forcefully.**





*Where your head goes, your body will follow!*

Beginner skaters sometimes look at their feet rather than in the direction they are headed. Remind them to **look where they want to go.**

# TURNING

## LEANING

Encourage students to get on their boards in a cruising position and demonstrate how their **board tilts when they put their weight either on their toes or their heels** and allow them to try it moving once they've mastered it stationary.

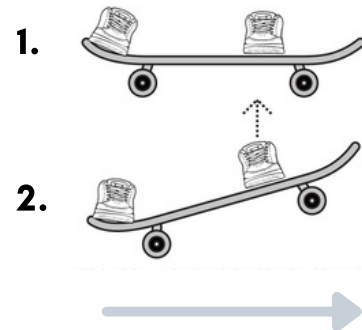
## TIC-TACS

Instruct students to get into their trick position. Instruct the student(s) to lift front foot up lightly/bend their front knee and apply slight pressure on their back foot to lift the front wheels off the ground. Ask your student to try to demonstrate tapping sounds with their front wheels.

Once your skater is able to lift their front wheels up and down, have them turn their shoulders and hips while tic-tacking. This will help initiate a turn. This is a good time to remind them to look the direction they are going, instead of their feet to help them turn the board if they're struggling.

Once students get tic-tacs stationary, they may try to do them with while moving and around obstacles.

## TIC-TAC & DROP-DOWN:



## OLLIE

The Ollie is an important trick that most students are eager to learn. After the student can demonstrate the basics of skateboarding, they may be interested in learning the Ollie. Ollies are a difficult trick and can take a lot of tries before it starts working.

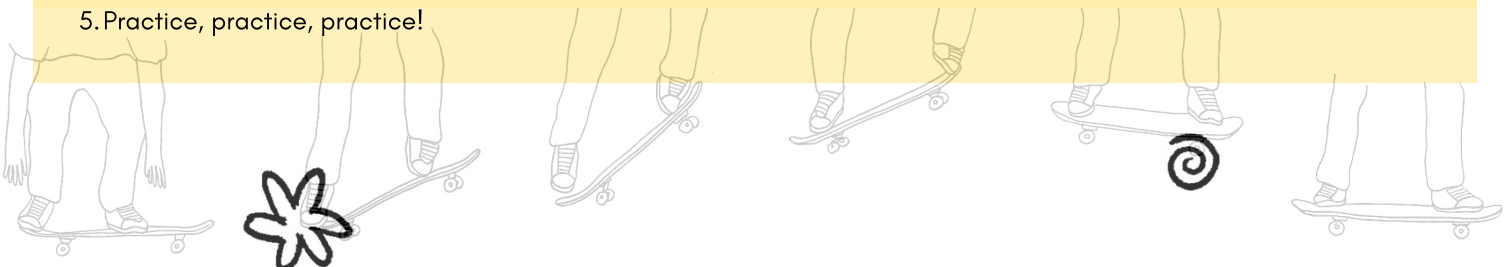
The student might be more comfortable holding onto a wall, fence, or the facilitator's hands at first.

Start by practicing on the grass, with Skater-Trainers (wheel-immobilizers), or with axle nuts tightened so the wheels don't turn. These techniques are ways to improve balance and comfort while trying.

1. Starting from a trick position. The front foot should be slightly in front of the middle of the board. All of the skater's toes should be over the board.
2. **Snap the tail down hard** by lifting the front of the board.
3. Jump off of the back foot and slide the front foot on its side up to the nose of the board so that it brings the board off the ground.
4. Bring both knees up to the same height so that the back of the board comes up and the board levels out.
5. Practice, practice, practice!



## OLLIE POSITION:



# WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY OLLIE?

## "I JUST WANT TO GET OFF THE GROUND!"

If you have a skater who can't get their ollie into the air, it could be for a few reasons:

- Not a hard-enough snap on the tail.
- Not sliding the front foot on it's side.
- Not jumping enough to allow the board to move upward.
- Not executing steps with the correct pace and timing.

Observe and help the student analyze their movement to determine why the board is not coming off the ground. Remind them to be persistent, that Ollies are difficult, and that they take a lot of practice. You don't want your skater getting discouraged before they have their opportunity to succeed.

### TIP:



Ollies and skipping have the same timing. If you have a skater who is spacing out the steps in a way that won't bring them into the air, have them practice skipping and have them mimic it on their skateboard.

## "I WANT TO OLLIE HIGHER"



As skaters start to get the ollie, they'll likely experience a period of time where they can get the board off the ground but it's not very high. For beginners, the front trucks usually go much higher than the back truck, which often don't get very far off the ground. Take this opportunity to acknowledge your skater for their progress! At this point they can ollie, and now just need to focus on refining it. **Here are some tips you can offer to help them get the ollie they want:**

Most of the time low ollies occur because the skater isn't allowing enough space under their back foot for it to come up to the level of their front foot. (This can be scary for skaters because their back foot is the one that stabilizes them.)

Have them step off their board and jump as high as they can and hit their knees as close to their chest as possible. Tell them to try doing this after snapping their tail as they slide their front foot. This will make space for the back of the board to come up to level out with the front.

If your skater is comfortable riding their board, a good way to get over this hump is to provide a small obstacle to ollie over, like a crack in the concrete or a broomstick. This will encourage the student to jump with their ollie.

If your skater seems reluctant to try this on their own you can offer to hold their arms for stability or have them hold onto something for support.



### TIP:

*"Imagine your knees hitting your chest."*

# RAMPS, QUARTER PIPES, & MORE!

Once the student can demonstrate solid skating foundation, you can introduce them to transitioned surfaces like small ramps and quarter pipes. **If your student cannot ride on flat ground comfortably, they should not try transition.** Depending on the student, it may be a good idea to have them practice rolling down or up transitions first.

If necessary, **hold arms** with your student, *not* their hands or finger tips. Remember to ask for consent first. Have your student start with both hands, then just back hand, then spotting underneath their back arm, and finally no hands at all. Once the student has gone through these three levels of support, they can try the transition on their own.

## TIP:

Ensure your student knows what it means to bend their knees or lean forward. You can do this on flat ground without skateboards. Emphasize **leaning forward** (front foot) for going down ramps, and **leaning back** going up ramps (back foot), and **bending their knees** continually.

Support yourself when supporting others—keep a wide and stable stance.



## 3 QUESTIONS BEFORE DROPPING IN:

Three questions we must answer before we teach a student to drop in:

Does the student have **basic board control skills**, like tic-tacs, turning, and knee-bending?

Is the student **proficient with drop-downs**?

Does the student **want to learn** to drop in?

## DROPPING IN

**Start the student on flat ground** with their tail down and front wheels up.

Have them try smacking the front wheels down while keeping their chin over their front knee while leaning forward.

**Move to a small flat bank.** Have them put their board so the wheels hang off into the ramp a few inches, but the back wheels and tail are still on the flat, and try smacking down and rolling. (See the photos above.) Have them smack down on the flat portion and then roll down the bank.

Finally, have the student position their board on the deck at the top of a bank. Hold the skater's front forearm if desired. (Do not hold their wrists or fingertips.) Place your back forearm firmly under their upper arm/under back armpit.

Have them drop down forcefully making sure their spine stays straight as they lean forward. Make sure to move with your student as they travel down the ramp. Remind them they must be quick and firm to make it happen. Discourage hesitation, and gradually provide less physical assistance as they practice.

Once a student is a true master of the bank drop in, bring them to a small quarter pipe. Again, hold both forearms as they try this, until they are confident enough to try it on their own.



# OTHER THINGS TO BE AWARE OF



## PARK ETIQUETTE

A busy skatepark can be daunting for beginners. Park etiquette helps to ensure that everyone can share the space safely. Experienced skaters follow formal and informal rules at the skatepark. These guidelines help determine whose turn it is to go and how each skater gets into the turn order.

- Treat skateparks like busy streets.
- Make eye contact with skaters in your area before taking your turn.
- Stand to the side while waiting for your turn.
- Observe the activity before inserting yourself into it.
- Go when it feels safe for you to do so.



## FALLING

Falling happens. When we fall, it's important to stay relaxed.

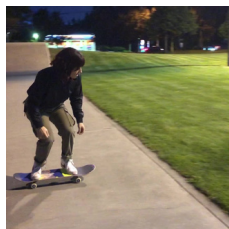
Throwing an uncooked spaghetti noodle at the ground is likely to break it because it's stiff and rigid. However, if you cook the noodle before throwing it, it will be soft and flexible. It's almost impossible to break it by throwing it. The same thing applies when we are skating. This is what we like to call "**Noodle Theory: We are all noodles floating in the broth of life**" says Soph Elden, Seattle Chapter Director. Skaters want to be soft and relaxed when they fall so they don't shatter like an uncooked noodle.

We teach skaters to **tuck and roll** by falling toward their leading shoulder, tucking that shoulder under, and rolling out across their back. This motion spreads the impact over a large area of the body. Impact isn't isolated and the risk of injury is lowered. You can practice this action with your skater on a soft surface, like grass, to help them feel more prepared when they need to do it for real.

Falls can happen quickly and unexpectedly so it's important to practice safe falling techniques so that they become instinctive and reflexive.

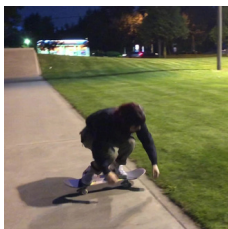
## TUCK & ROLL

### STEP 1



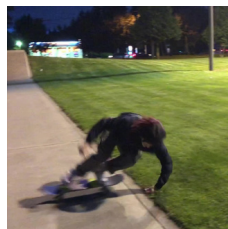
Approach with knees bent and looking in the direction they are headed.

### STEP 2



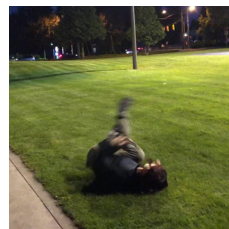
Get as low to the ground as possible to minimize impact and maximize their control.

### STEP 3



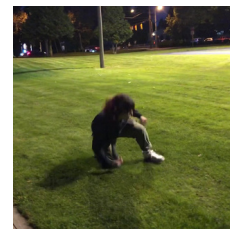
As they dismount from the board, roll to their dominant shoulder and tuck in the elbows.

### STEP 4



Continue rolling over the leading shoulder to the back with the arms and legs tucked in.

### STEP 5



Once they've rolled over their back, they should be able to pop back up on their front foot and stand up from a kneeling position.

# TRAUMA & BEHAVIOR

## WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma is a deeply distressing or disturbing experience that can happen on a large or small scale.

These bad experiences become inescapable and leave behind internal scars that can disrupt basic functions. Anyone can suffer from trauma, regardless of their identity or socioeconomic status.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR?

- Change in behavior
- Impulsive actions
- Aggression or violence
- Low sociability/isolation
- Shutting down
- Lack of awareness
- Exhaustion
- Distancing



## HOW DO WE HEAL?

There is no single or right way to heal from trauma, but at Skate Like a Girl we have learned that it begins with community and authentic relationships. As facilitators, we can be an integral part of this healing process by choosing to show up for our skaters, being trauma-informed, and fostering safe spaces to thrive. Ask questions like, *"How can I create an environment where skaters can excel? What do they need? How can I help them so that they can be on-time, present, and engaged?"* These are all great starting points to show skaters that you care.

Trauma influences how we react to different situations. When individuals are triggered or in a stressful situation their brains go into fight, flight, or freeze mode and the reactions or coping mechanisms that occur look different for everyone. While most commonly we would see this as an outburst, individuals also shut down, withdraw from activities, or appear sleepy and exhausted. Because these reactions are pre-wired into the brain, utilizing trauma sensitive coaching strategies can help diffuse situations effectively and with care. The biggest takeaway is making sure skaters feel like they matter. When they have a sense of belonging, they tend to demonstrate more positive behaviors.

All brains are different, and we have no control over the structure of them. Sometimes we don't have tools to function like other people do, so we have to learn how to do that with time, patience, and compassion. It's important to remember that our brains can change and everyone is doing the best they can. As facilitators, it's essential that we are making a conscious effort to understand where challenging behaviors are coming from and how to manage, prevent, and ultimately heal from them.

# MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

Individuals misbehave because they want attention or feel like they need to take back control. We can try to prevent misbehavior through communication and pre-planning. Try to reduce long transitions to avoid boredom and keep activities and games at the ready in case everyone is extra wiggly. Even after all this planning, anyone can still have their off-days. Below are some tips to keep in mind while dealing with misbehavior.

## MODEL THE BEHAVIOR YOU EXPECT

Remember, kids are always watching and they remember what we do and what we say. They learn how to act by watching us, so make sure to follow the rules and models that are appropriate for programs and school settings.

**Model:** empathy, good listening, question asking, accountability, and wear a helmet!

**Avoid:** profanity, phone usage, incorrect use of pronouns, lack of humility.

**Support:** your staff and volunteers and make sure you are all holding each other accountable.



## REDIRECT

This strategy can be used when skaters aren't following the rules or participating in the activity. Get their attention by introducing a new activity or task specifically for them.

## REWARD GOOD BEHAVIOR

Try not to focus on bad behavior. When students are distracted or rowdy, say something like *"I'm calling on Cassie because they are sitting quietly and raising their hand."* VS. *"Be quiet, stop talking."*



## CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO RELEASE ENERGY

Moments of anger or frustration can stem from pent up energy from a stressful day. If the vibe in the room is off or skaters are moody, give them a game that will let them run around and act silly. After a fun 10-15 min, you can wrangle them back in and get focused. It's usually a good idea to tell skaters how long they'll have, and when the time is almost up.

## SEPARATE THE SKATER FROM THEIR BEHAVIOR

Any individual can get caught up by their emotions and act out due to past trauma, or stress in their personal life. When someone does something perceived as "bad" remember to take a step back and evaluate the action, not the person.

### ACTION STEPS:

#### Step 1→ Ensure Physical Safety:

Say something, do something, remove them from the situation.

#### Step 2→ Ensure Social Emotional Safety:

Redirect their attention by complimenting them on something positive they've been doing so they understand you don't see them as "bad". Say something like, "Thanks for showing up today, I'm glad you're here"

#### Step 3 → Practice Patience:

Remember that it may take some time for the skater to become calm enough to be receptive. Provide them with the time they need.

When they are no longer reactive, talk with them calmly and try to figure out what is bothering them or explain why their actions were problematic. Provide them with an opportunity to matter, a responsibility, or way to hold themselves accountable.





# TRAUMA SENSITIVE COACHING STRATEGIES

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POWERED BY  
**UP2US  
SPORTS**

**Trauma sensitive coaching** is all about providing support for all skaters through confidence, effort, and persistence. As a facilitator, we have the amazing opportunity to foster our skater's self-efficacy by continually believing in them and guiding them through the long and tumultuous process towards success. Through authentic conversations, care, and gestures, we can set-up skaters for success.

## STRATEGY #1: TELL IT, LABEL IT, CELEBRATE IT

It's not enough to just tell children they are good, you must tell them WHY! Specific praise provides evidence for why they did well and helps them to develop positive behavior. This specific praise also models what "good behavior" looks like.

To avoid empty praise:

- **TELL** them what they did.
- **LABEL** what it's called.
- **CELEBRATE** their achievement and show them its value.

**Coach** "Hey you've been working on that kick turn for weeks and you finally got it! That's called perseverance! Nice job, high five!"

*Show it with a smile!*

## STRATEGY #2: ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS AND HAVING GREAT RESPONSES

As facilitators it's important that we give skaters opportunities to think critically and respond appropriately. Open-ended questions that can't be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" are best.

**Student** "Did you see me land that trick?"

**Coach** "No, I didn't! Give me a play by play?"

**Student** "I landed an ollie!!"

**Coach** "How did you do that?"

**Student** "I can't drop in it's too hard!"

**Coach** "Remember when you said you couldn't do a Flippy-uppy but then you learned how to and now you can? It's the same thing!"

## STRATEGY #3: LOOK AND LISTEN

As facilitators we need to be aware of our skaters wants and needs through active listening and reactive learning. Changes in environment, staffing, or activities can trigger an individual's anxiety or discomfort and in those moments of panic, their brain is focused on self-preservation.

**When someone is reactive:**

- Make sure to give them space to calm down, sit out, or take a walk.
- Don't ask what has happened until it has de-escalated.
- Check in with the skater, are they ready to chat?

(Up2Us Sports Coach Training Guide, 2018, p.19-20)

## HOW DO I UTILIZE THESE STRATEGIES IN REAL TIME?

"Last summer, I was working with a girl that didn't want to skate or participate. I asked myself, 'what does this skater need from me? What am I not giving her?' I tried different methods, and finally the one that worked was *giving her an opportunity to matter*. I asked her to be the 'skate park life guard' and gave her the responsibility of making sure people weren't running into each other at the skate park. Her disposition immediately changed, and for the first time she was stoked to be a part of camp. She started to participate in everything. Sometimes kids don't want to skate, and that's ok. Our goal isn't to create amazing skateboarders, it's to make sure everyone is having fun and participating."

— Skate Like A Girl Coach Soph, 2019



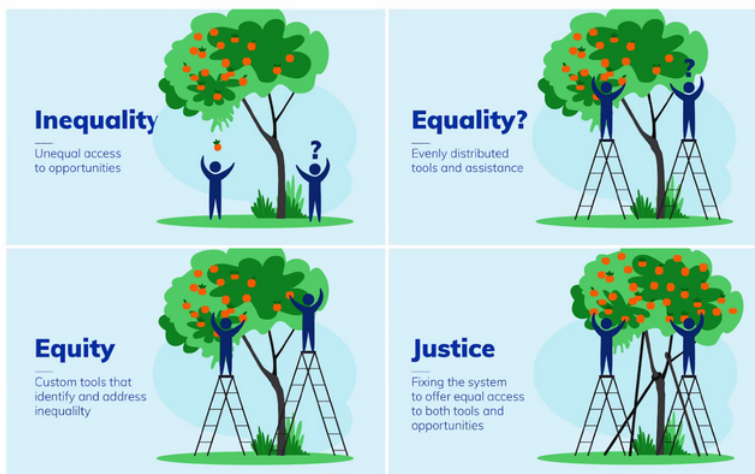
# RESPONSIBLE FACILITATION HABITS

## INSTILL MOTIVATION

**Elicit curiosity and encourage exploration.** Children are intrinsically motivated by exploration, play, mastery and success. These lay the groundwork for meaningful learning. As an instructor you can reinforce motivation through positive feedback of the kid's natural tendency. Do not dismiss opportunities to explore or be overly fearful that the children will get hurt. Fears can rub off on children. Do not rely upon incentives. The goal of an instructor is to develop a child's own inner fire towards learning. Once given a tangible award child will often stop engaging in an activity of their own accord. The best way to support long term motivation habits is through creative problem-solving and playful learning mixed with positive feedback. Children also need reminders that success is possible. A child will not be motivated to do anything if they think the activity is impossible. Prioritize social interactions. Social interaction releases dopamine and serotonin which activate the brains reward system. This provides the student with a sense of happiness and excitement when doing an activity. Face-to-face learning is the best. Everyone has a different intrinsic motivator. One student might respond better to constructive criticism, while another thrives with encouragement. Different motivation systems are caused by genes and life experiences and thus would require different approaches to motivation. (8)

## RECOGNIZE MICROAGGRESSIONS

A Microaggression is a brief statement or behavior that, intentionally or not, communicates a negative message about a non-dominant group. These can happen every day and in any situation. Many microaggressions in studies were committed by instructors. Due to the subtlety of microaggressions they can be both harder to spot and harder to shake off. They are created from a place of bias and prejudice often taught from birth by the community one is raised in. There can also be uncertainty in the execution of a microaggression, as it can come from a place of racism for example, or someone lashing out due to a bad day. Whether you are the Target, the person on the receiving end of the microaggression, Bystander, a person who witnesses the microaggression, or Perpetrator, the person initiating the microaggression, you can help to stop them from occurring. (2)



**We aim to cultivate a community for youth as well as adults to feel included and excited to be a part of skateboarding.**

This means making more space to tackle the hard topics, and constantly questioning what's acceptable or appropriate in our spaces, communities, language, and activities. Above all else, we strive to create an equitable environment for skateboarders from all backgrounds to thrive.

# COMMON PROBLEMS

## "EAGER BEAVER"

- Students can be eager to start and jump on a skateboard before putting on pads. Remind them that pads are necessary, there is no skateboarding if they do not have all their pads on.
- PRO TIP: You can try and avoid this issue by keeping skateboards out of view until you need them. Keep them stacked in the corner until everyone is ready to go.

## THEY DON'T WANT TO SKATE

- There may be individuals that don't want to participate that day or ever. Pull them aside and try to get to the root of the problem by asking them what's going on. Maybe they are having a bad day, issues at home, or they're just hungry. It's ok if skaters sit out every once and a while, just make sure they stay with the group and are doing something productive like homework or reading.
- If this issue persists across multiple sessions, communicate directly with parents or other program leaders and Skate Like a Girl leadership.

## "THAT WAS EASY!"

- If a skater is ever continually saying "that was easy" after doing a trick, they may be creating a negative environment by unintentionally putting others down.
- This is a great teaching moment because we can talk about the importance of humility. Talk to them about making space for people of all skill levels, we are all learning at our own pace!
- Immediately give them something harder that challenges them, often a variation of the trick everyone else is trying is the best bet.
- You can also give this more advanced skater the opportunity to demonstrate for their peers, provide tips to their friends, or pair them with a beginner skater to give them some one-on-one help.

## BUTT-BOARDING

- Remind skater that butt-boarding is illegal/SLAG's policy is that we skate on our feet.
- Stay firm and be consistent! Don't allow yourself to stray from the policy because skaters will remember!
- If skaters are resorting to butt boarding, you may want to consider additional structure or activities to keep them entertained. Try including some non-skateboarding activities.

## THEY GET HURT

- Skateboarding can be dangerous and falling or stumbling can happen at any age and any skill level. Remind them to stay calm, breath, and focus on what actually hurts. There is a first-aid kit available at every site. Give skater time to recollect, they can sit out or go to the nurse if necessary.
- If you are working with a group and have minimal support, ask your group to take a knee/sit on their boards while you deal with the injured participant.

## THEY DON'T WANT TO PUT ON PADS

- **For kids:** Review Skate Like a Girl's pad policy: "Wearing a helmet and pads is non negotiable". The only exception is if we have written consent from parents via note or registration paperwork that says otherwise. Regardless, stay firm! If they do not want to follow these rules, their option is to sit out and not skate.
- PRO TIP: Putting on a set of tiny kid pads is a way to bring comedic relief to the situation.
- Remind kids of how sick knee slides are, and how when you wear pads you can try new and scarier tricks.
- **For adults:** Skate Like A Girl only requires individuals to wear a helmet, the rest is up to them. We strongly recommend the use of wrist guards, as well as elbow and knee pads.

## PROBLEMATIC LANGUAGE

- Students may be inclined to use vulgar or problematic language because they are in an out-of-school setting with their friends. If you hear this language, take the skater aside and remind them that that language is not appropriate. We are here to create a safe environment and help others learn, grown, and succeed.
- It's very important to lay down the law concisely, (setting community expectations is an example of this), so that the group understands it's not appropriate. You don't want to miss this opportunity to set your expectations.
- A great way to mitigate the risk of this happening is to create **community agreements** on day 1 that all skaters agree to abide by.
- If the problem continues, talk to their parents. Sometimes the parents may allow it at home but it may not be appropriate for SLAG.

# BEST PRACTICES

## SUPPORTING INFORMAL TIME

*What is informal time and how can I use it to my advantage?*

There are two types of time we can make for children. One is formal time, which is planned, designed and structured time like lessons, games, and practice. The other is **informal time**, which is unstructured “down time”, anything in-between and before or after formal time.

Informal time is important, especially for children, because it's these moments that can make or break an individual's experience. When choosing who to sit with or who to talk to while waiting for the lesson to start, individuals social fears and anxieties can be tested. As facilitators we need to make sure that we are nurturing these connections. Make intentional spaces for people to engage with one another and hangout, it's important that even during informal time, skaters feel a sense of security and have the opportunity to build friendships before getting down to business

*(Up2Us Sports Coach Training Guide, 2018, p.10).*



## MANAGING BREAKS

### BEHAVIOR BREAKS

- Skaters who are breaking rules will be given one warning.
- If they do not change their behavior, the next step is to give them a behavior break, which is sitting to the side of your lesson group.
- After 2 minutes or so, you can ask them if they are ready to rejoin the group. If they are, let them join in. Follow up with them as needed.

### BATHROOM BREAKS

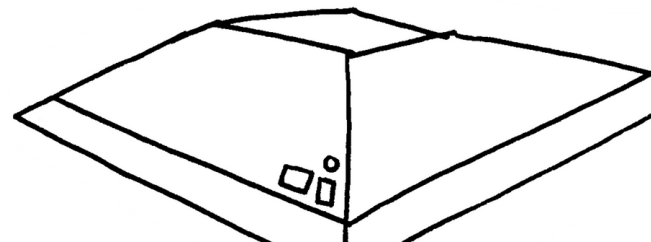
- Go over the bathroom policy with your students during the first class session.
- Depending on the site, bathroom policies may differ. If bathrooms are close by, students can be excused as needed to use the bathroom (walk themselves there). However, during other programs the bathroom may be far, and therefore students will only use the bathroom during official breaks.
- **Students should NEVER use the bathroom in pairs** without an adult ("buddy system"). As stated in the Code of Conduct: **Personnel should never be alone with a kid.** Bathroom breaks are taken as a group. One youth in bathroom at a time. Staff should know where you're going & how many kids you're taking, before you leave.

### SNACK/WATER BREAK

- Depending on the length of the program, snack breaks may or may not occur. Typically these breaks are about 10 minutes in length.
- Make sure everyone knows how long the break will be and what they are allowed to do during that time.
- This is a time for facilitators to stay engaged, talk to skaters, ask questions, etc. It is unacceptable to be on your phone during breaks!
- Ensure skaters put their garbage or lunch boxes away before returning to skate.
- Set up a post-snack activity for skaters to transition to, as some skaters take longer than others:

#### GREAT EXAMPLES:

1. Free skate with coach \_\_\_\_\_ when you're done"
2. "Join an epic game of \_\_\_\_\_ with coach \_\_\_\_\_ when you're done"
3. "Make your way to the skater circle with coach \_\_\_\_\_ when you're done"





# TRANSITIONS

## CIRCLING UP:

- Pretend there's a fire in the center (act like you're roasting a marshmallow, etc)
- Feet touching the next person's
- Hold hands
- Touch Elbows
- Sardine Circle (shoulder to shoulder in a circle)

## ATTENTION GETTERS:

- "When I say go..." (then give instructions) then say "go"
- Countdown from 5, 4, 3, 2...1 (wait for silence before speaking, and make sure you have set the expectation that only one person at a time should be speaking)
- Eye contact: "Laser beam eyes on me!"
- "Look like me" (strike a pose and the students will copy you)
- "Don't blink, I don't want you to miss it" (for younger skaters)
- Shout outs/attention for skaters who are on point (instead of calling out disruptive skaters)
- "Put your hands on your head if you can hear me"

# CLOSING THE SESSION

## PARTNER CLOSING:

- Before you leave, turn to the person next to you and tell/show them something that you learned today!
- Find a partner and make up a secret handshake. Come and show me when you're done!
- Turn to the person next to you and tell them your goal for next session!

## CLOSING CIRCLE:

- One word check out - go around and share one word that describes how they feel.
- Shout outs - go around and share props for a fellow skater.
- Self Love - go around and share one thing you are proud of yourself for.

## QUICK GROUP CLOSING:

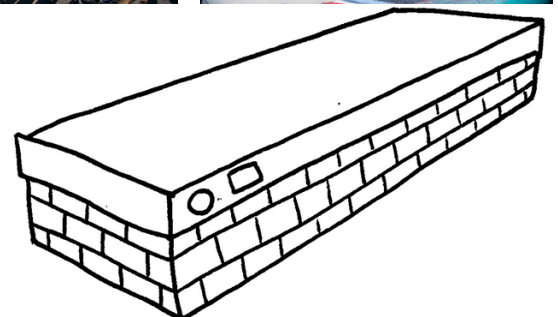
- Give 5 people a high five.
- 5 finger check out - everyone puts up fingers to show where they're at (how confident are you? How tired are you? How stoked are you to come back?)
- Hands in the center for a chant! "2,4,6,8, who really loves to skate? WE DO!"

## GROUPING STRATEGIES:

- Call out a number and let skaters (as fast/safely as possible) get in to groups of that number. (e.x. "Find groups of 7!... Groups 4!... Groups of 10!... Groups 3!") or end on whatever number you like for your next activity
- When needing to group by age to lesson group: have skaters line up without talking and just holding up how many years old they are with their fingers. Have skaters get in order of birthday month & day (also a great way to neutrally order skaters to take turns)

## LINING SKATERS UP:

- "Line up behind me"/ "Line up in front of me"
- "Line up behind my skateboard" (place skateboard where you want the line)
- Ask someone to be "line leader" - Line up behind [insert skaters name]
- Conga Line: Put your hands on someone's shoulders (also practice consent)
- Blind trust walk: One leader in front, everyone else in the line has their eyes closed



# SKATEBOARD ANATOMY

## NOSE

the front  
kicktail of the  
skateboard

## DECK

the wooden  
part of a  
skateboard

## TRUCKS

the metal  
axles that  
secure the  
deck to the  
bearings and  
wheels

## BEARINGS

the round, metal ball  
bearings that attach the  
wheels to the trucks and  
propel the skateboard  
forward

## WHEELS

the part of the skateboard  
that rolls on the ground and  
allows you to move

## HARDWARE

the screws and nuts that hold the trucks  
to the deck. often referred to as "bolts"

## TAIL

the back kicktail of the  
skateboard

## GRIP TAPE

sandpaper layer adhered to the top of the  
deck to keep shoes from slipping off

# DYNAMIC STRETCHES

Dynamic stretches (as opposed to static stretches) are active movements that help to warm up your muscles and joints by utilizing a full range of motion. They are generally a better option when preparing to skate, because they set the intention of ongoing movement in your muscles. Whereas, static stretches are a good option for cooling down because your muscles are already warm from activity.



## LUNGE WITH A TWIST:

Step forward, then drop your hips. Don't lunge so far forward that your front knee extends beyond your toes. After you've lunged, slowly twist toward the side of your front leg for a more intense hip flexor stretch.



## HIGH KICK:

Starting with your right leg, extend your left arm straight out. Kick your leg up while keeping your leg and hand straight so that your toes hit your palm.





### **SIDE LUNGE:**

Start in upright position then bend right leg, come back to the original position and repeat with the left leg



### **HIP STRETCH WITH A TWIST:**

Hip stretching helps the core, upper, and middle back. Start in the pushup position and bring your right foot up to your right hand while keeping your hips down and lower back flat. Lift your left hand, twist to your left while extending your arm and reaching toward the sky. Come back to the starting pushup position and repeat on the other side.



### **KNEE TO CHEST:**

Bring your knee toward your chest before lowering the foot toward the ground. You can alternate each leg while stationary or while walking forward.



# GAMES WITHOUT A BOARD

## POISON DART FROG

1. Skaters sit in a circle and staff selects one person to be the 'detective'. The detective leaves the circle and covers their eyes.
2. Staff (or skater) walks around the circle and taps someone on the head. That person becomes the poison dart frog (the detective should not see this).
3. When the poison dart frog sticks their tongue out at someone, that person must pretend to die dramatically.
4. Detective returns to the circle and must stay inside of it. They get 3 attempts to guess who the poison dart frog is.

## DETECTIVE

Choose one person to be "the Detective" and have them stand at the other end of the room with their back turned toward group. Place an object right behind them. The group's goal is to run towards the object and grab it but every time the leader turns around they have to freeze. When they reach the item, they have to pick it up and sneakily pass it behind their backs to each other without the leader seeing who has it. The leader has to guess who has the item behind their back.

## DUCK- DUCK- GOOSE

1. Group sits in a circle, one person walks around the outside of the circle tapping each person on the head and saying [word 1, typically "duck"].
2. At any point, the person walking can say [word 2, typically "goose"] as they tap someone on the head, then their goal is to steal that person's spot by running (in the same direction they were walking) around the circle and sitting in the spot of the "goose".
3. The "goose" tries to tag the other person before their spot is stolen.
4. If the "goose" tags the other person, they can sit back in their same spot, but if their spot is stolen then it's their turn to walk around the circle tapping people.

## CAPTURE THE FLAG

1. Divide the skaters into two teams and divide the space in half (using cones, tape, or landmarks).
2. Have each team hide their flag in their designated area/side.
3. Each team tries to find and take the opponent's flag and bring it back to their side.
4. If a player is tagged, they must perform a task (such as five jumping jacks) before returning to their side.

## AMEOBA TAG

1. Pick 1 or 2 skaters to be 'it', when you tag someone you link arms with them and go after someone else.
2. Continue tagging and adding to your chain until everyone is linked.

## EVERYBODY'S IT

1. Tag, but anyone can tag anyone else.
2. When you get tagged, you must sit down until the person who tagged you gets tagged and sits down.
3. If two people tag each other at the same time (hands are the only part of the body that can be used to tag) the two people play rock-paper-scissors to determine who sits down (this is when staff oversight is important!)

# GAMES WITH A BOARD

## SKATE LIMBO

1. Place or hold the limbo pole (jump rope, pvc pipe, two people's arms) a good distance from where skaters are lined up.
  2. Encourage skaters to do board grabs, hippy jumps, ollies over or under the limbo pole.
- QUICK TIP: Play music, it's way more fun this way!

## FOLLOW THE LEADER

1. Line up all skaters behind you.
2. Students follow behind you on their skateboards, on foot, or as you climb up and down ramps.
3. Stop at any point and give students a chance to lead the group!

## WHO HAS THE FASTEST WHEEL?

1. Challenge everyone to a wheel competition.
  2. Circle up, explain bearings and how they work.
  3. On the count of three, everyone spins one of their skateboard wheels at the same time.
  4. Winner gets a sticker! Slowest wheel gets a sticker too!
- QUICK TIP: Discuss the benefits of faster/slower wheels - not all wheels are the same!

## BOARD SPACESHIP

1. Divide the group into 5-10 smaller groups.
2. The goal is to create some type of vehicle or "space ship" out of skateboards that rolls. Skaters can test out their creation by riding it or sending it down ramps.

QUICK TIP: Great questions to ask:

- What worked well about our spaceship?
- What didn't work?
- How do you know?
- What could we improve for next time?

## SKATEBOARD STACK HOUSE

Build small arches or structures by stacking boards sideways or on top of one another.

**\*\*Instructor oversight is VERY important.** Keep skaters engaged while also keeping them away from anything that might fall on them! It's best to have skaters watching while handing boards to staff who do the actual building.

## MARIO KART

1. Find something the group can skate around in a circle (cones, extra gear, skate park features, etc.)
2. Students skate around in one direction at their own pace.
3. Instructors pause the rotation periodically and ask students to try something new like skate tricks, grabs, tic-tacs, or random things such as giving someone a high five.
4. Be sure to switch directions to allow skaters to practice turning in each direction.



# GAMES AT THE SKATEPARK

## COPING HANG

- Skaters can go for a personal best (with staff using timers) or it can be a group/team competition to see who can hold on the longest!
- Make sure the coping isn't burning hot if it's summer!
- And try to pick a quarterpipe that isn't too big.
- Staff should enforce hanging. Don't let the skaters use their feet.

## LEARNING HOW TO RUN UP RAMPS

- "Hands, elbows, chest, feet" is a generally an okay order.
- Watch American Ninja Warrior for inspiration.

## HARDCORE PARKOUR

1. Line skaters up behind you.
2. Announce that they are to do what the person in front of them did after them.
3. Lightly jog around the skate park, going up and down ramps, 180-ing off ledges, hopping up/down stairs.
4. "When I say hard core - you say parkour!"

## KNEE SLIDES

- Learn how to use those knee pads!
- Start by practicing sliding on a flat surface and into large pads. After move on to small banks or ramps.



# THANK YOU FOR READING THIS TOOLKIT!

# SKATE LIKE A GIRL



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Visit for free beginner  
skateboarding tutorials!

## QUESTION OF THE DAY:

### EITHER/OR

(best for shorter time frames and younger skaters)

- Would you rather be able to teleport anywhere or be able to read minds?
- Would you rather give up taking a shower for a month or give up internet for a month?
- Would you rather eat a spider or a worm?
- Do you prefer snow or sun?
- Do you prefer sweets or salty foods?

### OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

(best for longer time frames or adult groups)

- If you were a vegetable which one would you be?
- If you were a smoothie what would be your three ingredients?
- What animal would you want to hug?
- If you could be a fictional character, which character would you be?
- What superpower do you wish you had?

## ONLINE RESOURCES:

Check out these awesome online resources for more information about

**Pronouns:** GLAAD - <https://www.glaad.org>

**Teaching skateboarding and building community:**

The Goodpush Toolkit - <https://www.goodpush.org/>

**Suicide Prevention Line:** 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**Crisis Text Line:** Text "HELLO" to 741741

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