

Congratulations on being the parent of a figure skater; the STAR 1-5 competition program is where figure skating begins! The STAR competition program is comprised of five different levels of events for skaters who have completed the CanSkate program. It introduces participants to key components of figure skating including performance, assessment, and competition. STAR 1-5 fits into the Learn to Train level of Skate Canada’s Long-Term Athlete Development Model (LTADM).

Each stage of this national program emphasizes key skills such as turns, stroking, jumps, spins, and different aspects of performance that have been designated by figure skating experts as necessary for development and progression in our sport. It is important to note that every skater is unique and will advance at different rates due to various factors such as growth spurts and participation. To accommodate individual needs, the STAR 1-5 competition program is designed to be fluid and allow skaters to progress at their own pace, even skipping levels if appropriate; skaters may move through several levels in a season or stay at the same level – it’s all dependent on individual athlete development! At all stages and levels, parents should discuss their skater’s progress with their coach to determine the best options for them. The chart below provides a brief description of each level:

STAR	Format	Description
1	Group Elements Event	Introduces skaters to performing elements like jumps and spins in a fun group environment with their coaches. Skaters are evaluated and receive a report card and ribbon based on their performance.
2	Evaluated Program	Skaters now take many of the elements they learned in STAR 1 as well as new skills and perform them in a program in front of judges. Many skaters may learn a program in a group and even share music. Like STAR 1, skaters are evaluated and receive a report card and ribbon.
3	Evaluated Program	STAR 3 continues to build on the skills learned in STAR 1 and 2. More difficult elements like an axel jump are added and judges evaluate the programs based on more challenging criteria. Skaters also receive a report card and ribbon.
4	Ranked Program	Axels are encouraged at this level and receive a bonus for successful completion. STAR 4 serves as a transition point between evaluated levels and competition incorporating a points system. Assessments are used to produce a ranking for each group of competitors. Each skater receives a report card with top finishers in each group receiving either a ribbon or medal. In STAR 1-4, skaters are evaluated against a national standard by a panel of certified judges. Each element they perform receives an assessment of Gold, Silver, Bronze or Merit as well as an overall standing.
5	Ranked Program	Skaters may perform double jumps at this level. STAR 5 is the first time skaters are rewarded points for elements and performance; it is the same scoring system used to judge top competitive figure skaters. Skaters are ranked based on total points and are provided a detailed report card. Top finishers receive medals.

What Happens After STAR 1-5?

Skaters may choose to continue in higher levels of the STARSkate program:

- Senior Bronze to Gold tests (*will become STAR 6-10 + Gold tests in the future*)
- Transition into in CompetitiveSkate (Pre-Juvenile, Juvenile, etc.).
- Skaters may also explore ice dancing, pair skating, interpretive skating, or synchronized (team) skating.

There are many opportunities for skaters and the best path for athletes to take should be a decision made collaboratively (child, parent and coach).

Helping your skater get the most out of STAR 1-5

There are a lot of options within figure skating and that can sometimes be overwhelming; here are some tips to make this a positive and fun experience for parents and children.

- *Keep it Fun.* The focus of STAR 1-5 should be on enjoyment and developing figure skating specific skills. Encourage skaters to have fun, try their best, and learn to find joy in all aspects of the sport. Remember this is their sport.
- *Ask Questions.* Don't be afraid to ask questions about the way the skating world works! Your coach is a good place to start as are experienced parents and club volunteers. You can also find excellent information on-line at www.skatecanada.ca, as well as your section and club websites.
- *Reward Effort.* Do not get hung up on results; instead, focus on personal progress and effort. Rankings only reflect the performances on the ice and not who skaters are as individuals. Skaters are not machines and top world skaters have bad days too.
- *Provide Emotional Support.* This is a really challenging sport. Even in the STAR 1-5 competition program skaters attempt fairly complex movements on a tiny blade and slippery surface; that's enough to make anyone nervous! Being anxious before competition is normal and it can be helpful to explain to your children that their nerves just show they care about how much they want to do their best.
- *Model Healthy Eating and Physical Activity.* Even beginner athletes need the right fuel to help them perform at their best. Modeling healthy eating behavior and providing meals that are nutritious and balanced will benefit your entire family. Encourage participation in a range of physical activities in addition to skating - can you find physical activities that you can do together as a family?
- *Communicate with your Coach.* Your coach is there to help you as well as your child. Communicate with them regularly about the progress of your skater and to chart a course for development that works for your family and your budget.