



## **Proposal: Skate Oakville Adaptive CanSkate Program**

### **Purpose:**

To introduce an Adaptive CanSkate program at Skate Oakville, providing high-quality, inclusive skating instruction tailored to the needs of skaters requiring one-on-one support.

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### **Background & Rationale**

Skate Oakville has experienced a growing number of skaters who require additional support on the ice. Currently, many of these skaters are registered in general CanSkate sessions, where the structure and coach-to-skater ratio often make it challenging to provide the individualized attention they need to thrive. As a result:

- Convenors and coaches are managing multiple skaters (often 5 or more) requiring one-on-one attention in sessions not designed for that level of support.
  - The quality of instruction and safety for both the skaters needing support and those in the general program can be compromised.
  - There is limited flexibility in allowing caregiver involvement on regular sessions due to insurance and logistical constraints.
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### **Program Overview: Adaptive CanSkate**

**Adaptive CanSkate** is not a segregated program for skaters with disabilities, but a specialized session designed to meet the learning needs of skaters who benefit from:

- One-on-one support on the ice
- A quieter, more structured environment
- Coaches trained in working with diverse learning styles and abilities
- The option of having a caregiver accompany them on the ice, enhancing support and comfort

This program is fully aligned with Skate Canada's Adaptive Skating initiatives, which support the inclusion of caregivers on the ice (covered under the skater's insurance) and encourage clubs to create accessible, supportive programming.

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## Benefits of Implementing Adaptive CanSkate

- **Enhanced Learning:** Skaters who need support receive individualized coaching focused on their specific needs, helping them progress more confidently and consistently.
- **Relieved Pressure on Other Sessions:** General CanSkate sessions will be better balanced, allowing coaches to focus on delivering quality instruction to all participants.
- **Improved Coach Experience:** Coaches are better able to plan and teach effectively without being stretched beyond their capacity due to additional support needs.
- **Inclusivity without Isolation:** This program complements our existing sessions. Skaters who can follow the standard circuits independently are still welcome and encouraged to register for general CanSkate. Adaptive CanSkate simply offers an option where needed.
- **Parental/Caregiver Involvement:** The ability to have caregivers on the ice provides emotional and physical support, easing the transition onto the ice for new or anxious skaters.

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## Implementation Plan

- **Session Design:** Smaller group size, lower coach-to-skater ratio, and modified circuits where appropriate.
- **Staffing:** Assign trained coaches with experience in adaptive or inclusive programming.
- **Caregiver Access:** Caregivers permitted on the ice in accordance with Skate Canada insurance policies.
- **Scheduling:** Weekly sessions during off-peak hours to allow for quieter ice times and increased availability of coaches and volunteers.
- **Promotion:** Marketed to existing families, local support organizations, and through Skate Canada channels to ensure those who would benefit most are aware of the offering.

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## Support from Skate Canada

Skate Canada supports and encourages Adaptive Skating programs, including the allowance for caregivers on the ice when covered under the skater's insurance. A similar Adaptive program previously run by one of our team members at another club received positive feedback and support from Skate Canada, offering a strong precedent for success at Skate Oakville.

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## Conclusion

Adaptive CanSkate is an essential next step in ensuring that Skate Oakville continues to be a leader in inclusive, high-quality skating instruction. It allows us to:

- Address the real and growing need for one-on-one support
- Reduce pressure on our mainstream programs and staff
- Offer a better skating experience for every skater

By introducing this program, we demonstrate our commitment to excellence, inclusion, and the well-being of all members of our skating community.