

New skate buying guide

What to look for: Strong, supported ankles. If you can bend over the side of the skate with your hand, it is too flimsy and will prevent your skater from doing his or her best. Look for a stiff boot with some cushioning inside.

What to avoid: Skates that have adjustable straps or that are designed to “grow with your child.”

How skates should fit: Toes should wiggle but not be able to slide around. There are wonderful videos at tips at: <http://shoprainbo.com/skate-fitting>.

Where to buy new skates: Unfortunately, Dubuque does not have a professional skate shop. If you are confident about sizing, you can order online through a variety of retailers. The best option is to be fitted by a professional. The nearest options are:

Chicago – Rainbo Sports, 800-752-8370 (Rainbo often spends a day in outlying areas, such as the Quad Cities. You can ask if they have any events coming up near Dubuque.)

How to care for new skates: Wipe off the blades after each use. A good investment is a pair of “soakers,” which are cloth covers for the blades. These are not meant to walk around in – rubber guards are recommended for that – but for keeping the blade dry and protected when not in use.

Cost: A good beginner skate will run \$70 to \$150 new. If it costs considerably less than that, it could make skating more difficult for your child than rental skates would. If it costs considerably more, you are probably buying too advanced of a skate and would be risking injury.

Buying used: There are a lot of opportunities to buy quality skates online at a used rate. Kids grow so fast that you often can get a practically-new pair at a fraction of the cost. As always with used online purchases, however, buyer beware on these deals.

Suggested brands and models for Basic 1-8:

Jackson Artiste

Jackson Classique

Jackson Mystique

Riedell 33 TS

Riedell 121 RS

Riedell 15 RS

Riedell 10 RS

GAM Fantasia

GAM Horizon