



WINTER GAMES CHALLENGE | *Channel Your Inner Olympian*

FOR THIS ADVENTURE, PARTICIPATE IN A WINTER SPORT

This challenge is designed to get your child excited about winter sports and outdoor play! Utah is getting ready for the 2034 Winter Olympic Games, and these fun activities will help your child feel like a real winter athlete!

WHY PLAY IN THE WINTER?

Winter play is essential for sensory and physical development!

- **Gross Motor Skills:** Pushing snow, pulling a sled, and balancing develop large muscle groups and coordination.
- **Sensory Input:** Feeling the cold, wet texture of snow provides unique sensory input that helps children focus and regulate their bodies.
- **Simple Science:** Children discover basic physics (sliding, friction, melting) just by playing!

● **CRITICAL SAFETY WARNINGS** ●

Winter fun requires warm layers and constant checks for cold. Please follow these safety rules at all times:

- **Dress Warmly:** Always wear layers, waterproof gloves, hats, and warm boots.
- **Check Fingers and Toes:** Be very aware of your child's fingers, toes, and nose. If they start feeling cold, get inside and warm up immediately! Keep the activity fun and pleasant; avoid having a bad experience because they got too cold!
- **Sledding Safety:** Only sled on gentle slopes that are free of trees, rocks, and roads. Always walk up the side of the hill, not the sledding path.
- **Ice Safety:** NEVER walk on frozen ponds or lakes in Utah. It is rarely cold enough for the ice to be safe and solid. Stay away from large sheets of ice unless supervised in a certified ice rink. If visiting an ice rink, ask about their loaner helmets and skating trainers—they make learning safe and easy!





SLEDDING OLYMPICS

What To Do

At a safe, gentle snow hill: Help your child pull their own sled (great heavy work!) up the hill.

For safety and fun: A trusted adult or older sibling should accompany a younger preschooler down the hill.

Learning Goal

Develops strong muscles (gross motor skills) and coordination. It encourages bravery by trying thrilling speed and sliding.

For older preschoolers: Teach them how to lean their bodies side to side to help steer the sled slightly and how to put a foot down to slow down or stop.

SNOW FORT BUILDERS

What To Do

Work as a team to build something big out of snow, like a small wall, a giant snowball, or a cozy snow fort. Use small shovels and buckets, or just your hands, to pack the snow tightly. Have your child help pat and smooth the final creation.

Learning Goal

Builds teamwork and sharing as children work together to lift and stack snow. Shaping the snow helps strengthen hands for small motor skills.

SNOW PUCK PRACTICE (LIKE HOCKEY)

What To Do

Make a puck: Pack a snowball very tightly into a hard disk (a puck). Give your child a broom, a plastic hockey stick, or a safe sturdy branch. Have them gently tap or push the "puck" along the flat snow toward a goal (like a bucket or a stick).

Learning Goal

Improves hand-eye coordination and gross motor skills (swinging the stick). It introduces the fun of a classic winter sport!

ICE BLOCKING (THE DESERT SLIDERS)

What To Do

No snow? No problem! Find a grassy hill that isn't too steep. Put your child on a large, smooth block of ice (often found at grocery stores or convenience stores) wrapped in a towel. Have them slide down the hill on the block! They can practice sitting, or even try sliding a small toy down the block.

Learning Goal

Provides the fun of sliding and speed, even without snow! It is a great way to learn about friction (the slipperiness of ice).





WINTER GAMES CHALLENGE | *Channel Your Inner Olympian*

FOR THIS ADVENTURE, PARTICIPATE IN A WINTER SPORT.

The Winter Olympics are returning to Utah in 2034! We are excited to welcome an international audience to our beautiful state. To celebrate, we encourage you to get out and engage in some of these sports. Here are some ideas for ways your family can build excitement for the Winter Games.

Host Your Own Games: [This Tinkergarten Article](#) has wonderful ideas for your family to host your own Winter Games.

Ice Skating- Utah is home to both man-made and natural opportunities for ice skating. If you've never tried ice skating, head to one of the 16 ice rinks around the state to test your skills. Utah even has an [Olympic-sized rink](#) available for the public to skate on!

Ice Hockey – Once you've learned how to handle ice skates, try out the game of hockey. Hockey requires balance, speed and agility. Utah is now home to the Utah Hockey Club, the first professional hockey team in Utah; try attending one of their games if you get the chance!

Downhill Skiing – There are 15 ski resorts in Utah, all offering unique terrain and opportunities to test your skills. Check out Ski Utah's website to find information on all the resorts, and if you're a 4th, 5th or 6th grader don't forget to apply for your [Ski Utah passport!](#)

Or look into these programs:

[Epic SchoolKids Utah Pass-](#) A FREE program offering 5 days of skiing and riding in Park City for kids in Kindergarten through 5th-grade.

[Power Kids Pass-](#) Kids 12 and under receive a FREE ski pass at participating resorts.

Sledding- We all know how much fun sledding can be in the winter! Sledding is a great way to get the thrill of sliding on snow without traveling too far. Bring a group of your friends to a local sledding hill and have fun sliding on the snow!

Snow Shoeing – Although winter does add some extra obstacles in getting outside, snow shoes are great tools to stay on top of deep snow. Snowshoeing is a fun way to explore areas of our natural world closed off to us in the summer. If the snow is deep enough, you can travel off-trail without causing damage to the landscape.

TOO WARM FOR SNOW? TRY THESE!

Sandboarding - Look for large sandy hills near your home and see if you can sled or slide down one. Be sure to find a slope that isn't too steep and has no sharp rocks!

Street Hockey - No skates required! Try this fun version of the famous winter sport.

Skating - Strap on your skates or rollerblades and enjoy an indoor rink or an outdoor path.

TAKE IT UP A NOTCH!

Special Olympics Volunteer- Youth ages 8 and up can help with the [Special Olympics in Utah](#).





Biathlon - Biathlon combines two sports - cross-country skiing and shooting. Soldier Hollow, located in Midway, is the only biathlon course in Utah. Their facility hosts world championships and is a training ground for many Olympians! Check out their campus, attend a competition or try the biathlon yourself!

Cross-Country Skiing - Cross-country skiing is a great way to get some good exercise during the winter months. Many campgrounds and complexes in northern Utah groom their roads in the wintertime for cross-country skiing, which is a necessity for efficient cross-country skiing. Try this fun form of exercise once the snow starts falling!

Learn about Avalanches - The Utah Avalanche Center is Utah's avalanche forecasting non-profit. Their job is to educate and inform the public on the conditions of our snowpack during Utah's winter months. As you take part in any backcountry activity, whether hiking, snowmobiling, skiing.

Build a Winter Obstacle Course - Snow makes great building material as it will usually stick together if there's enough water in it. Try building ramps, slides or tunnels out of snow to compete with your friends.

Snowball Dodgeball - Snowball fights are a fun way (as long as everyone wants to be involved!) to enjoy snow. Using soft snow (no ice!) make snowballs and see if you can get enough friends together to play a game of snowball dodgeball.

Snow-Water Equivalency Test - Are you curious about how much water is in snow? Collect a bowl full of snow after a storm and then melt the snow in a microwave. Do you notice that there was less water in the bowl than there was snow? Try doing this with different snow storms over the winter, what do you notice?

Curling - Curling is a slower-paced game played on the ice, but doesn't require you to wear ice skates. The goal of the game is to slide a large stone into a bullseye that sits in the center of the ice. Your goal is to get your stone closest in the bullseye's center while knocking out your opponent's stones

