

My child isn't familiar with boats. Can they still join learn to sail?

Absolutely! Every summer, our instructors take new students and turn them into sailors who never want to come off the water. *(In fact, that is one of the things we do best!)*

If your child is between the ages of 5 and 8, they can join the **Wet Feet** program, which is designed to give new sailors their sea legs in a game-oriented, carefully supervised environment.

If your child is older, they can join the recreational sailing program, with our sturdy fleet of dinghies, where they will be carefully guided on the water by more experienced peers, until they are comfortable enough to take the tiller themselves. *(And believe us: this will happen faster than you think!)*

Does my child need to have a certain swimming level?

Our sailors are required to wear life jackets anytime they are on water. This is strictly followed – no exceptions. Wet feet sailors don't need to have any level of swimming – it's their instructor's job to get them comfortable with the water. (To get their "feet wet.")

The oldest sailors are required to take a short swim test in their life jackets. Early on in lessons, they also take the infamous tip test – a controlled tip of their dinghy so they are comfortable with their boat and their equipment. (Dinghies are designed to tip, and on hot days, they sometimes even end up sideways in the water "accidentally" on purpose.)

What gear does my child need?

Here's a **list**. But the two most important things to remember: a certified life jacket or PDF. And lots and lots of sunscreen! (Seriously, we are sticklers for sunscreen.) Sailors need to be prepared for all kinds of weather – they will sail rain or shine, with the exception of thunder and lightning. Also: While there is a place for sailors to dump their gear before heading out on the water, it isn't constantly supervised. We can't assume responsibility for any electronics left on the shore.

The list:

- Coast Guard approved life jacket or PDF. It has to fit properly.

- Water bottle. (A good trick: fill it up and freeze it the night before so it stays cold most of the day.)
- Sunscreen, with SPF of 30 and above.
- Zinc (recommended) for high risk spots like the nose.
- A hat or visor that can be tied to the PDF so it doesn't fly off in an awesome wind.
- Two pairs of shoes: one pair for shore games, and a second pair of white soled water shoes or sandals. No flip flops.
- A large beach towel.
- A bathing suit. Rash guards are also strongly recommended.
- One complete change of warm clothes, including a long-sleeve shirt, and rain-gear.
- Lunch (if you are bringing your own) or cash to buy lunch at the Yacht Club. (Sailors can also go home for lunch if they have a form filled out by a parent.)
- A larger bag for all your gear.

Note: *The race team requires additional gear.*

What kind of boats do the sailors use?

We have a growing fleet of dinghies at the LYC, and a sailor's vessel is matched to their skill level. Those new to sailing typically sail on the Optimist (a dinghy for one sailor), or a 420 RAD with a reduced sail plan. As sailors advance into race-level sailing, they either stay in Optis or move onto the fully-rigged 420s and Lasers. (**Note:** sailors in Lasers and advanced Optis typically have their own boats but the program can supply Optis to a certain number of advanced racers but does not own any Lasers)

How do sailors spend their day?

Check out the regular day schedule here. The instructors also organize theme days, and some days will be changed based on regattas or special events at the club. You can find the calendar here.

8:30 to 9:00: Sailors arrive and start rigging their boats, as directed.

9:00: Meet at the Sailing Centre. Instructors brief sailors on the plan for the day, weather, and another other activities. (This is also when lunch orders are taken.)

9:15: The CanSail 1-4 group goes to the lawn, for games and warm-up. CanSail 5-6, and the Race team, has instruction and fitness training.

10:00: With the boats rigged, it is time to hit the water.

12:00: The boats return for lunch. (Senior sailors may have lunch on the water.)

1:00: Back on the water for the afternoon session.

4:00: Boats are de-rigged, and parents arrive for pick-up.

What are the courses taught at the LYC?

Our certified instructors follow the CanSail program developed by the Sail Canada. CanSail 1-2 covers the basics of sailing. CanSail 3-4 teaches more advanced techniques. CanSail 5-6 focuses on advanced boat handling and race skills.

While skills are important, and most of our sailors are keen to advance, our focus is on promoting responsibility on the water, a love for sailing, and having fun.

How will I know how my child is doing?

Each sailor will receive feedback from their instructor after their session. Parents are also welcome to touch base with instructors as needed. Just remember: Everyone improves the more time they spend on the water. But our instructors set high standards especially at the upper levels of training. This way our sailors feel a huge sense of accomplishment when they pass.

What about lunch?

Some of our sailors bring their own lunch. But the LYC also provides a popular [lunch program](#), with healthy options. Sailors may sign up for a meal at the beginning of their session or each day.

What if I am late picking up my child?

Regular sessions in the Learn to Sail Program run daily from 0900h to 1600h. Staff are on site until 1630h. Any sailor remaining after hours will not be supervised by LYC or LTS staff and shall be the sole responsibility of their parent or guardian.

Do I need to join the yacht club?

Participants in the Learn-to-Sail program do not need to be members of the club but a program discount is provided to club members. Families who aren't members are welcome at all LTS events held at the clubhouse. If you want to join, however, here's where you find out how. [LINK](#)

Junior memberships are also available. Sailors who attend regattas need to be a member of a yacht club. They can become a junior member if the family is not a member.

I still have questions. Who do I contact?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the sailing programs at LYC, please contact the Director of our Learn-to-Sail Program, Rob Barbara at learning@lyc.ns.ca.