



**Professional Ski  
Instructors of America  
American Association  
of Snowboard Instructors  
Children's Specialist Standards**

**CS 1, CS 2**

Updated: October 2022

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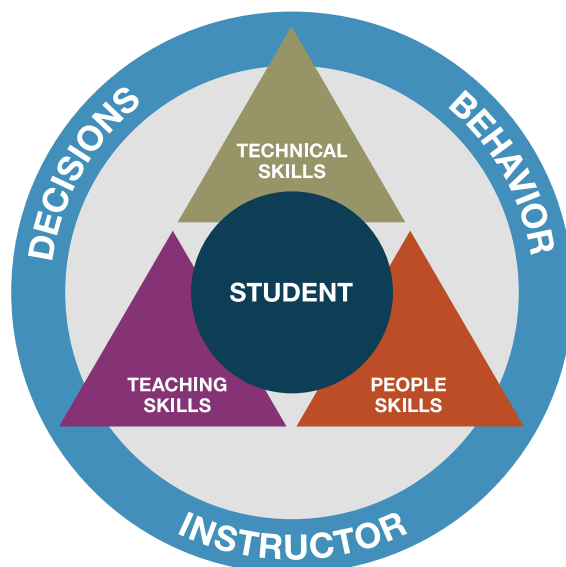
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# Introduction

## PSIA-AASI Children’s Specialist Standards

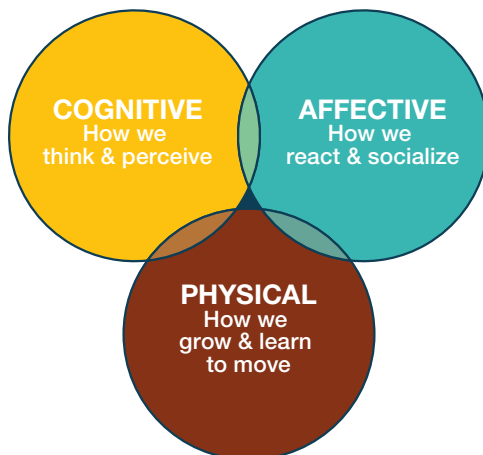
American snowsports instruction demands versatility. PSIA-AASI members teach guests of all ages in a wide variety of snowsports environments – from groomed trails to off-piste terrain and from hard snow to powder to manmade terrain park features. The types of lessons offered can be similarly diverse, including recreational skiing or riding, racing, freeski, and freestyle, to name a few. Lessons for *children* are an especially important part of every snowsports school’s business and vital to the future of our industry.

The objective of these *PSIA-AASI Children’s Specialist Standards* is to identify how children’s stages of development apply to the fundamentals of great skiing/riding, effective teaching, and connecting with students and their parents – and to define the assessment criteria for PSIA-AASI’s Children’s Specialist Assessment-Based Certificate Program.



To this end, the Learning Connection<sup>SM</sup> model provides the framework for a balance of crucial people skills, teaching skills, and technical skills; highlighting fundamentals that apply to a variety of technical and tactical decisions based on a child’s ability, motivation, personality, development, and more. Another foundational element of these Children’s Specialist standards is the CAP Model – which considers how people think and perceive (the cognitive realm), how they react and socialize (the affective realm), and how they grow and learn to move (the physical realm).

### The CAP Model



These standards follow the requirements of an assessment-based, non-degree granting certificate program that:

- a) Provides instruction and training to help participants acquire specific knowledge, skills, and/or competencies associated with intended learning outcomes;
- b) Evaluates participants' accomplishment of the intended learning outcomes; and
- c) Awards a certificate only to those participants who meet the performance, proficiency, or passing standard for the assessment(s), hence the term, "*assessment-based certificate program*."

(Source: ANSI/NOCA 1100 - Standard for Assessment-Based Certificate Programs)

PSIA-AASI's American Teaching System™ specifies three skier/rider zones: Beginner/Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced. The *PSIA-AASI Children's Specialist Standards* align these zones with assessment parameters for two instructor certificate levels:

- Beginner/Novice- to Intermediate-Zone Children – PSIA-AASI Children's Specialist 1 (CS 1) Instructor
- Beginner- to Advanced-Zone Children – PSIA-AASI Children's Specialist 2 (CS 2) Instructor

Note that, within the cross country and telemark disciplines, "beginner/novice, intermediate, and advanced" refer more generally to categories of guest skill rather than "zones."

The CS 1 certificate affirms that the instructor is qualified to teach children in the beginner/novice through intermediate zones on beginner/novice terrain (typically identified as "green") and intermediate (blue) terrain. The CS 2 certificate qualifies an instructor to teach children through the advanced zone and on expert (black) terrain.

### Prerequisites

- CS 1: At minimum, must be a current PSIA-AASI-certified Level I (or equivalent) instructor, complete the CS 1 pre-course requirement (CS 1 workbook/e-learning course), and be able to ski or ride at current certification level.
- CS 2: At minimum, must be a current PSIA-AASI-certified Level II (or equivalent) instructor, complete the CS 2 pre-course requirement (CS 2 workbook/e-learning course), and be able to ski or ride at current certification level.

These *PSIA-AASI Children's Specialist Standards* provide the assessment criteria for the people skills, teaching skills, and technical skills necessary for an instructor to successfully complete CS 1 and CS 2 learning outcomes. For example, CS 1 instructors are assessed on their development of certain skillsets, and as they progress in their professional development they enhance and expand skillsets to teach a wider range of children – in more variable conditions and terrain. This sets the stage to seek the CS 2 certificate.

PSIA-AASI offers many resources to aid instructors' professional development with regard to fundamentals of people, teaching, and technical skills. At a minimum, this *PSIA-AASI Children's Specialist Standards* document complements and should be consulted in combination with the sport-specific technical manual(s) and the following publications:

*Children's Instruction Manual, 2nd edition:*

- Explores content related to teaching children to ski or snowboard.



*Teaching Snowsports Manual:*

- Explores content related to people skills and teaching skills.

*PSIA-AASI Performance Guides:*

- Presents the performance indicators for assessing all skill categories within the Learning Connection model – providing the detail instructors need to perform the assessment activities.



## Assessment Activities and Assessment Criteria

Evaluating a Children's Specialist candidate's skills requires well-defined, measurable assessment criteria – as presented here and outlined further in *PSIA-AASI's Performance Guides*.

Assessing the candidate's people skills, teaching skills, and technical skills requires an evaluation environment that simulates a ski or snowboard lesson. Teaching situations and scenarios are relevant to child development and skier/rider zone, with assessment based on the certificate level sought. They need to allow enough time and/or frequency for demonstration of all assessment criteria. Those that take place on snow should be on terrain that's suitable for the related skier/rider zone – beginner/novice, intermediate, or advanced. People skills may be assessed throughout the entire certificate process by assessing the instructor's ability to build and maintain the trust that fosters continued learning at the required level.

Throughout the process, PSIA-AASI divisions will use a variety of assessment activities – based on terrain and prevailing conditions – to evaluate instructor competency as outlined in these *PSIA-AASI Children's Specialist Standards*. Not all assessment activities need to take place on snow.

These standards describe how the fundamentals of people skills, teaching skills, and technical skills are assessed at the CS 1 and CS 2 levels. Effective use of the national standards, combined with a wide range of educational resources, creates an efficient environment for consistent evaluation.

## The Language of Learning Outcomes and Assessment

The *PSIA-AASI Children's Specialist Standards* rely upon the following Learning Outcome Framework to create a consistent language for assessment. The learning outcomes clearly state what the instructor can demonstrate upon successful completion of the assessment-based certificate program.

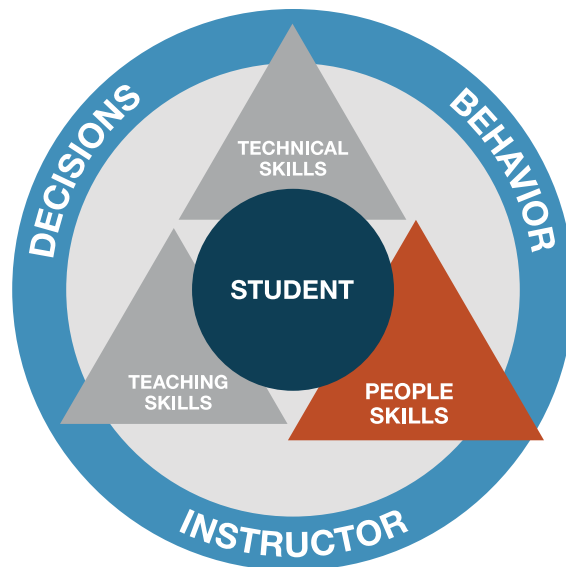
- Learning Outcomes:** Learning outcomes represent what is to be achieved upon completion of each level of certification. Learning outcomes do not vary between examiners or divisions.
- Learning Experiences:** These are the training experiences – or tasks – that lead to achievement of the learning outcome. NOTE: The learning experiences listed in this document are *recommendations* of what an **instructor** may do in order to gain the knowledge and understanding relative to the given subject area. These are *not* requirements; they are suggested approaches to aid individuals in their development as professional snowsports educators. For more details, refer to the associated *Performance Guide*.
- Assessment Activities:** Representing *how* a person is assessed, these are the activities a candidate performs to demonstrate that learning has occurred. (These have historically been described as tasks or maneuvers.) NOTE: The assessment activities listed in this document are *recommendations* of what an **examiner** may use to assess knowledge and understanding relative to the given subject area. The examiner is free to use variations and alternatives. Those listed provide an idea of how an assessment can be conducted. For more details, refer to the associated *Performance Guide* or divisional exam guides.
- Assessment Criteria:** Representing the “level of standard,” assessment criteria outline performance details that specify to what level the learning outcomes have been met. This does not vary between examiners or divisions.
- Assessment 6-point Scale:** Throughout the PSIA-AASI professional development and certification system, all assessment criteria are measured by means of the following 6-point assessment scale.
1. Essential elements are not observed or not present.
  2. Essential elements are beginning to appear.
  3. Essential elements appear, but not with consistency.
  4. Essential elements appear regularly at a satisfactory level.
  5. Essential elements appear frequently, above the required level.
  6. Essential elements appear continuously, at a superior level.

## People Skills

In the context of teaching children, people skills are about communicating in effective ways to develop trust and achieve favorable relationships in partnership with the child and their parents. Building rapport with children depends on instructors' self-awareness and their abilities to identify and adapt to the child's and parent's needs, motivations, and emotions. For students to feel confident taking risks and being open to new learning, instructors must first establish trust among the group.

### Fundamentals

- Develop relationships based on trust.
- Engage in meaningful two-way communication.
- Identify, understand, and manage your emotions and actions.
- Recognize and influence the behaviors, motivations, and emotions of others.



## Children's Specialist 1 (CS 1) – People Skills

### Overview of People Skills at CS 1 Proficiency

CS 1 instructors exhibit an understanding of the people-skill fundamentals as they relate to children and their parents, using them to develop trust within the learning environment. They show awareness of the likely needs and emotions of children new to snowsports and can communicate in a clear, developmentally appropriate manner to the group, showing respect, patience, and professionalism. CS 1 instructors exhibit an understanding of behavioral management tactics by addressing the unique dynamics of children and working with parents to create a positive partnership.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a CS 1 instructor...

	Communication	Behavioral Management & Relationships with Others
Learning Outcomes	Engages in developmentally appropriate communication (verbal and non-verbal) to address the needs of a group of children and their parents.	Addresses intrapersonal and interpersonal situations with children and their parents in a developmentally appropriate manner.
Learning Experiences	Benefits from learning experiences that can include e-learning, PSIA-AASI publications on snowsports and children's instruction, videos, lesson observations, individual teaching sessions, guided debriefs of teaching sessions, small-group teaching sessions, and in-person training focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicating with a group of children and with parents at the beginning of, during, and at the end of a lesson using developmentally appropriate language.</li> <li>Developing tactics to address common emotional responses seen in children, appropriate and inappropriate behavior in a group of children, and undesirable actions of a child and/or parent.</li> </ul>	
Assessment Activities	Performs assessment activities – which vary between divisions and between examiners, depending on conditions and group experiences – that may include an online exam, simulated or real lessons, simulated conversations with children and/or parents, presentations, interviews, and discussions with the examiner and peers.	
Assessment Criteria	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use CAP-appropriate communication with the parent and child.</li> <li>Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication for the cognitive level of the children.</li> <li>Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication for the social/emotional (affective) level of the children.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and respond to children's emotional responses to events throughout the lesson.</li> <li>Identify and respond to children's social interactions throughout the lesson.</li> <li>Respond to situations in the parent, instructor, and child relationship to create a positive experience.</li> </ul>



## Children's Specialist 2 (CS 2) – People Skills

### Overview of People Skills at CS 2 Proficiency

CS 2 instructors exhibit a more refined understanding of the people-skill fundamentals, using them to develop trust with all individuals. They demonstrate awareness of the social-emotional needs of each child, the group as a whole, and the parents – and use active listening and verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to build connections between all parties. CS 2 instructors manage behavioral situations in a developmentally appropriate manner.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a CS 2 instructor...

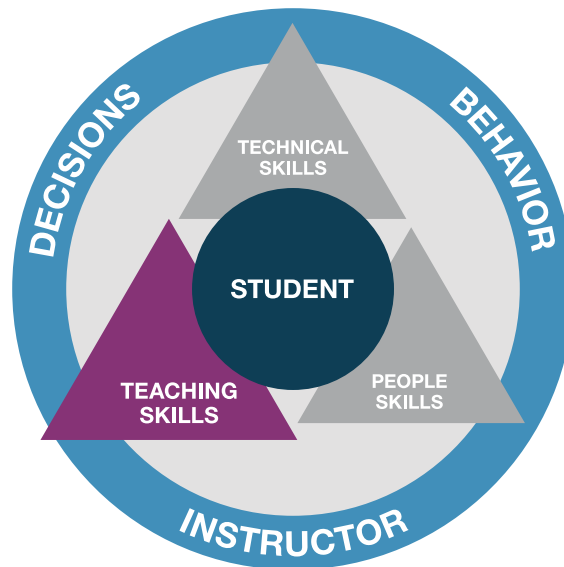
	Communication	Behavioral Management & Relationships with Others
Learning Outcomes	Engages in developmentally appropriate communication to meet each child's needs, the group's needs, and the needs of the parents.	Manages intrapersonal and interpersonal situations with each child, the group as a whole, and parents in a developmentally appropriate manner.
Learning Experiences	Benefits from learning experiences that can include e-learning, PSIA-AASI publications on snowsports and children's instruction, videos, lesson observations, individual teaching sessions, guided debriefs of teaching sessions, small-group teaching sessions, in-person training, and external academic courses focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaging in individualized and group communication between children and parents at the beginning of, during, and at the end of a lesson using developmentally appropriate language.</li> <li>Developing and improving tactics used to address and manage common emotional responses seen in children, appropriate and inappropriate behavior among a group of children and with individual children, and undesirable actions of a child and/or parent.</li> </ul>	
Assessment Activities	Performs assessment activities – which vary between divisions and between examiners, depending on conditions and group experiences – that may include activities such as an online exam, simulated or real lessons, simulated conversations with children and/or parents, presentations, interviews, and discussions with the examiner and peers.	
Assessment Criteria	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synthesize CAP concepts into communication with parents and children.</li> <li>Blend verbal and non-verbal communications to meet the cognitive level of each child in the group as well as the group as a whole.</li> <li>Blend verbal and non-verbal communications to meet the social/emotional (affective) level of each child in the group as well as the group as a whole.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate two or more tactics to manage emotional responses of each child in the group, of subsets within the group, and of the entire group.</li> <li>Integrate two or more tactics to manage social behaviors of each child in a group, of subsets within the group, and of the entire group.</li> <li>Manage the parent, instructor, and child relationship to create a positive experience.</li> </ul>

## Teaching Skills

With trust established using people skills, teaching skills *strengthen* the learning partnership between the instructor, child, and parents. Teaching skills create an engaging environment in which to foster student learning. To maximize learning, instructors plan, implement, and adapt the learning experience in a developmentally appropriate manner, and give students an opportunity to reflect on their experiences.

### Fundamentals

- Collaborate on long-term goals and short-term objectives.
- Manage information, activities, terrain selection, and pacing.
- Promote play, experimentation, and exploration.
- Facilitate the learner's ability to reflect upon experiences and sensations.
- Adapt to the changing needs of the learner.
- Manage emotional and physical risk.



## Children's Specialist 1 (CS 1) – Teaching Skills

### Overview of Teaching Skills at CS 1 Proficiency

CS 1 instructors apply the teaching-skill fundamentals, allowing them to plan and organize an engaging learning experience in a developmentally appropriate manner. They present progressions in the *beginner/novice* through *intermediate zones*, using study, training, and teaching experiences. A CS 1 instructor makes minor adjustments to learning experiences based on the needs and desires of children and their parents, and the abilities of each child. They facilitate learning by communicating changes in student performance relative to outcomes.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a CS 1 instructor...

	Assess and Plan	Implement and Reflect/Review
Learning Outcomes	Uses provided information about children and parents to plan relevant learning experiences through the intermediate zone.	Delivers group-focused learning experiences that have developmentally realistic outcomes.
Learning Experiences	Benefits from learning experiences that can include e-learning, PSIA-AASI publications on snowsports and children's instruction, videos, lesson observations, individual teaching sessions, guided debriefs of teaching sessions, small-group teaching sessions, and in-person training focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering information from children and from parents relevant to planning and delivering an appropriate learning experience.</li> <li>• Planning and delivering a lesson – including its drills, activities, and mode of delivery – appropriate to each child's stage of development.</li> <li>• Creating a safe learning environment for the group, by managing physical and emotional risks.</li> <li>• Reflecting on the lesson experience with children and their parents.</li> </ul>	
Assessment Activities	Performs assessment activities – which vary between divisions and between examiners, depending on conditions and group experiences – that may include an online exam, simulated or real lessons, simulated conversations with children and/or parents, presentations, interviews, and discussions with the examiner and peers.	
Assessment Criteria	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and summarize the motivations and expectations of children and their parents to determine common themes.</li> <li>• Choose appropriate terrain and/or skill for the group based on their skiing or riding level and stage of development.</li> <li>• Plan an engaging and exploratory learning experience with productive use of movement and practice time based on the identified stages of development.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach and justify developmentally appropriate progressions and activities that enhance the children's learning experience.</li> <li>• Manage physical and emotional risk to maintain engagement in the learning environment.</li> <li>• Reflect with the group and review the learning experience to identify performance change and future growth.</li> </ul>

## Children's Specialist 2 (CS 2) – Teaching Skills

### Overview of Teaching Skills at CS 2 Proficiency

CS 2 instructors demonstrate proficiency in the teaching-skill fundamentals in a developmentally appropriate manner, relying on experience gained while teaching and training. They facilitate learning *through the advanced zone* by planning and adapting the lesson experience based on the needs and desires of children and their parents, and the abilities of each child. CS 2 instructors help students recognize and assess their changes in performance.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a CS 2 instructor...

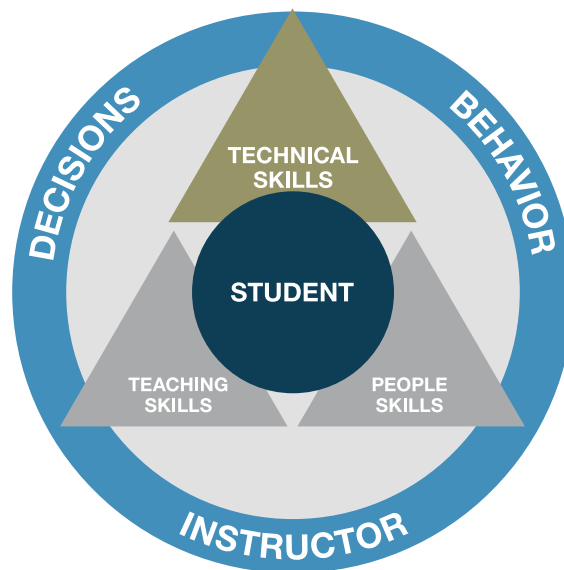
	Assess and Plan	Implement and Reflect/Review
Learning Outcomes	Uses provided information about children and parents to plan agreed upon learning experiences through the advanced zone.	Delivers individualized learning experiences that have developmentally realistic outcomes.
Learning Experiences	Benefits from learning experiences that can include e-learning, PSIA-AASI publications on snowsports and children's instruction, videos, lesson observations, individual teaching sessions, guided debriefs of teaching sessions, small-group teaching sessions, and in-person training focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering information from each child and their parents relevant to planning and delivering an appropriate learning experience.</li> <li>• Planning and delivering a lesson – including its drills, activities, and mode of delivery – appropriate to each child's stage of development.</li> <li>• Creating a safe learning environment for each child in the group, by managing physical and emotional risks.</li> <li>• Reflecting on the lesson experience with each child in the group and their parents.</li> </ul>	
Assessment Activities	Performs assessment activities – which vary between divisions and between examiners, depending on conditions and group experiences – that may include an online exam, simulated or real lessons, simulated conversations with children and/or parents, presentations, interviews, and discussions with the examiner and peers.	
Assessment Criteria	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with each child and the parents to determine a focus that addresses their needs.</li> <li>• Utilize appropriate terrain and/or skills for the lesson based on skiing/riding level and stage of development.</li> <li>• Plan creative and exploratory learning experiences in which movement, practice time, and terrain are optimized for each child based on the identified stages of development.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach and justify developmentally appropriate progressions and activities that enhance the learning experience for each child in the group.</li> <li>• Manage physical and emotional risk to promote engagement in the learning environment.</li> <li>• Reflect with each child, discuss their outcomes, review their learning experience, and plan for future growth.</li> </ul>

## Technical Skills

Technical skills bring teaching concepts to life with practical applications adapted to the student's ability level, desired outcome, *and stage of development*. These skills relate to the instructor's understanding of fundamental snowsports mechanics and applying that understanding in lessons in a developmentally appropriate manner. The Children's Specialist's technical skills represent the ability to understand, explain, and demonstrate skiing and/or snowboarding *as it relates to children*. In sharing technical skills, the instructor communicates certain sport-specific aspects of movement and prescribes developmentally appropriate solutions.

### Professional-Knowledge Fundamentals

- Convey and apply accurate technical information – for the sport being taught (alpine skiing, cross country skiing, snowboarding, or telemark skiing).
- Observe, evaluate, and prescribe (through movement analysis).



## Children's Specialist 1 (CS 1) – Technical Skills

### Overview of Technical Skills at CS 1 Proficiency

CS 1 instructors use PSIA-AASI resources to develop an understanding of the cause-and-effect relationships between children's stages of growth and motor skill (psychomotor) development, their body movements, and ski or board performance through the intermediate zone. They are able to identify and describe these interactions – highlighting stages of development – and prescribe developmentally appropriate solutions.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a CS 1 instructor...

	Technical Competency	Movement Analysis
Learning Outcomes	Identifies and describes distinct stages of cognitive, affective, and physical growth, including psychomotor development, for a group of children, relative to snowsports through the intermediate zone.	Identifies and describes cause-and-effect relationships influenced by child growth, skill-development milestones, and equipment options; and offers a relevant prescription for change for a single fundamental in a group setting through the intermediate zone.
Learning Experiences	Benefits from learning experiences that can include e-learning, PSIA-AASI publications on snowsports and children's instruction, videos, lesson observations, individual teaching sessions, guided debriefs of teaching sessions, small-group teaching sessions, and in-person training focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying CAP concepts and motor-skill development at each stage of development.</li> <li>Identifying common behaviors and beliefs of children that could influence the group's motor learning.</li> <li>Articulating the relationships between physical growth, psychomotor development, motor-skill acquisition, and equipment in movement analysis with respect to one sport-specific fundamental in one turn phase or cross country skill.</li> </ul>	
Assessment Activities	Performs assessment activities – which vary between divisions and between examiners, depending on conditions and group experiences – that may include an online exam, simulated or real lessons, simulated conversations with children and/or parents, presentations, interviews, and discussions with the examiner and peers.	
Assessment Criteria	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and describe the physical growth and psychomotor development for two different age groups of children.</li> <li>Identify and describe the stages of cognitive development and types of information-processing that impact motor learning for a group of children of similar ability.</li> <li>Identify and describe several affective behaviors and beliefs for a group of children of similar ability that could influence the group's motor learning.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe how motor-skill development impacts motor learning in children.</li> <li>Apply an understanding of biomechanics to describe the effect of a child's stage of physical growth and psychomotor development related to one sport-specific fundamental in one turn phase or cross country skill.</li> <li>Describe the influence of children's equipment options on observed movements and stated goals with consideration of the child's performance.</li> <li>Outline separate prescriptions for change for children of similar abilities for one sport-specific fundamental in one turn phase or cross-country skill.</li> </ul>

## Children's Specialist 2 (CS 2) – Technical Skills

### Overview of Technical Skills at CS 2 Proficiency

CS 2 instructors adapt their understanding of the cause-and-effect relationships between children's stages of growth and motor skill (or psychomotor) development, their body movements, and ski or board performance to create and apply a developmental profile for snowsports through the advanced zone. They have a working knowledge of current and historic PSIA-AASI resources and information. CS 2 instructors promote the sport-specific fundamentals through observation, evaluation, and prescription for change to help individual children achieve developmentally appropriate, desired performance objectives.

### Upon successful completion of the assessment, a CS 2 instructor...

	Technical Competency	Movement Analysis
Learning Outcomes	Identifies and compares distinct characteristics of cognitive, affective, and physical growth, including psychomotor development, for individual children, relative to snowsports through the advanced zone.	Prioritizes and individualizes cause-and-effect relationships influenced by child growth, skill-development milestones, and equipment options, and offers relevant prescriptions for change for multiple fundamentals through the advanced zone.
Learning Experiences	Benefits from learning experiences that can include e-learning, PSIA-AASI publications on snowsports and children's instruction, videos, lesson observations, individual teaching sessions, guided debriefs of teaching sessions, small-group teaching sessions, in-person training, and external academic courses focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying similarities and differences between individual children based on CAP concepts and motor-skill development.</li> <li>Identifying common behaviors and beliefs that could influence the individual's and group's motor learning.</li> <li>Describing the relationships between the stages of physical growth, psychomotor development, motor-skill acquisition, and equipment in movement analysis with respect to all sport-specific fundamentals in all turn phases or cross country skills.</li> </ul>	
Assessment Activities	Performs assessment activities – which vary between divisions and between examiners, depending on conditions and group experiences – that may include an online exam, simulated or real lessons, simulated conversations with children and/or parents, presentations, interviews, and discussions with the examiner and peers.	
Assessment Criteria	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the similarities and differences in physical growth and psychomotor development for two or more individual children.</li> <li>Identify the similarities and differences in cognitive development and types of information-processing that impact motor learning for two or more individual children.</li> <li>Identify and describe several social and emotional behaviors and beliefs of two or more individual children that could impact their motor learning.</li> </ul>	Consistently demonstrates their ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate how the application of motor skill-acquisition theories impact motor learning in children.</li> <li>Apply an understanding of biomechanics to describe the effect of a child's stage of physical growth and psychomotor development relative to multiple sport-specific fundamentals in all turn phases or XC skills.</li> <li>Justify equipment recommendations based on observed movements and stated goals with consideration of the child's performance.</li> <li>Outline separate prescriptions for change for children of different abilities for multiple sport-specific fundamentals to affect the desired outcome.</li> </ul>