

By Doug Leier, from [Outdoor News Guy](#)



Much has been written on the means and methods to get kids hooked on fishing, and I've tested and tried the best of them. Honestly, it's not that high of a mountain to climb to generate some lasting interest during warm summer days.

On the other hand, convincing a youngster like my 6-year-old son to go ice fishing, and then creating a positive experience so the next offer is greeted with more than a sigh or shrug of the shoulders, is often the opposite.

Should we really be shocked? The summer alternative involves splashing in the water, and catching fish, frogs or some other creature on a sunny afternoon when the biggest worry is sunburn or rain. Compare that to a few hours in sub-freezing temperatures, battling frozen fingers and toes, and you get a sense of the challenges inherent in getting kids interested in ice fishing.

But I'm living proof that it is possible, and it doesn't mean investing thousands of dollars in expensive fish houses or gear. Actually, the key factors are about the same as for summer fishing. Read the situation, plan for the worst and hope for the best. Every instance is unique, but if you make the comfort and enjoyment of the youngest angler a priority, you stand a much

better chance of having a successful day. And success, in my book, means that the youngster wants to go along the next time.

My son is 6 and it took me about four years to convince my wife that it was OK to simply take him out on a frozen lake, even with two feet of ice.

The next step is planning for the elements.

Honestly, this does not have to include an ice shelter with accompanying furnace. Don't plan the initial outing in the middle of an Alberta Clipper, and if a cold front does come along on the day of your planned outing, reevaluate and see if there's another day that will work out in the future. Keep the youngster's warmth at a premium.

No matter if it's above freezing or below zero, pack extra socks, gloves and mittens. You'll soon realize it's easier to pack these extras than to keep a child from playing in water, snow, and ice, which is what kids do when the fish aren't biting.

Another point is to put your own fishing desires as the last priority. While four lines per angler are allowed during winter, the goal is not to get as many lines as is legally allowed into the water. Seriously, if you and a young angler have a hot bite, will you have any chance to keep three lines running, let alone eight? I doubt it.

Do yourself a favor and rig up a just a couple of lines, and let the youngster have most of the action.

And while you're at it, drill an extra hole for the young angler. Let them dump ice or snow balls in that hole and you don't need to worry about fouling up the other lines.

Finally, prepare as if you won't catch a fish. For me this is easily imagined. We usually bring a sled along, as many lakes and reservoirs have small hills somewhere along the shoreline. On

Take A Kid Ice Fishing

one day my dad got plenty of smiles from my son simply by pulling him around on a shovel.

Perhaps the most important advice is that when your children are cold, get them warm. When they are ready to go, it's time to start the vehicle. You don't need to leave immediately, but give yourself a few more minutes to fish, have another snack, and pack your gear.

While our goal is always to catch fish, even if the fish don't cooperate I've found my son is ready to get back out ice fishing.

