

Optimist Level 1

The Optimist Level 1 course is designed to introduce sailing to children ages 8 to 11, although this course is appropriate for any sailor under the age of 15. The Optimist Level 1 course is typically taught over 5 full days or 10 half-days. This course is perfect for both children who have no sailing experience and those who have graduated from Wet Feet. Sailors will use the *Optimist Sailing with Puffy & Friends* activity book from the Canadian Yachting Association to help with their learning.

This course emphasizes learning proper skills through skill progression – teaching the basics and progressing with small building blocks until the skill is mastered. Sailors are motivated through these small successes and will be assured that the skills are taught properly. Teamwork is also encouraged in this course, as sailors start with two per boat, eventually graduating to sailing on their own by the end of the course.

The following topics are covered in the Optimist Level 1 course:

- Terminology – boat parts, wind direction
- Water safety – clothing, water pollution, lifejacket vs. PFD
- Balance – where to sit, moving around in the boat
- Steering – straight, turning, holding the tiller extension
- Propulsion – sculling, paddling, using the sail
- “Crab Claw” sheeting
- Stopping and going
- Capsizing
- Knots
- Launching and docking
- Tacking and gybing – ducking, footwork/crossing the boat, hand exchange



All the lessons are taught from the absolute basics, so those sailors who have taken Wet Feet will have an opportunity to review and build on their skills, and those who are new to Optimists will learn the fundamentals in a safe and fun environment.

