

Wet Feet

The Wet Feet course is designed to give children ages 5 to 7 a safe and purposeful early sailing experience. It is a half-day course, typically run over 5 days and taught in Optimist dinghies. The emphasis is on having fun while learning basic sailing skills. Sailors will use the *Bobbie the Safety Boat* activity book from the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary to learn about boat and water safety.

Young sailors will learn the fundamentals to dinghy sailing, broken down into small portions so they can learn more quickly, motivating them with small successes. Skills are also taught in small portions to eliminate bad habits that will need to be broken later on.



The Wet Feet course covers the following topics:

- Safety – wearing a lifejacket/PFD, appropriate clothing, safety on docks and in boats
- Balance –where to sit, moving around in the boat
- Steering – straight, turning, proper tiller extension grip
- Propulsion – sculling, paddling, using the sail
- Stopping and going
- “Crab Claw” sheeting
- Tacking
- Terminology – boat parts, wind direction

All the lessons are taught through games and activities, which keeps the young sailors engaged while learning these fundamental sailing skills. There are opportunities for the sailors to build on their skills in this course, and so they can take it more than once. The Wet Feet course is the perfect first stepping stone for teaching young children to sail.

