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A Vail Ski & Snowboard School class sporting Kinderlift of Colorado vests. There's a strap on the back that makes it easy to help them on the lift, the kids are easier to spot and they seem to like the "uniform" aspect of the vest.

Credits:
Vail Ski & Snowboard School

Pick 'em up, lift 'em up, head 'em out: A safety ski vest for kids

- By [Regan Dickinson](#), Denver Ski and Snow Report Examiner

If you've been up to [Vail](#) the past couple of ski seasons, you may have noticed groups of brightly-colored vest wearers trailing alongside a person much larger than said vest wearers. If so, you've spotted a Vail ski school class outfitted with something parents of kindergarten-aged kids and other ski schools ought to consider for their little ones this season and seasons to come.

Manufactured right here in Denver by a company called [Kinderlift of Colorado](#), the Kinderlift safety vests are quite simple conceptually, but give parents peace of mind on a few different levels. Bobby Murphy, who's the director of the [Vail Ski & Snowboard School](#) and a member of the [Professional Ski Instructors of America's Alpine Team](#), says the Kinderlift vests "have been outstanding for our operation."

Murphy says the vests give the 3-6 year old ski classes identification, safety and a handle to hang onto for a secure lift ride. Murphy explains, "Lift riding is a great example of why we love the safety vests. When you're loading a lift with a child you can use the handle on the back of the vest as an additional support or help for the child to get up onto the chair. The five and six year olds are usually big enough to hop right on the lift, but for the younger kids the height of the chair can be a challenge, so having this strap on the back is the best part of the vest for us."

Murphy adds that the other tangible benefit for ski instructors is the security and safety of being able to quickly and easily spot a stray student as well as alerting skiers and boarders to the presence of ski schooling tots.

“The color of the vests and the way they stand out gives us more visibility. They’re more visible to the instructor, and others on the hill that are skiing and snowboarding can see the kids out ahead of them so they know they should slow down or avoid the class,” says Murphy. “Plus, all of our employees on the mountain are trained to stop and check on any child they see in a vest without an instructor. Typically it’s not a problem; the instructor is usually right around the corner, but in case they did get separated it’s another layer of security.”

As noted, Vail’s ski instructors use the strap on the back of the vest primarily to help secure the children on the lift. It can also be used to help kids up off the snow after they fall. However, Murphy says they try not to use it for that purpose unless the child is really struggling to get back up since one of the skills they emphasize is learning to get up after a fall.

On a personal note, I wish I had known about the Kinderlift safety vests when my kids were in that 3-6 age group, and even up to the age of eight. It would have been quite helpful, particularly on lifts that are older, faster and more difficult to load. And, it would have been nice if my kids’ ski schools used the vests.

Though my kids are too old to use it now, I was given a sample vest to check out. The vest is sturdy, durable, well made and is very simple to put on and use, with a zipper in the front and the strap in the back. The vests come in three sizes – XS, S and M – and a variety of colors, including red, green, blue, yellow and orange.

If you’re considering outfitting your child in one of these vests, it might be a good idea to find out if your favorite ski area is using them, and what colors they’re using so you don’t get confused with their classes.

For more information about the vests, contact Randy Burklund at rburklund@comcast.net, call 303-898-2242 or go to www.kinderlift.com.

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