

Play. Love. Excel.



An American Hockey Parent Handbook

Helpful hints and important information for
creating a great youth hockey experience



PROUD PARTNERS IN HOCKEY



“The ADM and its ladder of development is the best program for every single kid playing the sport, regardless of ability level. Coupled with USA Hockey’s extraordinary coaching education programs, the sport at the grassroots level has never been better in our country.”

—DAN BYLSMA, hockey dad, 2014 U.S. Olympic Men’s Hockey
and Pittsburgh Penguins head coach



Welcome to USA Hockey

Herb Brooks told us “great moments are born from great opportunities.” Being a part of this great game is most certainly one of those great opportunities. Whether it’s competing for a gold medal, skating with neighborhood friends or volunteering at the rink, hockey can provide a lifetime of great moments—*and fun*—for you and your child.

As the national governing body for ice hockey in the United States, USA Hockey is here to help you make the most of it.

Our Youth Hockey Mission

We provide an innovative foundation for the growth and development of hockey players in the United States. We help young people become leaders, even Olympic heroes, and we connect the game at every level, promoting a life-long love of the sport.

Making Hockey Great for Your Child

Our primary emphasis is on the support and development of grassroots hockey programs. Your registration with USA Hockey aligns you and your hockey-playing child with a powerful advocate that is completely dedicated to you and to making hockey a great experience for every player.

Thank you for joining us on this exciting journey. We are truly yours in hockey. As part of that promise, we developed this handbook to share a wealth of information that will help you and your child enjoy a fun hockey experience.

About USA Hockey

Founded in 1937, USA Hockey is the national governing body for ice hockey in the United States, including more than one million registered players, coaches, officials and volunteers. We are the official representative to the U.S. Olympic Committee and the International Ice Hockey Federation. In this role, we organize and train men's and women's teams for international competitions including the IIHF World Championships, the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games. We also work closely with the National Hockey League and the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Our sole focus is hockey, a singular mission that is exclusive to USA Hockey in this country.

Your Child and the American Development Model

In January 2009, USA Hockey launched the American Development Model, which for the first time ever, provided associations nationwide with a detailed blueprint for optimal athlete development.

The ADM is designed to successfully develop American hockey players by implementing long-term athlete development principles. Research from leading hockey-playing nations, sport scientists, coaches and educators was used to design the ADM, which quickly gained international recognition as a best-practice model for young athletes.

As the basis for youth hockey in the U.S., the ADM provides:

- + An opportunity to learn and refine the basic skills without an over-emphasis on winning in the younger age classifications.
- + Age-specific, age-appropriate skill development.
- + An opportunity for those that wish to advance in a more competitive, elite environment to do so.
- + A philosophy that attempts to reduce hockey burnout and disenchantment.
- + Structured training programs for coaches and qualified adult leadership.

The ADM is rooted in a philosophy of *age-specific, age-appropriate* development.

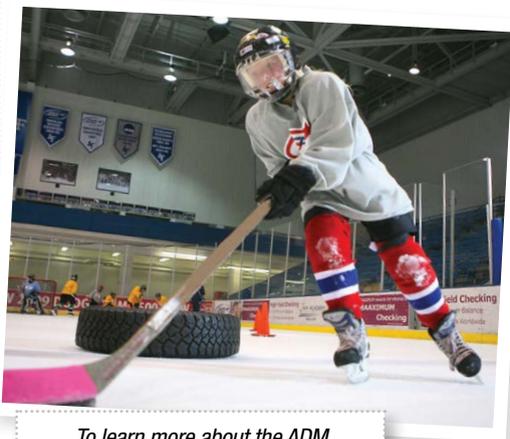
The ADM is forward-looking, building players well suited for the highly skilled, creative, fast-paced game of today.

The ADM is *fun*. USA Hockey believes in letting kids be kids. We believe that kids and their families should get the most out of hockey,

without feeling undue performance or financial pressure. We believe in community-based youth hockey. We believe in keeping kids engaged, moving and smiling. We believe in making optimal use of ice time. We believe in creating great athletes, not just hockey players. The ADM discourages early one-sport specialization.

The ADM Way

If kids truly want to excel, they need less emphasis on win/loss records and more focus on skill development and refinement, especially in the younger age classifications. They need more skill training and more puck touches. The fundamental physical and mental skills aren't learned effectively or efficiently during a game. They must be learned in practice. And practicing the right way is how kids will unlock their true potential. By combining age-appropriate training and practice techniques with an introduction to skills and athleticism, kids have more fun, more engagement, more exercise and more skill development. That's the ADM way.



To learn more about the ADM, visit ADMkids.com

A Safe Environment for Your Child

The safety of its players is USA Hockey's top priority. This includes not only on-ice safety, but also off-ice safety in any part of USA Hockey's programs. USA Hockey works together with leading organizations, including the United States Olympic Committee, to develop policies and programs that are intended to protect our participants and create an environment safe from abuse or misconduct.

For more information, click the Safety tab on USAHockey.com



On the Ice

USA Hockey has a strict standard of rules enforcement, allowing for improved skill development and a more positive environment for all participants. This standard results in a greater emphasis on skating, puck possession and the proper use of body contact. This standard is diligently reviewed and also includes equipment policies.

USA Hockey has long been a leader in the effort to enhance player safety, spearheading numerous initiatives aimed at providing the safest possible player environment.

Off the Ice

USA Hockey has zero tolerance for misconduct and abuse. Our off-ice safety efforts are gathered under the banner of USA Hockey SafeSport, which includes strict policies aimed at protecting participants from all types of misconduct. The SafeSport program also includes a streamlined process for reporting alleged inappropriate behavior.

About SafeSport:

+ SafeSport includes policies prohibiting sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, hazing, bullying and threats. These policies

also specifically address areas such as locker rooms, online and social media, road trips and host families.

+ SafeSport also encompasses education and awareness training, a screening and background check program, reporting-of-concerns protocol, responses to abuse and other misconduct, and continued monitoring of the SafeSport program.

A USA Hockey member or parent of any member who (1) violates any of the SafeSport policies or (2) fails to consent to and pass a screening and background check may be denied eligibility within any USA Hockey program and is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.

For more information on SafeSport, visit USAHockey.com/safesport

Recent data analysis by Safe Kids Worldwide, an organization dedicated to preventing injuries among children, indicated that **a lower percentage of hockey players visited emergency rooms** in 2011 and 2012 **than kids who played football, soccer, basketball or wrestled.**

Unequaled Instruction for Your Child

USA Hockey makes an unequaled commitment to coaching education, which means that members of USA Hockey receive an unrivaled level of support and resources geared toward developing young players.

USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program is designed to improve the caliber and quality of coaching in amateur hockey. Five levels of achievement and six online, age-specific modules have been established to educate and train each coach, from the beginner to the highly skilled expert.

The Coaching Education Program is committed to developing effective instructors and role models through a comprehensive education program at all levels of play. The program emphasizes fundamental skills, conceptual development, sportsmanship and respect for teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, parents and off-ice officials.

USA Hockey's district coaches-in-chief use trained coaching education personnel to conduct the first three progressive levels of instructional coaching clinics. The coaches-in-chief themselves organize and conduct the Level 4 clinics, while the director of the

coaching education program conducts the Level 5 clinic. All registered coaches are required to complete clinics in accordance with USA Hockey standards.

Additionally, USA Hockey has developed an internationally renowned library of instructional materials for coaches to use on the ice as well as in the classroom.

Officials

USA Hockey officials—the men and women in stripes—experience one of the most comprehensive officiating education programs in all of amateur sport. They attend clinics and pass tests annually that become progressively more difficult as they advance through the ranks. Additionally, each district has referee supervisors and mentor programs that help officials reach their fullest potential. If you're looking for a way to get involved and give back to the game, consider becoming a USA Hockey official. It's also a great way for teenaged hockey players to make money while learning more about the game.

“The thing I like about coaching is looking at it from where they started to where they finished. It isn't about wins and losses; it's about how they develop. We take pride in that.”

—KEITH TKACHUK, hockey dad, youth hockey coach, 19-year NHL veteran, four-time U.S. Olympian, first American-born player to lead the NHL in goal scoring



Hockey Parents: Enjoying the Experience

Above all, remember that hockey is a game, meant to be *fun*, including at the highest levels. Keep hockey in perspective and help your children do the same. Often the score isn't as important to them as simply gaining the experience of playing and making memories with teammates.

Savor every opportunity to watch your child on the ice. The hockey experience can be a source of great memories and lessons that last a lifetime. Traveling that road together can strengthen family ties.

Here are some ideas for making the experience great:

- + Create a scrapbook for your child with photos, news clippings, website postings and tournament programs. Have each teammate sign it.
- + Encourage your child to write a journal about his or her hockey experience.
- + Turn road trips into true family vacations; see the sights and explore the local culture. Take lots of pictures.
- + Take the lead in coordinating public service opportunities for the team; host a food or toy drive.
- + Join or create a hockey parent social club for your child's team; use social media to keep the conversations and friendships flowing.
- + Get involved as a volunteer committee member or coach.

ENJOY
& GET
INVOLVED
TODAY!



Getting Involved

Joining your local hockey association as a volunteer committee member, a coach or a helper of any sort can be a rewarding experience. It also strengthens your association.

Everyone has different strengths and skills that they can bring to a local hockey association, and every contribution helps, since associations are almost entirely powered by the extraordinary efforts of volunteers.

Even parents who never played hockey can make huge contributions as volunteers, so don't be reluctant. There's strength in numbers. Ask your local association about volunteer opportunities today. And if you have ideas for new ways you could help your association, don't hesitate. Jump in and join the team!



Budgeting Tips

All youth sports require some financial investment, and costs to participate in hockey can be substantially reduced with planning and common sense. Additionally, both USA Hockey and many local associations offer a number of options to help make hockey a game everyone can play and enjoy.

Above all, don't buy into the myth that only kids from wealthy families can excel in hockey. Many of the game's greatest players came from modest financial backgrounds.



Your local association is the first place you should turn if you have questions or concerns.

Local hockey associations have a wealth of knowledge, experience and connections that can help you minimize costs. Additionally, a high-quality youth hockey association will also make efficient use of ice time by putting multiple teams on the ice for practice sessions, reducing costs while also increasing skill development opportunities.



Remember, used or hand-me-down equipment can be a great way to reduce costs, especially at the younger ages.

Young children don't put as much wear-and-tear on equipment; its effectiveness usually far exceeds one or two players' use. Just be sure to inspect it carefully to ensure that all used items are still safe and fit properly. Resist the temptation to put your kids in oversized equipment. It will hurt their performance, making it difficult for them to perform and have fun.



Also, remember that neither the skates nor the sticks make the player, especially at the younger ages.

Put your children in equipment that is safe, comfortable and adequate, but resist the temptation to outfit them lavishly. If you have questions regarding where and when a big-ticket splurge might be appropriate, ask your association or coaches.





Comparison shop. There are a myriad of online and local outlets offering new and used hockey equipment. Look for the best deals.



Remember that hockey equipment can be a great birthday or holiday gift. Given the choice, most kids who are truly passionate about playing the game would prefer foregoing other types of gifts if it meant they could continue playing hockey.



Be proactive. Ask your local associations to explain what is included in exchange for your registration fees. Ask how the money is allocated toward ice time, administration, officials and travel. Also make sure these topics are covered during preliminary parent meetings as well, so you clearly understand your financial commitment for the season.



Avoid spending money on impulse purchases during road trips. Pack lunches. Stay in hotels with complimentary breakfasts. Reduce travel. Frequently traveling to far-flung tournaments isn't a necessary component of skill development. Development happens at your local rink. Road trips can be fun, but they aren't where you get the most bang for your hockey buck.



While you're already part of the sport, if you have friends whose children would like to try youth hockey, USA Hockey hosts **Try Hockey for Free events** each year that give children who haven't ever had the opportunity to play hockey a chance to try it for free.

To learn more, visit
tryhockeyforfree.com

What to Expect as a Hockey Parent

Your child's hockey experience will be influenced by many factors, but nothing will influence that experience more than you. As a parent, you are the most influential figure in your child's development, both as a hockey player and as a person. Embrace that opportunity.

REMEMBER:

- + Let kids be kids. Fun should be paramount.
- + Be supportive.
- + Be disciplined. Manage your emotions and set a good example that teaches your child to do the same.
- + Be positive, and when adversity comes, be constructive not destructive. If you must be critical, don't get personal. Direct your comments at the action, not the person.
- + Be proactive. Getting involved as a volunteer or coach in your association can help you have an even greater influence on your child's hockey experience. And as a parent, being a proactive communicator with coaches and hockey administrators can help avoid frustration and conflict.
- + Your child's coach is likely a volunteer, and often also a parent, donating their time to help your child. While criticism might be appropriate, it should be done constructively and through appropriate channels.
- + Be respectful, *especially* in situations of disagreement or conflict.
- + Don't bully or harass. Speak out if you see bullying or harassing behavior from others.
- + Focus on the process, not the outcome, and teach your child to do the same.
- + Kids learn best by doing.
- + Praise your child's effort and resolve more often than their performance. Studies show that this helps them better develop the confidence to meet new challenges and overcome obstacles.
- + Keep hockey in perspective. Maintain a healthy balance of hockey and non-hockey

activities. Encourage your child to be well-rounded.

- + Enjoy the youth hockey experience with your child. Life moves fast and time passes quickly. Soon your child will be grown and you'll wish you could return to these days, if just for a moment. So savor these seasons, don't rush them. Make the experience one that you'll remember fondly together years from now.

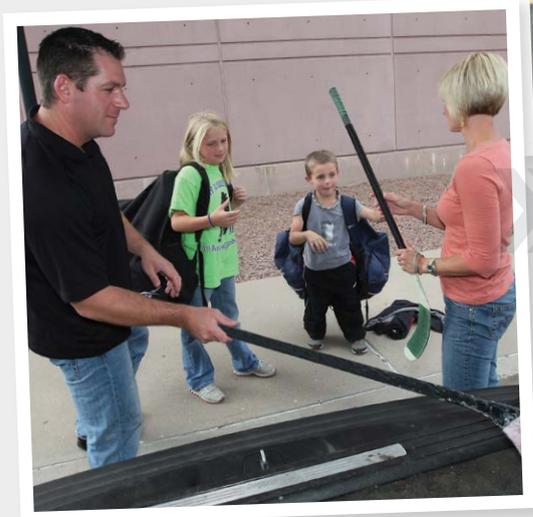
The youth hockey environment should be open and transparent. As a parent, you have the right to be involved and aware. Please don't hesitate to ask questions like these:

- + What role can I play in my child's hockey development? What roles are available to me within the association?
- + How will the coaches and administrators communicate with me?
- + What educational resources are available to parents, prospective coaches and/or volunteers?
- + What financial resources and options are available to help me provide the hockey experience for my child?
- + When should I speak out about questionable behavior exhibited by a player, coach, parent, administrator or anyone else in my child's hockey environment? To whom should I report that behavior? What is the process for reporting that behavior?
- + How can I help my child be safe on and off the ice?

For more information, visit
USAHockeyParents.com

“Parental expectations and disappointments, and coaching that values winning over healthy childhood play experiences, place children at both physical and psychological risk.”

—MARGARET PUCKETT and JANET BLACK, *The Young Child*



**AS A PARENT,
YOU ARE
THE MOST
INFLUENTIAL
FIGURE IN
YOUR CHILD'S
DEVELOPMENT**



Ladder of Player Development

USA Hockey's American Development Model includes eight stages founded on proven long-term athlete development principles.



AGES 0-6

ACTIVE START

This early development period is essential for acquiring fundamental movement skills (running, gliding, jumping, kicking, catching, striking, etc.) that form the foundation for more complex movements, thereby preparing children for a physically active lifestyle. USA Hockey encourages activity that incorporates fundamental movement skills in the four environments that lead to physical literacy: in the water (swimming), on the ground (athletics), in the air (gymnastics), on ice and snow (sliding and skating). Kids should start with a learn-to-skate program and then a learn-to-play program as their initial steps into hockey.

AGES 6-8 (FEMALE)
AGES 6-9 (MALE)

FUNDAMENTALS

The objective of this stage is to refine fundamental movement skills and begin to acquire basic sport skills through fun-focused methods. This is the time when a foundation is set for future acquisition of more advanced skills. In this stage, the focus is on the development of physical literacy. Fundamental movement skills should be mastered and motor development emphasized, while participation in multiple sports and activities is encouraged. For optimal skill acquisition, the basic hockey skills of skating and puck control are introduced. Fun competitions are also introduced in a team environment.



AGES 8-11 (FEMALE)

AGES 9-12 (MALE)

LEARN TO TRAIN



This is the period during which accelerated learning of coordination and fine motor control occurs. It is the critical stage for the acquisition of hockey skills. What is learned or not learned in this stage will have a very significant effect on the level of play that is ultimately achieved in the athlete's future. Players in this development stage should be able to begin transferring skills and concepts from practice to games. Group interaction, team building and social activities should be emphasized. A smart balance of practices and games will promote the continued development and mastery of key hockey skills.



AGES 11-15 (FEMALE)

AGES 12-16 (MALE)

TRAIN TO TRAIN

The focus of this stage is to further develop sports-specific skills, begin to introduce competition, and start emphasizing support training to continue development of speed, strength and stamina while maintaining flexibility. Players should consolidate sports-specific technical skills with an increased emphasis on hockey and a reduction in the number of other sports played. A continued emphasis is also placed on the development of individual and group tactics. Social and emotional considerations are addressed by placing an emphasis on team-building, group interactions and social activities.

AGES 15-18 (FEMALE)

AGES 16-18 (MALE)

LEARN TO COMPETE



This is the time to prepare athletes for the competitive environment, continue to refine technical and ancillary skills, and develop the physical attributes. The focus is on optimizing fitness preparation and beginning to specialize in hockey. Training should be individualized to the athlete's particular needs in skill development, mental preparation, fitness and recovery. During this stage, training volume and intensity increases. Competitions become more important and the focus shifts to performance. Training emphasizes the development of position-specific technical and tactical skills under competitive conditions. Mental skills that contribute to performance are also emphasized.

AGES 19-21 (FEMALE)
AGES 19-23 (MALE)

TRAIN TO COMPETE

The objective of this stage is to transfer from the training environment to a competitive environment. Athletes must consolidate technical skills and maintain ancillary skills and underlying physical capabilities. Training volume remains high while intensity increases with the importance of competitions. The training is usually 10+ months of the year, disciplined and hockey-specific. Athletes will usually be required to move away from home for training and competition environments that fit this stage of development.



AGES 19+

TRAIN TO WIN

The focus of this stage is the stabilization of performance-on-demand characteristics and achieving excellence at the highest levels of performance, e.g., the National Hockey League, the Olympics, the World Championship. Only a very small minority will achieve this stage. It is important to build a winning strategy with these athletes and to individualize training and recovery to prevent over-training.

ALL AGES

HOCKEY FOR LIFE

Players can enter this stage at any age, as “Hockey for Life” can provide quality recreational opportunities for all ages. Whether as a “rink-rat” at a local outdoor rink, as an intramural hockey player at a college or university, or in adult recreational hockey leagues, USA Hockey believes that the opportunity to play and have fun in our sport should be available to all players with various levels of commitment. Even later in life, USA Hockey hopes that everyone leads a physically active, healthy lifestyle that includes the great game of hockey. Experiments have shown that physical exercise can double the rate at which the brain creates new brain cells. It makes an old brain act more like a young one in its ability to generate neurons needed for learning and remembering new things. So, in effect, exercise helps the brain stay youthful.



For Reference: USA Hockey Youth/Junior Age Classifications

AGE CATEGORY	CLASSIFICATION
8 YEARS & UNDER	8U MITE
9-10 YEARS	10U SQUIRT
11-12 YEARS	12U PEEWEE
13-14 YEARS	14U BANTAM
15-16 YEARS	16U MIDGET
17-18 YEARS	18U MIDGET/HIGH SCHOOL
16-20 YEARS	JUNIOR



Body Checking: A Key Skill

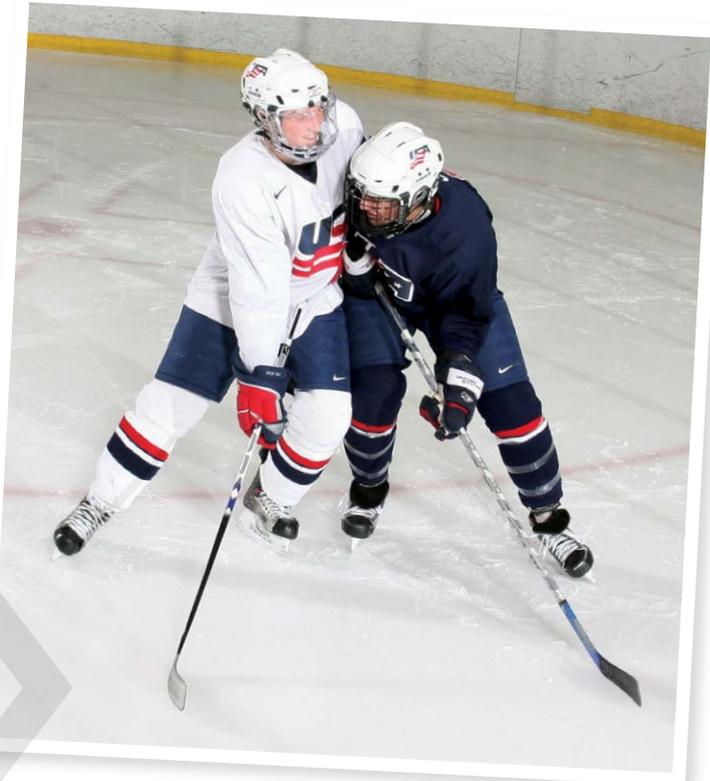
» USA Hockey believes in teaching progressively increased body contact for six years, from 7 years old through 12 years old, so players will be better prepared to give and receive legal body checks.

True to its skill development and safety commitment, USA Hockey was the first governing body in North America to modify the allowable age for body checking.

As a result, USA Hockey does not permit body checking at the mite, squirt and peewee levels (ages 12 and under). USA Hockey first permits body checking in games at the bantam age classification instead. This decision was based on extensive medical, physiological and sports science research, including the fact that 9 to 12 years of age is a young athlete's optimal window for skill development.

As a reminder, the purpose of a body check is to separate the opponent from the puck, not punish the opponent physically. A player cannot legally contact an opponent in the head, face or neck. The onus is on the player delivering the check to avoid making contact with the head, face or neck. Only the trunk (hips to shoulders) shall be used to deliver a body check, and the delivery of a check must come from the front or side of an opponent.

The USA Hockey body-checking standard is designed to improve the proper skill of legal body checking or contact at all levels of play and will not remove the physical component of the game. A hard body check (in body checking-approved age classifications) should not be penalized as long as it is performed within the rules.



Gaining an Extra Edge: Nutrition, Hydration and Sleep

Sometimes it's easy for kids to overlook proper nutrition, hydration and sleep, but as a parent, you have an opportunity to prevent this—and provide your young athlete with a major competitive edge.

Proper nutrition, hydration and sleep give your child what he or she needs to excel not only in sports, but also in life. Athletes should begin preparing for tomorrow's activity immediately after the conclusion of today's activity. By doing so, they will be one step ahead.

Nutrition Tips:

- + Eating well-balanced meals with foods from each of the essential food groups is still the best advice.
- + When eating on the road, research restaurant menus online in advance to determine if they have balanced meal options.
- + Avoid excessive sauces or dressings, which can be packed with “empty” calories. Ask for them on the side to control portions.
- + Avoid fried foods. Grilled and steamed foods are healthier choices.
- + Minimize or eliminate soda pop. Drink water, milk or chocolate milk instead.

Hydration Tips:

- + Studies show that people suffer a five percent decrease in cognitive function for every one percent of dehydration. Drink more water.
- + As a recovery drink after exertion, fat-free chocolate milk can be an excellent choice. According to WebMD, it “beat out carbohydrate sports drinks at helping to rebuild and refuel muscles after exercise.” It's often less expensive than carbohydrate sports drinks, too.
- + Urine color is a good indicator of hydration level. Clear to pale yellow is good; darker yellow is bad.

Sleep Tips:

- + Lifestyles have become increasingly busy, but for children and athletes in particular, foregoing proper sleep is acutely damaging.
- + According to extensive study by doctors and scientists, children between the ages of 3 and 6 should sleep 10-12 hours nightly for optimal health and function. For children between 7 and 12 years of age, the recommendation is 10-11 hours. For 12-to-18-year-olds, the recommendation is 8-9 hours. When people are deprived of adequate sleep, or suffer from inconsistent sleep patterns, “the brain functions at a subpar level, with slower reaction times, impaired judgment and emotional instability.” — *Michael Sweeney, Brain: The Complete Mind, how it develops, how it works, and how to keep it sharp.*

The Structure of USA Hockey

DISTRICTS/AFFILIATES

USA Hockey is divided into 12 geographical districts throughout the United States. Districts are organized with USA Hockey volunteer personnel to administer registration, risk management, coaching and officiating programs. These programs include registration and training of coaches and officials. Districts volunteers also facilitate learn-to-play programs for youth players and their parents. Within those 12 districts, a total of 34 affiliates provide the governance.

YOUR LOCAL ASSOCIATION

Your local youth hockey association, which is the heartbeat of hockey in your community, builds on this foundation. USA Hockey supports these associations with tools and resources to help them excel.

Local associations pour heart, soul, time and resources into creating a great hockey experience for youth players and their parents. Volunteers are the backbone of these associations, administering schedules, registration, fund-raising and overall management. They are at your service, donating time, energy and talent for the love of the game and community. They are your first point-of-contact for any questions and concerns.

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

Your local associations schedule and manage ice time, including practices, games, jamborees, tournaments, etc. Structure and philosophy varies from association to association, but USA Hockey provides age- and developmentally appropriate guidelines, based on ADM principles, at every step on the development ladder.

At the 8U level (mites), those guidelines include 50-60 ice sessions per season. The emphasis is on fun, fundamental skill development and practice, not winning or losing. Playing multiple sports is encouraged.

The 8U experience recommended by USA Hockey includes no full-time goalies, 12 or fewer players per team, station-based practices and cross-ice games to maximize fun, puck touches and skill development for every player.

Multiple teams should be on the ice for each session, making the most efficient use of ice time and maximizing skill-development opportunities.

At the 10U level, USA Hockey recommends one goalie per team along with 10-12 skaters on the ice for 95-100 sessions. These sessions should include 75-80 quality practices and 20-25 game days. The 12U experience is similar to 10U but with an optimal goal of 12 skaters per team, two goalies and an increase in ice sessions. Smaller rosters ensure more playing time and more skill development for all.

USA Hockey's recommended 14U and 16U experience includes an increase to 160 ice sessions, ideally 80 minutes in duration, 16 skaters and two goalies per team, 120-130 quality practices and 40-50 games. At this stage, players should shift to a nine-month training calendar that also includes age-appropriate off-ice training.

For 18U males and 19U females, USA Hockey recommends 200 ice sessions mixed with age-appropriate off-ice training over a 10-month training calendar. As these players continue to advance, they will move toward a training calendar that equally supports training and competition. At the NCAA and professional ranks, training will shift toward supporting the athlete's competition calendar.

“What’s really good for kids is to give them a variety of sports; to have them train to be athletes, not necessarily train to be good in one sport. Let kids be kids. Let them have fun.”

—PETER LAVIOLETTE, Stanley Cup-winning head coach, U.S. Olympian

LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT STAGES

- 8. HOCKEY FOR LIFE**
- 7. TRAINING TO WIN**
19+ Junior (NCAA, NHL)
- 6. TRAINING TO COMPETE**
Junior, NCAA
- 5. LEARNING TO COMPETE**
18-and-under (Midgets/High School)
- 4. TRAINING TO TRAIN**
16-and-under (Midgets), 14-and-under (Bantams)
- 3. LEARNING TO TRAIN**
12-and-under (Peewees), 10-and-under (Squirts)
- 2. FUNDAMENTALS**
8-and-under (Mites), 6-and-under (Mites)
- 1. ACTIVE START**
6-and-under



Codes of Conduct

USA Hockey developed codes of conduct for coaches, parents, players and spectators to help everyone understand the expectations associated with their role in the game.

COACH'S CODE OF CONDUCT

- + Winning is a consideration, but not the only one, nor the most important one. Care more about the child than winning the game.
- + Remember, players are involved in hockey for fun and enjoyment.
- + Be a positive role model to your players. Display emotional maturity and be alert to the physical safety of players.
- + Be generous with your praise when it is deserved; be consistent and honest; be fair and just; do not criticize players publicly; learn to be a more effective communicator and coach; don't yell at players.
- + Adjust to personal needs and problems of players; be a good listener; never verbally or physically abuse a player or official; give all players the opportunity to improve their skills, gain confidence and develop self-esteem; teach players the basics.
- + Organize practices that are fun and challenging for your players. Familiarize yourself with the rules, techniques and strategies of hockey; encourage all your players to be team players.
- + Maintain an open line of communication with your players' parents. Explain the goals and objectives of your association.
- + Be concerned with the overall development of your players. Stress good health habits and clean living.



PLAYER'S CODE OF CONDUCT

- + Play for fun.
- + Work hard to improve your skills.
- + Be a team player—get along with your teammates.
- + Learn teamwork, sportsmanship and discipline.
- + Be on time.
- + Learn the rules and play by them. Always be a good sport.
- + Respect your coach, your teammates, your parents, opponents and officials.
- + Never argue with an official's decision.



PARENT'S CODE OF CONDUCT

- + Do not force your children to participate in sports, but support their desires to play their chosen sports. Children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment. Make it fun.
- + Encourage your child to play by the rules. Remember, children learn best by example, so applaud the good plays of both teams.
- + Do not embarrass your child by yelling at players, coaches or officials. By showing a positive attitude toward the game and all of its participants, your child will benefit.
- + Emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit your young athlete. De-emphasize games and competition in the lower age groups.
- + Know and study the rules of the game and support the officials on and off the ice. This approach will help in the development and support of the game. Any criticism of the officials only hurts the game.
- + Applaud a good effort in both victory and defeat, and enforce the positive points of the game. Never yell or physically abuse your child after a game or practice—it is destructive. Work toward removing the physical and verbal abuse in youth sports.
- + Recognize the importance of volunteer coaches. They are important to the development of your child and the sport. Communicate with them and support them.
- + If you enjoy the game, learn all you can about hockey—and volunteer.



SPECTATOR'S CODE OF CONDUCT

- + Display good sportsmanship. Always respect players, coaches and officials.
- + Act appropriately; do not taunt or disturb other fans; enjoy the game together.
- + Cheer good plays of all participants; avoid booing opponents.
- + Cheer in a positive manner and encourage fair play; profanity and objectionable cheers or gestures are offensive.
- + Help provide a safe and fun environment.



What They're Saying About the ADM



“We should always strive to do the right thing for kids, and the American Development Model does just that. Hockey has evolved. Coaches and parents have certainly tried to do the right thing in regard to development, but we haven't had a national blueprint for associations to use—something based on solid research—until now. This is a major step forward, and USA Hockey is to be commended for its leadership.”

—RON WILSON, 2010 U.S. Olympic men's hockey coach, 7th winningest coach in NHL history

“The American Development Model has made a huge impact on our young athletes, and by staying committed to the ADM, we'll continue giving them the overall skill development they need.”

—PHIL HOUSLEY, Nashville Predators assistant coach, 2013 gold-medal winning U.S. National Junior Team head coach, U.S. Olympian, highest-scoring American defenseman in NHL history



“The ADM will have the effect of increasing player participation, creating a positive environment for children to learn and play hockey, and it will facilitate better skill development.”

—GARY BETTMAN, Commissioner of the NHL

“I'm really excited about the American Development Model. As a parent, I think what's great about the ADM is that it focuses on age-appropriate learning and provides kids an environment to reach their fullest potential.”

—TIM THOMAS, Florida Panthers goaltender, U.S. Olympian, 2009 Vezina Trophy winner



“The ADM is absolutely fantastic. The principles behind the program are dead-on.”

—BRIAN BURKE, Calgary Flames president of hockey operations, general manager of 2010 U.S. Olympic Men's Team



“I think it's pretty cool. I like the fact that kids are encouraged to play other sports. Hockey is a great sport, but playing other sports definitely helps you become a better hockey player.”

—ZACH PARISE, Minnesota Wild forward, U.S. Olympian

A photograph of USA Hockey players on an ice rink. In the center, a player in a grey USA Hockey sweatshirt and blue helmet has both arms raised in celebration, holding a hockey stick. To the left, a goalie in grey gear is visible. To the right, another player in a blue USA Hockey jersey and white helmet is looking towards the center. The background shows a rink with a net and banners for 'SAA' and '.COM'.

Play. Love. Excel.

“USA Hockey continues to do wonderful things in every aspect of the sport. And for kids, providing the best development programs and safest possible environment are at the forefront of every decision made.”

—KATEY STONE, 2014 United States Olympic Women's Hockey head coach, winningest coach in NCAA Division I women's ice hockey history



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