

Recommended Program Structure by Age Group

Age appropriate programming is vital to both athlete development and participant retention. The American Development Model was developed to provide local leadership with a guide to offer a on and off ice curriculum that will meet and exceed the needs of young athletes at each age group.

It's a good idea to reevaluate the programs you offer throughout the year to make sure you are meeting the development needs of your members. Below is an outline of the recommend program design from Learn to Play – 12U.

Introductory Program (Learn-to-Skate, Learn-to-Play & 6U):

- Length
 - 10-12 weeks
 - 1-2 ice touches per week
- Structure
 - Keep it as low-cost and low-commitment as possible
 - Plan to host at least one the first-half the season and another program the second-half
 - Programs start after national Try Hockey For Free Days

8U:

- Length
 - 5 months = 20 weeks per season maximum
 - 2-3 ice touches per week
 - 50 min ice sessions
 - 50 to 60 ice touches per season
- Games/Practices
 - Minimum 16 cross ice/half-ice games & 34 practices
 - Max 20 cross ice/half-ice games & 40 practices
- Structure
 - Group players into top 1/3, middle 1/3 and beginner 1/3.
 - 30 – 60 players each practice session
 - 9 to 13 players/team; no fulltime goalies



10U:

- Length
 - 6 - 7 months = 24 – 28 weeks
 - 3 - 4 ice touches per week
 - 60 min ice sessions
 - 95 to 100 ice touches per season
- Games/Practices
 - 70/30 practice-to-game ratio
 - 75 to 80 practices
 - 20 to 25 games intro of formal full-ice games
- Structure
 - 10-12 skaters & 1 goalie per team

12U:

- Length
 - 7 months
 - 4 ice touches per week
 - 60 min ice sessions
 - 105 to 120 ice touches (70/30 ratio)
- Games/Practices
 - 70/30 practice-to-game ratio
 - 80 to 90 practices
 - 30 to 35 games
- Structure
 - 30 – 45 players per practice session
 - 15 skaters & 2 goalies per team

USA Hockey provides the foundation for the sport of ice hockey in America; helps young people become leaders, even Olympic heroes; and connects the game at every level while promoting a lifelong love of the sport.

