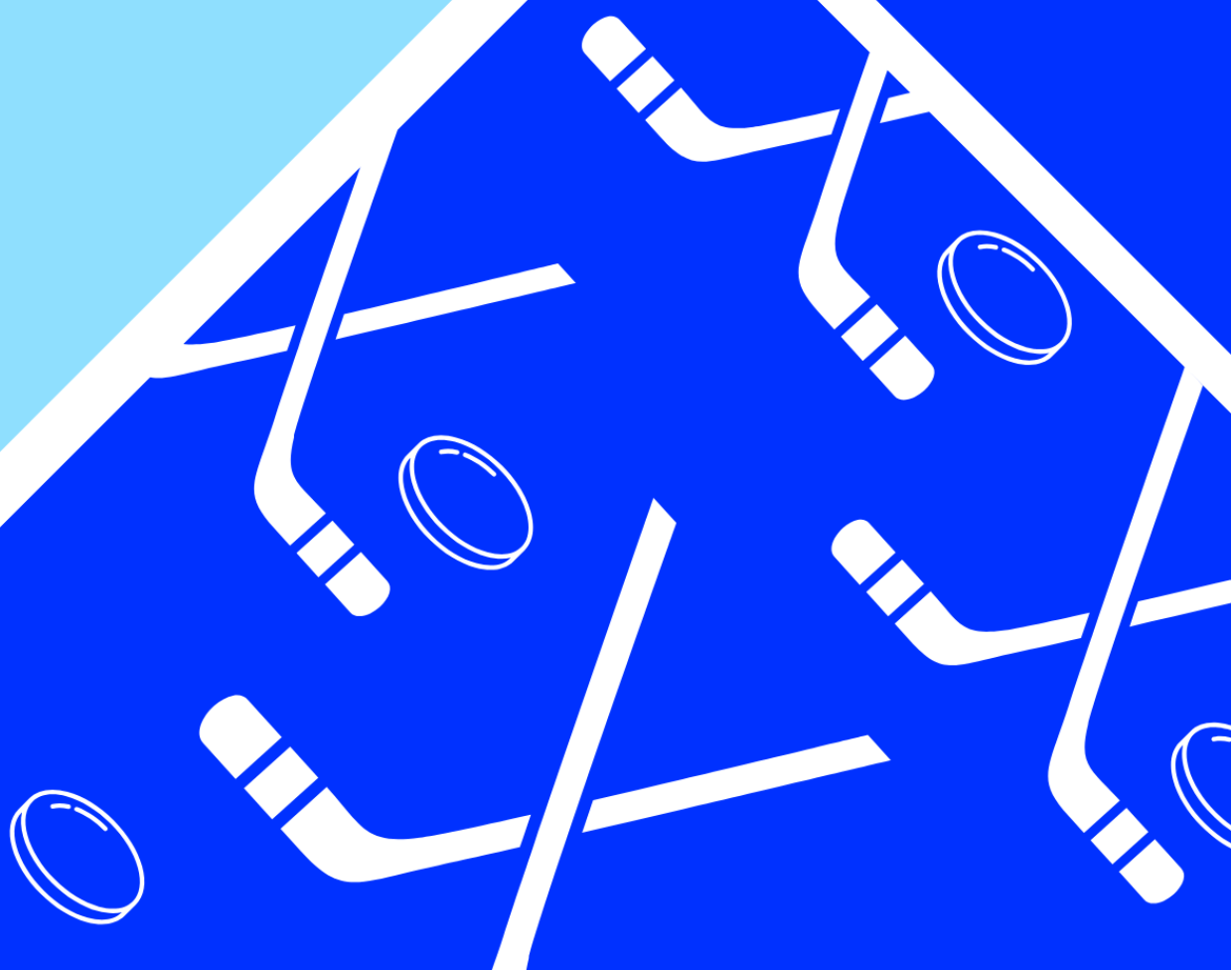


**HOCKEY
QUÉBEC**

**U7
U9**

ORGANIZATION
GUIDE

25
26
—



About the U7-U9 Organization Guide



Purpose of the guide

This guide has been designed to help stakeholders organize U7 and U9 regular season activities. It brings together the guiding principles of small area games, as well as the methods of organising and running games. It aims to provide a clear and practical reference to ensure the coherence and quality of the organisation of activities for young people.

Please note that this guide is intended to supplement the Hockey Québec administrative rules published annually. These are the reference at the regulatory level for the supervision of all activities and take precedence over the following guide.

What you'll find in the guide

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| ➤ Presentation of the program | Definition of initiation, clarifications between divisions and programs and objectives of the game program in a small area. |
| ➤ Guidelines for the season | Calendar of activities and season phases |
| ➤ Organization | Organization of teams and games, equipment. |
| ➤ Game Rules | Specific rules for U7 and U9 games |

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INTRODUCTION

SECTION

1



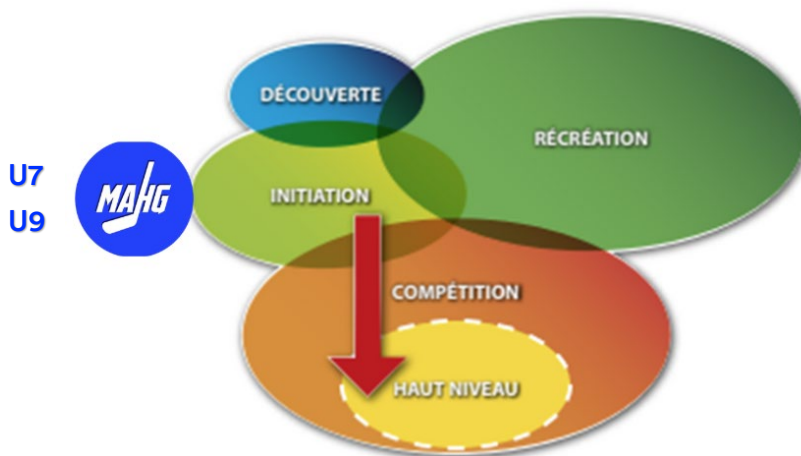
1.1 Definition of initiation

In sport, initiation is an **educational approach** focused on the overall development of the child. It's not just about teaching the basics of hockey, it's about creating a safe, challenging and responsive environment where each child can learn and grow at their own pace.

The activities of the U7 and U9 divisions, which are part of the initiation, are anchored in this pedagogical approach. They are based on clear principles: to offer varied and progressive activities, adapted to the level of each child and to highlight play, experimentation and discovery.

It is after a transition to initiation that players will move on to a more recreational or competitive environment. **However, the purpose of initiation remains the well-being of the child and participation in their sport and not the search for performance.**

FIGURE 2 : LES CINQ CONTEXTES DE LA PRATIQUE SPORTIVE⁵



Source : https://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/publications/Fondement-pratique-sportive-au-Quebec.pdf

Démarche pédagogique	Mettre l'accent sur l'apprentissage et le bien-être des enfants dans un environnement amusant.
Habiletés de base	Favoriser l'exploration et le développement des habiletés de base nécessaires au hockey.
Expression du jeu	Adapter l'environnement aux besoins de l'enfant pour une expérience positive.

1.2 Our role and values

Our collective responsibility at initiation is **to provide structured supervision**. This involves the design of educational materials, the training of stakMHAlters, the adaptation of rules and above all, the encouragement of a versatile practice that **supports the well-being of the child**. In order to ensure a beneficial transition for children to initiation, federations and associations have clear and complementary roles.

- **Federation (Hockey Quebec)** Overall Leadership Role: Designs educational materials, determines objectives, trains stakMHAlters and sets the rules of the playing environment to ensure a consistent and developmentally appropriate approach based on best practices in youth development in sport.
- **Clubs (Regions and MHAs)** Responsible for the implementation of activities following the programs established by the federation. This involves ensuring logistics, supervising coaches on the field and guaranteeing a safe and motivating environment, in line with the pedagogical orientations received.

For the U7 and U9 Small Area Play Program to be fully beneficial, it is essential that **all resource persons adhere to its core values**. The program is based on a vision of hockey that focuses on **fun and learning**, rather than early performance. Each young person progresses at their own pace, in a **welcoming and stimulating environment**, where **success is measured by the motivation, smile and pride of the child**. Sharing this common philosophy is fundamental to providing children **with a positive, enriching and sustainable experience**.

1.2 Objectives of the Small area Play Program

The Hockey Canada and Hockey Quebec U7 and U9 program is an essential part of the development of hockey skills for all children who play the game in Canada.

A player's first experience with hockey is critical. The first few years in hockey should be a **positive experience filled with fun and excitement**. If a beginner has fun while developing basic skills and builds confidence, chances are they will continue to enjoy playing hockey for the rest of their lives.

Hockey Quebec's mission is to provide a positive, safe and accessible environment, as well as programs focused on learning and fun for all hockey players in Quebec. Such a program should ensure progressive skill development through well-conducted practices and age-appropriate game situations in an environment appropriate to the level of play of the players.

- **Program Goals**
 - Teach the **basic skill set of hockey** to allow children to have **fun** while playing.
 - Develop and encourage **team spirit**.
 - To promote **fitness**, **fair play** and **cooperation** as well as the **enjoyment of play**.

1.4 Programs and Division

At Hockey Quebec, the initiation department encompasses both the MAHG program and the activities of the U7 and U9 divisions.

It is important to understand that **the two are not equivalent**. The **MAHG is a competency-based pedagogical framework while the divisions (U7/U9) are an administrative framework to govern** regional and provincial activities.

Players follow the MAHG program corresponding to their level of technical progression for the lesson phase at the beginning of the year, and then are grouped by age when it comes time to make the teams for the season.

The MAHG and U7/U9 programs **have the same goals** to ensure an environment that meets the needs of participants ages 4 to 8 who are new to hockey.

This Guide presents **information related to the organization of U7 and U9 regular season activities** and games in small areas.

1.5 Advantages of playing in small areas

Based on numerous scientific studies, it is clear that open-ice hockey is not suitable for the physical and psychological development of children under the age of nine. At this age, the focus must be on the **development of technical skills**, in a positive context where **learning is prioritized over competition**.

In this sense, hockey in a small area is an advantageous solution for the development of young people. By separating the ice, the configuration of the play space is **better adapted to the physical, technical and tactical abilities of the children**. An overview of statistics from scientific studies allows us to take into account the many advantages of the model of games on a small surface.

Other advantages of playing in a small area:

- **Increased emphasis on skating-related skills**, including agility, balance and changes of direction in a representative environment of the full game.
- **Puck control and protection skills** are enhanced, helping players be successful as they progress to a higher level.

- The technical and tactical foundations are strengthened more quickly, since the **skills are more often called upon during games.**
- The proximity and constant pressure of the opponent requires players to play **with their heads held high** and being aware of their surroundings.
- The reduction of time and space increases the frequency of decision-making, and improves the sense of hockey.
- **The intensity of the game increases** through the progressive development of children's skills and commitment to play.



Types d'habiletés au HOCKEY



1

Habiletés techniques

Les habiletés fondamentales requises pour pratiquer le hockey (p. ex., patinage, tirs, passes, freinages, virages, etc.) Au MAHG, elles forment trois groupes d'habiletés : stabilité, locomotion et manipulation.



Le programme d'initiation insiste sur l'enseignement des habiletés techniques et des tactiques individuelles. Ces habiletés de base améliorent le plaisir que le joueur prend à jouer au hockey.



2

Tactique individuelle

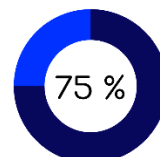
L'action d'un joueur utilisant ses habiletés techniques pour prendre avantage sur son adversaire, offensivement ou défensivement.

Avec ce groupe d'âge, aucun temps de développement ne doit être accordé à la tactique collective et aux systèmes de jeu. C'est le développement technique qui prime.

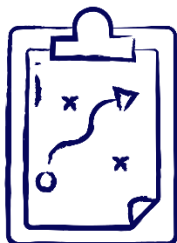
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Tactique collective

Une action collective de deux joueuses ou plus utilisant des habiletés techniques ou des tactiques individuelles pour prendre avantage sur l'adversaire ou s'y ajuster.



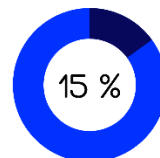
Technique



4

Système de jeu collectif

Un schéma de jeu selon lequel le déplacement de tous les joueurs est intégré de façon coordonnée afin d'atteindre un objectif offensif ou défensif.

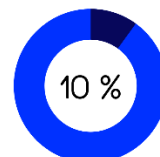


Tactique individuelle

5

Stratégie

La sélection de systèmes de jeu collectif pour imposer à l'adversaire un style de jeu et les tactiques qui forment le plan de match.



Tactique collective

Plusieurs études confirment qu'en **adaptant les dimensions du jeu à l'échelle des enfants**, le temps d'action et le **nombre de répétitions est multiplié** par rapport au jeu sur pleine glace. En résumé :



SEASON GUIDELINES

SECTION

2

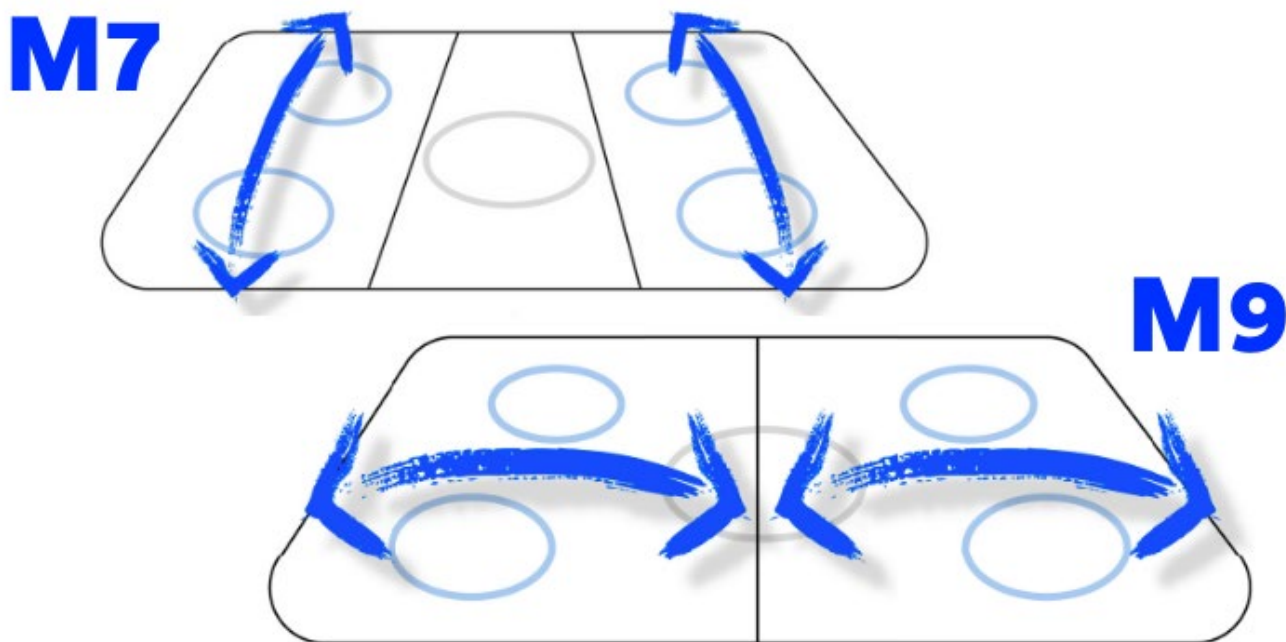
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2.1 Policy Overview

All U7 and U9 games are played on reduced surfaces. The U7 is played cross-ice, while the U9 is on half ice. The season is divided into four phases, described in the following section.

The framework of activities and the regulations differ for each division. In U7, the activities take place mainly in a local setting, while the regular season U9 activities are part of a regional framework.



This section establishes a set of standards that Hockey Quebec members must follow. [Minor hockey associations must follow the guidelines for a balanced season.](#) Some dates and timelines are indicative, while others are fixed. In addition, the number of games and practices is a recommendation based on the guidelines set out by Hockey Canada in the Long-Term Player Development Model and U7 and U9 Player Pathway documents.

The start date of the development phase for U7 and U9 players will be the weekend after Labour Day, the start of the season phase has been set for January 1 and U9 transition activities can take place starting March 15. [Each phase cannot start before the scheduled date.](#)

2.2 Development phase (September-October)

During the development phase, coaches should **focus on skill development through the MAHG program content**. It has been determined that the ideal proportion is two workouts per week. Each training session has an average of 20 minutes of practice through play. The development phase consists of 16 hours of training focused on developing individual hockey techniques and tactics in a fun and safe environment that fosters self-confidence.

The goal of each minor hockey association should be to provide a schedule that promotes player learning and not the speed of the MHA program. The development phase consists of a minimum of 16 training sessions, without games. Playing time is included in the MAHG program.

2.3 Season preparation phase (November-December)

After the development phase, the MHAs have the opportunity to train the teams. The procedure for the training of the teams is determined by the MHA. Team training begins the preparation phase of the season, which includes the completion of the MAHG program, team training sessions and home games. No regional league activities or festivals are held during this portion of the season.

This phase of the season allows each MHA to be given a buffer to **complete the program and its teams without the pressure of a deadline for the start of regional activities**. For coaches, it also allows for a **gradual takeover of training** with a view to developing their autonomy. Finally, for the children, the preparation phase for the season allows them to **gradually familiarize themselves and to forge bonds with their new teammates** in preparation for the start of the season.

2.3.1 Preparation for the U7 season

At the U7, this phase is optional since the formation of teams is not mandatory and there is no classification when they are formed. Under no circumstances should there be formal evaluation sessions prior to the formation of teams. Lessons can also be completed in full before teams are formed.

In U7, it is strongly recommended to organize all the activities of the season locally according to a two-to-one training/match ratio once the MAHG program is completed.

2.3.2 Preparation for the U9 season

After completing the first 16 lessons of the MAHG program, MHAs have the opportunity to hold two sessions for team formation. The content of the sessions and the procedure for the formation of the teams are determined by the MHA. The formation of the teams begins the preparation phase of the season. **This phase starts on November 1 at the earliest.**

Once formed, teams continue their activities locally for the remainder of the pre-season phase in a ratio of at least one practice for each match. As a team, players complete the final six lessons of the MAHG program with the guidance of the Master Coach. Once the lessons are completed, coaches take charge of planning the content for their team.

Teams also have the opportunity to play locally held exhibition games during the pre-season phase.

2.4 Season phase (January to April)

The regular season phase represents the longest portion of the calendar within the seasonal structure in U7 and U9 hockey. This **starts on January 1st at the earliest**. Seasonal activities generally end in mid-March, but they can continue until April.

It is important to continue the skill development work during training sessions throughout the season. Hockey Quebec and Hockey Canada have developed various resources to help coaches prepare training plans that meet the development requirements of this division. The Hockey Canada Network, Access to Drills and the Initiation Program all contain resources on specific skills that meet the needs of young players.

2.4.1 U7 Season Stage

In U7, there is no regional regular season schedule. If they take place, all games must be organised by mutual agreement between the associations and/or teams. Associations also have the possibility of registering teams in festivals for children who would like to participate.

2.4.2 U9 Season Phase

It is during the season phase that regional league activities and festivals are held. The number of games must average no more than two games per week, including those played at a festival.

Each association must also set aside ice time for practices for each of their teams.

2.4.3 U9 Transition Phase *optional*

Starting March 15, the MHAs can hold full-ice transition activities for 8-year-olds who will transition to U11 the following season. Special events during this phase are optional.

These optional activities are intended to prepare second-year U9 players for the transition to the U11 division. The formation of new official teams is not necessary for this phase.

Each MHA is free to determine the format of their transition activities, whether for practices or coached games, but they must remain non-exhibition and take place in a local setting.

2.5 Summary tables of the U7/U9 season structures

		U7 SEASON STRUCTURE		
PHASE		DEVELOPMENT	PREPARATION (optional)	SEASON
BEGINNING		1st weekend after Labour Day	After the 9th week of activities	January 1
VOLUME	WEEKS	8	9	Up to 15
	FREQUENCY	1-2 activities per week on average		

	TRAINING	16 lessons	Min. 6 lessons	15
	GAMES (season)	None	Max. 6 games	10 to 15
	FESTIVALS	-	-	Max. 3

U9 SEASON STRUCTURE					
PHASE		DEVELOPMENT	PREPARATION	SEASON	TRANSITION (optional)
BEGINNING		1st weekend after Labour Day	November 1 at the earliest (9th week of operation)	January 1	Starting March 15
VOLUME	WEEKS	8	9	Up to 15	Max. 4
	FREQUENCY	2-3 activities per week on average			
	TRAINING	16 lessons	Min. 6 lessons + team training	1/week	2-4
	GAMES (season)	None	Max. 6 local games	10 to 16	Max. 4
	FESTIVALS	-	-	Max. 3 (12 games)	-

TEAMS AND GAMES SETUP

SECTION

3



3.1 Team training

The following section presents some elements relating to the organization of teams by MHAs. For complete information, it is necessary to refer to the Hockey Quebec Administrative Rules (Chapter 6). In the event of any discrepancies, the H.Q. rulebook shall prevail.

3.1.1 U7 Teams

- Each child must be registered in HCR from the beginning of the season.
- All players must be registered on a team form during the season. Teams can be formed on T-112s based on festival attendance, but have rosters that vary for locally held games.
- Each team should ideally be made up of 10 to 12 players for the festivals.
- The teams are formed by age and there is no classification of the teams in the U7. In local games, it is possible to distribute children evenly so that they can play with those of similar skill levels. However, this allocation must be done informally and remain flexible.

3.1.2 U9 Teams

- Each child will have to be registered in HCR at the beginning of the season.
- All players must be registered on a team form during the season.
- Teams will be ranked in the four-class format (A/B/C/D). Each association will have to follow the Hockey Quebec Rulebook to determine the composition and classification of its teams.
- Each team should ideally be made up of 9 members.
- A team must have a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 13.
- Each team will be able to call on affiliated players if necessary, according to the regulations in place.

3.1.3 Keeping the goals

As part of Hockey Canada's goaltending development program, there is no [goaltender at the U7 level](#). In the context of a home game, a child can go to the net at the goalie position, without full equipment. In festivals, games must take place with a mini-net and without a goalkeeper.

Also in connection with the Hockey Canada program, it is [at the U9 division that the initiation to the goalie position begins for all](#). So we shouldn't aim to have a full-time goalie on every team at the U9. [At the U9 level, the games are played with goalkeepers and all the children who wish to do so must have the opportunity to try this position.](#)

A goaltender can be designated full-time if desired, but it is recommended that they also play as skaters on occasion. We notice that the fact of [specializing goalies too early sometimes becomes a hindrance to their long-term participation](#) in hockey. The kid who hasn't developed his basic skills will simply give up hockey if he loses interest in the goalie position rather than transitioning to the skater position. Identifying [a full-time goalie also prevents several other children from trying the position](#), creating an opposite effect on the recruitment of potential goalkeepers for the future.

For more information on the development of Guardians, please visit the following link:

<https://www.hockeycanada.ca/fr-ca/hockey-programs/players/essentials/positions-skills/goaltenders>



3.1.4 Coaches

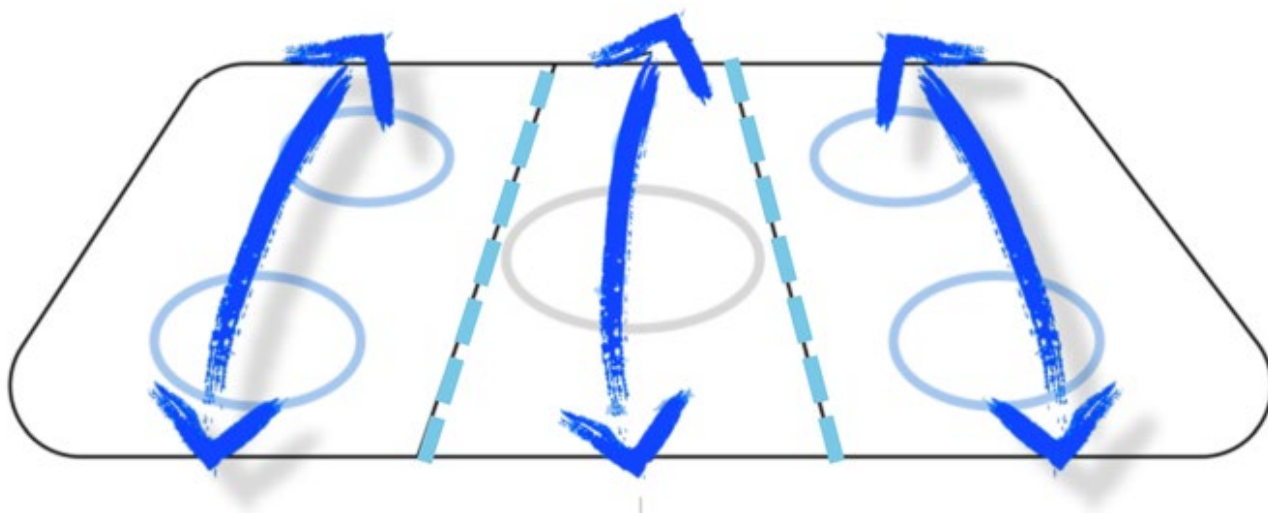
- At the U7 and U9 levels, each team will have to rely on the presence of exactly 2 trained people behind the bench during a match.
- Each member of the registered team staff must have completed the required training, in accordance with the regulations in force
- Each team will still be able to register more than 2 managers in its official composition.

3.2 Game Formats

At the U7 and U9 levels, the organization of the games follows a four or six teams model. In this model, two teams compete in an area of the rink and do not change opponents between periods. This model allows the holding of games of different divisions or classes on each surface.

If only one game is held on the ice, the area left open can be used as a training surface for another group.

3.2.1 U7 Playing Surface

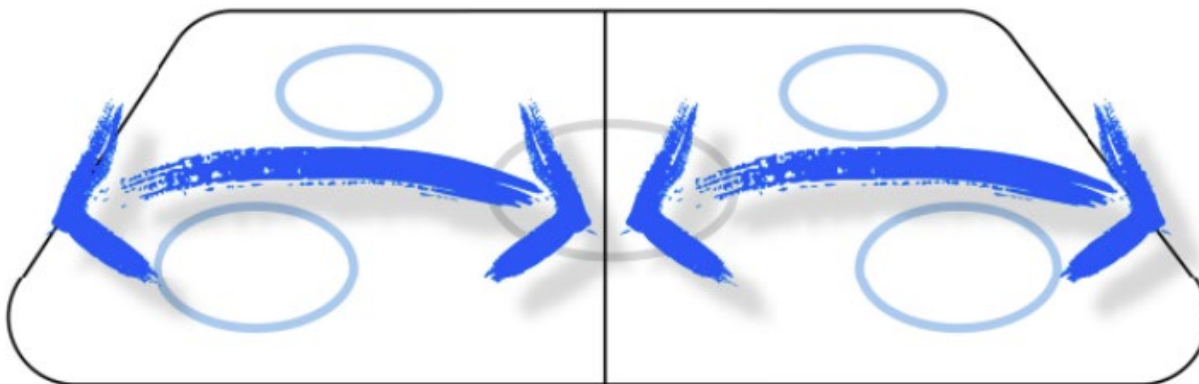


In U7, all games must be played on one-third ice, widthwise, creating up to three playing surfaces for up to six teams. However, it is possible to use only two playing surfaces and leave one area free.

If an ice rink with dimensions that do not correspond to 200' x 85' were to be used for an U7 game, the playing surface area may not exceed 5700 ft², which is the equivalent of one third of a regulation rink. The same applies if only two playing surfaces are used: these must occupy a third of the ice and be oriented widthwise.

Different configurations of benches can be used so that each team has access to their playing surface. If the neutral zone is free, it can also be used as a players' bench or a training area for those who are waiting.

3.2.2 U9 Playing Surface



In U9, all games are played on half-ice with a divider located at the red line to separate the two playing surfaces.

If an ice rink with dimensions of less than 200' x 85' were to be used for an U9 game, the playing surface area may not exceed 8500 ft², the equivalent of half a regulation rink. The same applies if only one playing surface is used: the divider must be placed on the red line. If a smaller glass is used. This may not exceed 130 feet in length and/or 65 feet in width.

Use of dividers is required for U9 games. Different bench configurations can be used so that each team has quick access to their playing surface.

3.3 Equipment and facilities

3.3.1 U7 Material

- The use of full dividers is not required for U7 games. The space can be delimited by cones or partial dividers only.
- In U7, games are played with mini-goals (12 inches by 36 inches) around which a circle one meter in diameter is drawn. No other markings are required on the ice.
- The use of the blue puck (4 oz.) is mandatory at the U7.

3.3.2 U9 Material

In order to reproduce as closely as possible the conditions of a game on full ice and to ensure that everyone can have a positive experience, the quality of the facilities chosen and the organization of the games is of paramount importance.

- Dividers are placed on the red line to delimit each playing surface. The association is free to use the model of its choice.
- The use of strip-type dividers, ranging in height from 36 to 42 inches with rounded corners, is recommended.



Photo credit: Hockey Quebec

- The use of intermediate nets (36 inches by 48 inches) is mandatory.



Photo credit: Jean-Michel Laforte, Hockey Saguenay – Lac-Saint-Jean

- To facilitate the development of puck control skills and promote speed of play, the use of the blue puck (4 oz.) is recommended, especially for Classes C and D. The regular black puck can also be used in all classes.

With intermediate nets, the use of suitable anchors is permitted to prevent it from being moved by the goalkeeper during play. However, these anchors must allow the goal to move in the event of a collision.



Suitable anchors:
Height of approx. 5
cm and screw depth
of +/- 1.5 cm



Cups: Available at
hardware stores.
Adheres to the ice to
prevent the goal from
moving.

3.3.3 Equipment Suppliers

Each MHA is free to do business with the supplier of their choice. Hockey Quebec does not have an agreement with a specific supplier, but can provide references if needed.

3.3.4 Hardware Installation

- Before the season, it is important that **each association make an agreement with the arena managers** for the installation of equipment before games, during the passage of the resurfacers and for storage during the season.
- Any volunteer who is called upon to go on the ice to set up the equipment will have to be registered with HCR in order to be covered by Hockey Canada's insurance in the event of an accident. Helmets and skates (or crampons) are mandatory for volunteers on the ice.

For all the information, as well as a video on the safe installation of the tapes, see the link: <https://www.apsam.com/clientele/cols-bleus/arenas/manutention-bande-separatrice>



Photo credit: Hockey Quebec

3.3.5 Marking the U9 Ice Rink

- Before the game, it is recommended that the location of the centre face-off point be marked on each half of the ice, halfway between the two nets.
- It is also possible to draw a slot for the goaltender for nets located in the neutral zone.

3.3.6 Use of the changing rooms

Each arena or association determines its procedure for sharing locker rooms. As a general rule, the teams that compete do not share the same dressing room. Access to rooms is limited to staff members of a team.

3.4 Organization of the games

3.4.1 Match Duration

- In U7 and U9, the duration of a game is 50 minutes, excluding ice resurfacing time.
- The maximum duration of a match is 60 minutes, including warm-ups and breaks.
- Ice surfacing may be done every three hours in U7 and two hours in U9, unless otherwise instructed by arena managers.

3.4.2 Statistics and match sheets

- Scoring is not counted or tallied during games for U7 and U9.
- No match sheets or statistics are kept at the U7.
- A match sheet must be used for each game at the U9. Each team must give a copy of its roster to the timekeeper before the game.
- Only lineups and penalties are counted on the U9 match sheet.

3.4.3 U7 Officials

- On-ice and off-ice officials are not required at the U7.
- A coach from each team will be on the ice to supervise and animate the flow of the game.

3.4.4 U9 Officials

- The presence of an off-ice official (scorekeeper) is mandatory.
- The presence of an on-ice official duly accredited by Hockey Quebec is optional.
 - The MHA and the region, in collaboration with the regional and local referees-in-chief, determine whether officials will be on the ice. This measure is intended to avoid the obligation to cancel a match in the event of an official absence.
- If the game does not have an on-ice official, a coach designated by both teams will act as the on-ice referee. If the two teams are unable to agree, they will each appoint a coach.
 - At all times, each team will have to have a coach ready to take on the role of official.

3.5 Organization of the leagues

3.5.1 U7 Leagues

U7 activities are not organized within a traditional league schedule. It is strongly recommended that activities be concentrated locally, within an MHA.

If necessary, the organization of inter-association games must be carried out by mutual agreement between the teams or associations. It is recommended that the number of games be limited in order to encourage the holding of practices, within which game time can be reserved.

In order to promote participation and ensure a positive context for families, it is strongly recommended to prioritize the following elements: a fixed schedule of activities, a frequency of activities limited to 1 or 2 times a week and local activities to reduce travel time.

3.5.2 U9 Leagues

The organization of the U9 leagues must follow the same criteria as the higher divisions, while integrating the specific elements of the division.

The number of games should be limited to an average of one per week, for a maximum of 16 per season. Weekday games are strongly discouraged due to the age of the participants.

There is no obligation to have a balanced schedule for all teams. The number of regional league games can be adjusted based on each team's participation in festivals. Thus, teams registering for fewer festivals could play more league games.

- The league will present the season schedule in advance with location, time and teams.
- The score of the games is not counted and there is no ranking. There is no championship or end-of-season series.
- It is recommended that the season schedule be reshuffled to group teams of the same class into sub-divisions if the gap between the level of play is too great.
- In order to limit travel, divisions of 4 to 8 teams should be created. The maximum travel time in the first leg should not exceed 30 minutes for a match when the geography allows it.
- In any case, it is strongly recommended to group as many U9 activities locally as possible.

3.5.3 Guidelines for Dual Programs

In U9 only, doubleheaders are possible during the regular season, but not mandatory. Where applicable, the following criteria must be used for each team:

- Minimum rest period of 60 minutes between the two games.
- A maximum of 90 minutes of rest between the two games.
- Each team must play both games in the same arena.
- Maximum of two games per day, per team.
- No doubleheaders on weekdays, including Fridays.
- Only one double program per weekend. A team should not play more than 2 games per weekend in the regular season.
- The number of doubleheaders per season must be limited.

3.6 Organization of the festival

In U7 and U9, all events must adopt a festival format and apply the game formula of its division: third ice and mini-goals in U7, half ice in U9.

In connection with the principles of Long-Term Participant Development (LTAD), the By-laws of Hockey Quebec, the orientations of the U7 and U9 programs and the recommendations of the Report of the Quebec Committee on the Development of Hockey, all festivals are required to adopt a participation format.

All the regulations specific to festivals can be found in the Hockey Quebec By-Law Book.

It is important to remember that the quality of an event is measured by the quality of the experience offered to players, coaches and parents and that it must be focused on fun.

LES TROIS PREMIERS STADES DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DU PARTICIPANT

Les enfants évoluent à travers les stades de développement à mesure qu'ils grandissent et se développent. Ce qui détermine où se situe un enfant est son niveau de développement moteur, psychologique et social dans une activité donnée.

C'est pour cette raison que le programme MAHG favorise la progression par compétences plutôt que par âge.

1

ENFANT ACTIF

0 À 6 ANS - PRÉ-MAHG ET MAHG 1

Consiste à introduire les habiletés motrices fondamentales sur la glace (se tenir debout, marcher, se relever) et à intégrer l'activité physique au quotidien.

Mettre l'emphasis sur le développement de la **locomotion**, de la **manipulation d'objets variés** et de l'**équilibre**.

Donner des **défis** que l'enfant peut explorer **librement** pour développer sa **confiance**.

Axer les activités sur le **plaisir** et les **contacts sociaux**.

2

S'AMUSER GRÂCE AU SPORT

6 À 9 ANS - MAHG 2-3-4

Vise à développer les habiletés motrices fondamentales et avoir du plaisir à être actif physiquement. Au MAHG, l'enfant développe progressivement des habiletés motrices spécifiques de base et apprend à les enchaîner.

Mettre l'emphasis sur le développement de l'**agilité**, l'**équilibre**, la **coordination** et la **vitesse**.

Introduire des **règles simples**, l'**esprit sportif** et le **respect** de ses coéquipiers et adversaires.

Les compétitions sont informelles et **ne tiennent pas compte des résultats**.



3

APPRENDRE À S'ENTRAÎNER (9-12 ANS : M11-M13)

On poursuit le **développement de la littératie physique** tout en apprenant un vaste éventail d'habiletés sportives. On introduit progressivement la compétition formelle tout en laissant l'occasion d'**expérimenter différentes positions**.

GAME RULES

SECTION

4



4.1 Game Time

The game time for the U7 and U9 will be distributed as follows:

Warm-up	2 minutes
1st period	21 minutes
Break	1 minute
2nd period	21 minutes (or more)*
Duration of attendance	90 to 180 seconds (U7) 90 to 120 seconds (U9)
*No match can exceed 60 minutes.	

- All games played on the same ice are synchronized.
- A siren or whistle announces substitutions.
- Coaches must ensure that ice time is evenly distributed among all players. If the number is insufficient, one player will take turns making a double shift.

4.2 U7 games

Overall, the rules in the U7 division are intended to promote fun and dynamic play. At this age, the supervision by the rules must be minimal and be able to adapt easily. Coaches are strongly encouraged to get involved in the game to encourage all children to be involved in the action.

- All games are played 4 vs 4 or 5 vs 5, depending on the number of members of each team. The objective is to promote a maximum of engagement time for the children.
- A face-off is held only to start shifts. In all other situations, the puck is given directly to a player or directed into an open zone by a coach to restart play.
- Penalties are not called. However, coaches are expected to educate children on the rules and ensure the safety of the game.

4.3 U9 games

4.3.1 Number of players and positions

- All games are played 4 vs 4, with goalkeeper.
- All players must rotate between forward and back positions in the same match.
- No goalkeeper can be withdrawn for a 5th attacker.

Exceptions: If a goaltender must leave the game temporarily or until the end of the game, his team may play with a 5th skater without the privileges of the goaltender or have a skater play the goalie position.

Any skater who takes the position of goalie must wear the minimum necessary equipment (helmet and bib, goalie stick). The match will not be stopped to make the change. The Designated Player will be able to don the equipment on the team's bench and rejoin the game at the start of a shift.

4.3.2 Faceoffs

- Each period begins with a face-off at centre ice.
- At the end of a shift, players must give up the puck immediately and leave the ice.
- The referee retrieves the puck and positions himself at the centre faceoff point or the closest point. Refer to Figure 2 for the different face-off areas and positions.
- As soon as a player from each team arrives, the official puts the puck in play. The other players join the game as soon as they come off the bench.

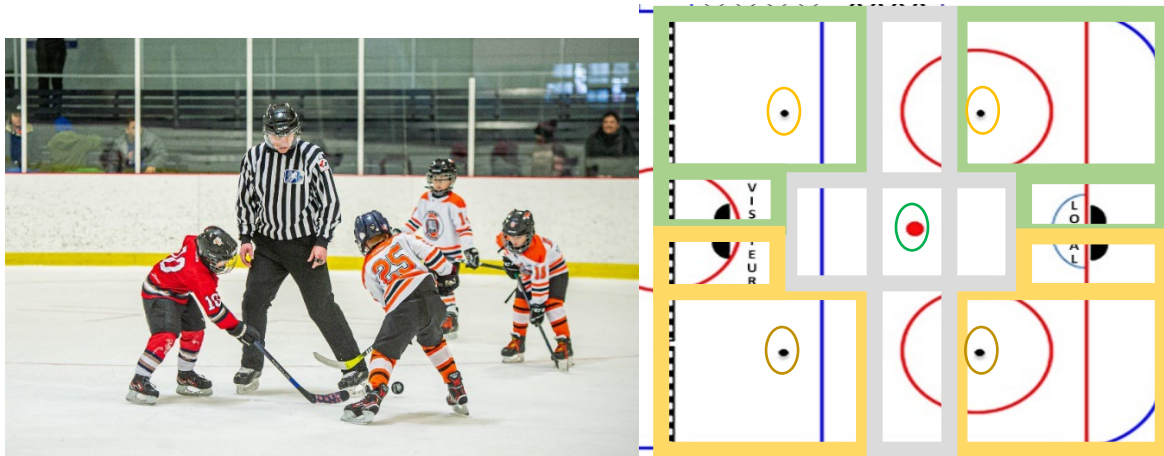


Figure 1: Positioning of faceoffs

Photo credit: Jean-Michel Laforte, Hockey Saguenay – Lac-Saint-Jean

4.3.3 Stoppages and changes of possession

- There will be no offsides and icing.
- When a goalie stops the puck or after a goal, the referee blows the whistle to signal the attacking team to back off. The defending team takes possession of the puck behind its goal.
- The team that is moving back cannot put pressure on the puck carrier before the puck carrier makes the first action (passing, carrying the puck over the goal line).
- For any situation that requires a stoppage of play (puck out, pass with hand, high stick, net moved), the official gives a puck to the non-offending team for the resumption of play while the offending team backs up to let the restart take place.
- If the net moves, the official may stop play if it is obvious that the goal is moved. If necessary, the official replaces the goal during play to slow down play as little as possible.

4.3.4 Penalties

Coaches are expected to encourage respect for the rules and sportsmanship, and to educate players about fouls committed. Coaches are also expected to work with officials to ensure that games run smoothly. Safety is first and foremost the responsibility of the adults who supervise the children, i.e. coaches and parents.

- Minor penalties are reported by the official as per normal procedure. Play is stopped and the puck is given to the non-offending team for the restart where play was stopped.
- The offending player is automatically sent to his team's bench for the end of the current shift. The team can replace the offending player, the official does not have to wait for the arrival of the replacement to restart the game.
- If a goal is scored during a delayed penalty, the offending player is still removed for the end of the shift.
- In all cases, penalties are counted on the match sheet.
- Any player who takes their 3rd penalty in the same game will be removed from play for the remainder of the game.
- Officials may inform the coach when a player has received his second penalty, but this warning is not required for the application of the penalty related to a third penalty for the same player.
- Automatic expulsions and suspensions apply in accordance with Hockey Canada regulations.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SECTION

5



5.1 *How does small-area games benefit player development?*

Child development experts say that for children under the age of eight, the focus should be on fun and skill development, and that one of the best ways to do this is to adapt the environment to their scale. Giving children the opportunity to play without interruption and develop their skills ensures a healthy and balanced approach to hockey and increases the chances of long-term participation. Several other sports, such as soccer, basketball, tennis and baseball, reduce the playing surface according to the age of the players.

When you look at today's game, the action during a "real hockey" game takes place mostly in tight spaces where multiple players are battling for the puck. Studies show that NHL players very rarely reach their maximum speed due to the small areas in which the game takes place. The most sought-after skating skills are those that allow you to change direction quickly to stand out and keep the puck.

To maintain playing conditions that are representative of this reality while adapting to the level of physical development of children aged 8 and under, playing in a small area is the best solution.

In addition, by adapting the space to the child's dimensions, it greatly increases the opportunities to touch the puck and apply their technical skills.



2 FOIS PLUS DE CONTACTS AVEC LA RONDELLE
Tous les joueurs sont près du jeu en tout temps et ont beaucoup plus d'occasions de toucher la rondelle. Indépendamment du niveau d'habileté ou des aptitudes de chaque joueur, les occasions de participer au jeu doublent lorsque le jeu se déroule sur une surface plus petite.



6 FOIS PLUS DE TENTATIVES DE TIRS
Il y a six fois plus de tirs au but lors des matchs en espace restreint, parce que les joueurs sont plus près de la rondelle et du filet adverse en tout temps. La rondelle se rend donc au filet beaucoup plus souvent.



3 FOIS PLUS DE TIRS AU BUT
Lorsque les joueurs ont plus d'occasions de prendre part au jeu offensif, les gardiens sont beaucoup plus sollicités, favorisant ainsi leur développement dans une multitude de situations.



2 FOIS PLUS DE TENTATIVES DE PASSES
Le jeu collectif est plus apparent. Puisque les joueurs exercent une plus forte pression sur le porteur de la rondelle, celui-ci doit plus souvent effectuer des passes pour permettre à son équipe de garder la possession.



5 FOIS PLUS DE PASSES RÉUSSIES
Dans un espace restreint, il y a un plus grand nombre de tentatives de passes et celles-ci sont aussi plus courtes. Lorsque les passes sont plus courtes, elles sont plus précises et les joueurs ont plus de succès en captant les passes.

Skating, puck control and opposing players are the basics of hockey, and what half-ice play emphasizes. In this sense, half-ice hockey has all the makings of real hockey!

5.2 *Will the players be at a disadvantage since they won't know the rules once they reach U11?*

For the most part, young players know the theoretical notions of these rules and game situations by being introduced to them by watching games of higher levels. However, the 5 to 7 year olds do not

have a sufficient level of psychological development to respect the constraints of the collective game in a coherent way, which makes it more difficult for the U9 to learn the rules. Around the age of 8, the level of technical and psychological development of the players allows them to apply the rules much more quickly in a game situation, hence the importance of introducing these rules to the U11 rather than the U9. In this sense, the transition phase will allow players to learn how to apply the rules on full ice. In addition, what makes players stand out is their level of technical skill (much more than knowledge of a rule), which is what the half-ice program emphasizes.

In addition, what makes players stand out is their level of technical skill (much more than knowledge of a rule), which is what the half-ice program emphasizes. To maintain the fun, it is important to keep the game dynamic with a minimum of downtime.

5.3 Will the players be undisciplined if there is no power play or consequence for their team?

The role of coaches is arguably the most important in teaching safe play and sportsmanship, regardless of the regulations that are applied. It is not the rules and the referee who have the responsibility to educate the players, but the coaches and parents through their interventions. A coach who conveys the values of sportsmanship as required by his role (especially with the younger players) must intervene with his players who bMHAve or commit dangerous or reprehensible actions or actions.

5.4 Is contact between players dangerous for their safety?

By reducing the space, the number of battles for the puck increases and, consequently, the number of accidental contacts between players (not to be confused with checking and physical contact, which are not allowed). However, the majority of these battles are fought on the spot or at low speed, so they are less risky than a collision at full speed. In addition, players quickly learn how to play in a small area with constant pressure, which is beneficial for their development and long-term safety.

5.5 Why take away the score when young people are already counting it by themselves?

It's only natural to want to compete and compare yourself.

Limiting competition among children under the age of 9 is intended to promote their physical, emotional and social development. Before this age, the focus should be on learning motor skills, having fun, and participating, rather than winning. This ensures equal opportunities and promotes social development, thus avoiding undue pressure on young children. To promote the long-term participation of children, it is therefore important to emphasize the positive aspect of competition, which begins first and foremost with surpassing oneself regardless of the result. In addition, the search for victory unfortunately leads to several unfortunate situations on the part of adults for the development of children. By removing the results of the games, we reinforce the importance of technical development and the enjoyment of young players.

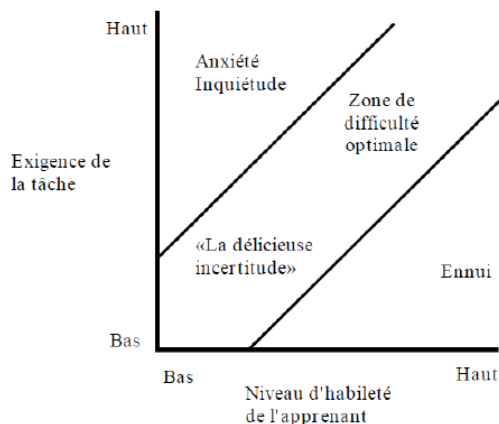
Although it is natural to want to compete and children often count the points themselves, not counting them formally promotes the creation of an environment conducive to development by the adults who supervise the young people.

Wanting to win a battle for the puck, encouraging teammates, respecting the opponent are examples of competitive attitudes and behaviours that are the basis of learning to compete, which must be taught at an early age and can be reinforced without scoring or results. Without these skills, the young person will not be sufficiently equipped to face the competition when he or she is confronted with it later in their development.

The importance of gradually bringing competition:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsWA9m5HhrE&t=81s>

5.6 Will my child develop faster if he plays with the most skillful ones?

Far too many parents think that a child absolutely needs to play with the best to develop faster. In reality, the reality is different and playing in a group that is systematically stronger than one's level of ability leads to a great risk of discouragement in the child.



The delightful uncertainty in children's athletic development suggests that playing with peers of roughly equal skill creates an ideal balance between the chances of success and the chances of mistakes. This offers both the excitement of the challenge and the discovery of limits, thus stimulating development. Additionally, playing with peers of the same level fosters an environment where the chances of success are balanced, building confidence and exploring social dynamics. This varied approach embraces uncertainty as a catalyst for development, while ensuring that the child remains engaged, motivated and happy in their sporting journey, where the exploration of skills and social relationships coexists in enriching ways. In itself, mistakes and success are necessary for learning. It's all about balance.

5.7 Why not play with goalkeepers from the U7 to promote their development?

Hockey Canada's "Goaltending Pathway" calls for goaltending to start in the U9 division and focuses primarily on occasional positional experimentation for all players. Some associations use this route for their recruitment successfully. This is also the path taken by several countries such as the United States, which have recently been more successful in goalkeeping development.

We notice that the fact of specializing goalies too early sometimes becomes a hindrance to their long-term participation in hockey. The kid who hasn't developed his basic skills will simply give up hockey if he loses interest in the goalie position rather than transitioning to the skater position.

At a more advanced level, skating skills are very important for a goalie and must be developed at an early age. In the long run, it's much easier to teach technique to a good skater than it is to teach a good technician to be athletic. In this sense, we must promote the development of young people at all positions, including goaltending, so that they develop a wider range of skills.

5.8 Kids get bored playing half-ice and want to play real games?

What research shows is that children want to play first and foremost and feel competent when playing sports. The context does not matter. Conversely, it is more adults, who are much more attached to the appearance of things in their perceptions, who will believe that playing half-ice in a non-competitive environment is boring for the child. On the contrary, it has been proven that the main reason why children drop out of sport is precisely the fact that the environment became too competitive.

To make hockey motivating for young children, it is therefore in our best interest to create an environment that is focused on fun rather than competition, and in which children are constantly involved in the game.

5.9 Who can I contact for questions about the U9 Half-Ice program?

If you have any questions about the implementation of the program within your association, we invite you to contact the managers of your region and your MHA. For questions regarding the development of the program, it is possible to contact Hockey Quebec by email at info@hockey.qc.ca.



**U7-U9
ORGANIZATION GUIDE**