



GUIDE FOR FIRST-TIME HOCKEY PARENTS

Welcome to Sturgeon Hockey Club!

This information guide is intended to provide answers to questions commonly asked by parents of children becoming involved in hockey for the first time. This guide is for you if:

- you are registering a child in hockey for the first time;
- you have not been involved in a hockey program before; or
- you have questions about how the game of hockey is organized and played at your child's level, what is required, and what you can do to prepare for his/her first hockey season.

Most of our first-time players begin at the Initiation, or Novice level. The various levels of hockey are explained in the "Organization" section. As it is not unusual for players to join at other levels, there is useful information in this guide for parents of new players at all levels.

Organization

What is "Sturgeon Hockey Club"?

The Sturgeon Hockey Club is a non-profit organization that operates hockey programs for youngsters between the ages of four to seventeen in Sturgeon boundaries as follows. The club is run by an elected executive of volunteers from the communities within our area.

The SHC Boundaries are defined as follows:

1. South Boundary: From corner of RR 260 and TWP RD 550 (Hwy 37) running East to RR 243.
2. North Boundary: From corner of RR 260 and TWP 584 running east to RR 240.
3. East Boundary: From corner of TWP RD 584 and RR 240 running South to TWP RD 572. West on TWP 572 to RR 243 (Secondary Hwy 803). South on RR 243 to RR 550 (Hwy 37).
4. West Boundary: From corner of RR 260 and TWP 584 running south to TWP 550 (Hwy 37).

The Executive includes at least one Director for each of the six player categories: "Initiation" (ages 4-6); "Novice" (ages 7-8); "Atom" (ages 9-10); "Pee Wee" (ages 11-12); "Bantam" (ages 13-14) and "Midget" (ages 15-17).

What am I getting myself into?

The decision to become involved in hockey is an important step for you and your child. The skills and personal development that your child will experience will serve him/her for a lifetime. The rewards for you as a parent can be many. The time you spend together can bring some of the most satisfying experiences that you can share with your child.

At the beginning level, hockey is not about winning – it is about learning the basics of the game, coupled with personal development and the acquisition of life skills. Hockey is a unique opportunity for your child to grow and for you to share in that growth.

Your child needs your help and support to make the most of this opportunity. Understanding your responsibilities as a parent is an important step toward ensuring your child's success in hockey.

As a parent, one of the most important things you can do is show good sportsmanship at all times to coaches, referees, opponents, and team members. Remember that your children are playing hockey. It is important to allow them to establish their own goals and play the game for themselves.

How much work is involved for me as a parent?

At a minimum, you are expected to provide for your child's transportation, equipment and fees. Normally, your child will have one practice and one game each week. At the Initiation level these are often both on the weekend, one each day, but for older players the practices will also take place during evenings of weekdays. Transportation to and from the games and practices, as well as purchasing and maintaining equipment, and registration fees are parents' basic responsibilities.

In addition to the basic responsibilities, the amount of work for you as a parent depends on the extent to which you become involved in your child's team and/or club. You may want to coach, assistant coach, manage, or timekeeper for the team, or you may want to become involved in Sturgeon Hockey Club and its activities. Becoming more involved, while requiring a sometimes substantial time commitment, can also greatly increase the satisfaction that you and your child derive from the hockey season. The efforts of parents are vital to Sturgeon Hockey Club's continued success.

What is Initiation Hockey?

It's a structured, learn-to-play hockey program designed to introduce beginners to the game's basic skills. It enables participants to become contributing members of a team, develop self-confidence, and experience a sense of personal achievement. These goals are achieved in an atmosphere of fun and fair play.

Ages of players may range from 4 – 6 years of age, and so naturally in this group there may be a wide variety of skill sets among the players. This may be a challenge at times if your child is in the younger group, so please encourage your child to try their best and try not to focus on other players.

Each week there could be two practice time slots and game slots are as per the Initiation model.

Skills developed and focused on in Initiation

The focus is on the development of physical literacy. Fundamental movement skills should be mastered, motor development emphasized, and participation in many sports/activities is encouraged. For optimal skill acquisition, the basic hockey skills of skating and puck control are introduced through the Initiation Program. FUN competitions are also introduced in a team environment. Learn all fundamental movement skills and build overall motor skills. Skill development in the fundamentals stage should be well-structured, positive, and FUN!

The skill of skating speed can be developed quickly with players this age. The ABC's of agility, balance and coordination should be emphasized through the teaching of skills and small games to emphasize the ABC's. Ensure that the skills the player acquires during the fundamentals stage will benefit them when they engage in recreational activities, enhancing their quality of life and health. Hockey Canada recommends in the early stages of fundamentals that players spend 85% of their time on the introduction and development of technical skills.

Once you see how much your child will learn and improve in their first year, you'll understand why it's all worth it. From experience, ice hockey has the fastest noticeable progression of skills involved with a sport. This is what makes people fall in love with it. Even the practices are fun to watch. Your child is going to learn a huge set of skills over the next few months. They are going to learn how to:

- Skate forward
- Skate backward
- Move from side to side
- Fall and get back up quickly
- Skate forward with the puck
- Skate backward with the puck
- Stick handle
- Skate making large turns (crossovers)
- Skate making tight turns
- Shoot – forehand and backhand
- Pass – forehand and backhand
- Stop
- Play defense
- Play goalie

We challenge you to not notice an improvement in at least one of those skills each week. That's what makes it awesome and great for the kid's confidence. As their skills and comfort level on the ice increases every week, so does their confidence. Keep in mind that they are introduced to these skills however they may not master them.

Registration and Fees

What does it cost to register?

Registration fees are set each year by the Executive and can be found on the Sturgeon Hockey Club website under registration.

At minimum, three-quarters of the fees are needed to pay for ice rental. The remainder pays the cost of equipment, insurance, scheduling, and various other operating costs.

What other costs are there?

Depending on your team's preferences, in addition to registration fees and equipment costs, you may encounter additional expenses for items such as:

- additional tournament(s);
- additional practice ice;
- team-building activities;
- apparel
- year-end party

How do I get my child into hockey?

You may register online (www.sturgeonhockeyclub.com) under registrations and follow instructions.

If there is a problem with registering online, please contact the Registrar.

New Residents coming from another city or out of province who have had a child in hockey previously must also complete a Parent Declaration form to be submitted with registration.

Registration forms must be completed to register your child. Photocopies or scans of your child's Alberta Health Care card and either their birth certificate, proof of residency (i.e. utility bill) and copy of Respect in Sport Certification must be supplied (See below), as well as the name and phone number of an alternate emergency contact person.

The information on the registration form is used to officially record the player with Sturgeon Hockey Club, and Hockey Canada, as well as to apply for insurance and prepare for player evaluations and team selections. Please use child's name as it appears on the Birth Certificate.

Respect in Sport Program

All parents are required to take the **Respect in Sport** online program. This program must be completed prior to player stepping on the ice.

The FAQ's

A program providing information on parents' natural influence over a child, the coach or leaders role in an activity, the role parents play in their child's enjoyment and of a sport or activity, and protecting

your child when they are outside of your immediate control. The program also provides parents with tools to evaluate their own behaviour by highlighting five key "behavioural traps" frequently exhibited by parents, particularly in competitive sports. It demonstrates negative behaviours and provides ideas of how a situation may be better handled, includes valuable information from subject matter experts delivered in a clear and concise fashion, and asks questions of parents based on scenarios presented. Specific topics included in the program are: five common negative parent behaviours, a child's development, nutrition and hydration, rest, injuries, as well as interacting with coaches, officials, and other parents.

Why do I need to take it? Besides being a Hockey Alberta condition of participation in hockey it provides tools to deal with various situations that could arise in a hockey team setting. Let's face facts, hockey is an emotional game for all stakeholders, but by completing this program you will be better equipped to deal with many situations you could face.

What will happen if I do not complete it? Hockey Alberta will not allow the child/children to participate until the program has been taken.

What is the cost to take the Respect in Sport Parent Program? The cost is \$12.00 plus GST per family.

What equipment is required to complete the program?

All that is required to complete the Respect in Sport curriculum is a computer, an Internet connection, and speakers or a headset. Optional equipment includes a printer to print out your certificate of completion. Please note you cannot access through a tablet or smart phone.

Do I have to take the course every year? No, once you have completed it you are certified and there are currently no plans for recertification at this point.

How is the program taken? Accessed directly through the Hockey Alberta web site www.hockeyalberta.ca or linked from the Sturgeon Hockey Club website www.sturgeonhockeyclub.com it is a one-hour online curriculum with both audio and visual features that can be taken whenever you want and does not have to be completed all at once.

Hockey Equipment

Your child will need the hockey equipment listed below.

- CSA approved helmet and full-cage mask wire or clear plastic;
- mouth guard;
- neck guard;
- one set of shoulder pads;
- one pair of elbow pads;
- one hockey jersey (for practice);

- one pair of hockey gloves;
- one pair of hockey pants
- one athletic cup;
- one pair of shin pads;
- one pair of hockey socks;
- skates (please have them sharpened);
- hockey stick;
- tape for hockey sticks; and
- hockey equipment bag.

Optional equipment:

- skate guards
- long underwear
- sock tape
- water bottle

Several sport stores offer excellent starter packages for first-time hockey players.

In addition to the equipment noted above, the hockey club supplies, a pair of socks, and a numbered jersey for each player **to be worn for games only**.

What should I know before buying hockey equipment?

The most important pieces of equipment are skates and helmet. Skates should fit snugly, but should not “pinch” the foot when tightened. Have the child’s foot measured and have the skates checked by a qualified individual to ensure that they fit properly. Don’t buy skates that are too big and wait for your child to “grow into them”. Your child will find it much harder to learn to skate if his/her skates are too big. It is up to you to keep the skates sharp! Put in new laces and keep a spare pair of laces in the equipment bag. The helmet must fit snugly at the front and back, as well as the sides. The face guard may be either wire-cage or clear plastic – plastic is easily scratched and therefore may be more suitable for older players who can take care of it. Be sure that the chin strap fits snugly, but does not hurt the chin.

Be sure that the hockey stick is junior-sized. Small hands need a hockey stick with a small shaft. (Cutting off the end of Dad’s old hockey stick won't do - the shaft will be too broad for your child to grip comfortably.) Cut the stick below the child’s chin level when standing on skates. A stick that is too long can hinder player movement and development.

Player Evaluation

Why are the players evaluated?

All registrants must attend player evaluation sessions during September. In Initiation, this is to ensure that each team contains players of equal ability. Equals playing with equals results in all players developing much quicker.

Note: during the evaluations there will be many players on the ice who are unknown to the on-ice staff. At the Initiation level, we like to be able to address the players by name, so in order to help us, parents should write the player's first name in BIG letters on a piece of masking tape and stick it to the front of the helmet. At the other levels, anonymity is thought to be fairer, and players will normally wear numbered jersey's.

Where do we go?

Evaluations will be held at the Morinville arena. You will be notified by the beginning of September of the exact time, date, and location of your child's first evaluation. At the Initiation level you will not be notified until mid-September. If you are unsure, please call the directors for your child's category. At the Initiation level, players are usually evaluated twice. At higher age-levels, three or more evaluation sessions are used, as well as exhibitions games.

What equipment should be worn?

ANY TIME YOUR CHILD IS ON THE ICE, including during evaluation, all of the non-optional equipment listed above must be worn.

What is evaluated?

Initiation players are evaluated on forward and backward skating, stopping, and puck-handling.

My child can't skate. What should we do?

Your child may benefit from the Initiation program. This program is based on the Canadian Hockey Association (CHA) Initiation program. It is intended to teach beginning skaters (usually 4-and 5-year olds) how to move and skate wearing hockey equipment. Alternatively, if possible before the season begins, take your child to public skating sessions at local arenas. It will help to build up confidence on skates, as some children are very shy or self-conscious when starting out. Having tried earlier in a public setting might ease this a little.

If your child is shy or frightened at the first evaluation, please tell one of the on-ice evaluators – a little gentle encouragement is often all that's needed.

Above all, don't worry. Young players soon learn that everyone falls down a lot when starting out, and that it doesn't hurt when you're wearing all that padding – in fact, it's actually fun! You'll be amazed how quickly your child learns to stand, walk, glide, and stop on the ice.

Hockey professionals say that 80 per cent or more of the game of hockey is skating. Most of the practice time is devoted to learning to skate. The coaching staff and others will help your child learn to skate.

Team Selection

The selection process at the Initiation level is designed to ensure that equals play with equals.

At other levels, the evaluation team and coaches select the teams based on the evaluation results. Please note Coaches get the last three picks.

How many players are on a team?

The target is a 10-to-12-player team at the Initiation level, increasing as the players get older.

What can I do to help the team?

Your team will welcome any help that you can offer. Become involved as a coach, assistant coach, manager, timekeeper, parent liaison, music, team treasurer, penalty box or trainer, if you can.

Sturgeon Hockey Club requires that all team officials (coaches, assistant coaches, and trainers) complete a Volunteer criminal record check.

All team officials are required to complete the Respect in Sport Coaches Program. Initiation coaches are required to complete the Initiation Coaching Program. Participation in these courses is paid for by Sturgeon Hockey Club.

Even if you don't volunteer as coach or assistant, there will be many off-ice tasks that need to be done during the year. You may be able to help with some of these - ask your coach or manager.

Support the coaches on and off the ice. They are all volunteers and they need all the help and support that you can give them. They are there to answer any questions you may have and resolve any concerns you may have as quickly as possible.

Games

Please be on time for the games. Games must start as scheduled, or they will impact the other games that follow. *If you can't make it to a game, let the coach, manager, or another parent know.*

In Initiation, half-ice game are played. Boards placed at centre ice separate the ice surface into two halves. Two games are played at the same time on each of these half-ice surfaces. Coaches from each team act as co-referees.

For Initiation, every player will have a chance to play forward, defence, and goaltender in the course of the game. Goaltenders may use the team goal stick or their own hockey stick. No other goaltending equipment is used in Initiation games.

For Novice and above, all games are played on full-ice. Sanctioned referees are used, and all rules are enforced. Body checking begins at Bantam level.

Practices

Practices are important. They are the best opportunity your child will get to learn to skate and play the game of hockey. *They are not optional.* If you must miss a practice, let the coach, manager, or another parent know in advance, if possible.

If you have problems getting to a practice, talk to the coach. You may be able to work out an arrangement with another parent, family member, or friend.

Practices generally include a combination of skating, puck handling, and passing drills designed to teach skating and the basics of hockey. They may also include on-ice games.

Your child will normally have one practice per week, either on the weekend or in the evening on a weekday. Practices for Initiation are generally held on weekends.

You will be notified in advance when and where the practices are to be held.

“I Need Help!”

Help is available, whatever the problem.

Before and during the registration process, contact the Registrar.

During evaluations, talk to the directors for your child’s age category, but please bear in mind that this time is extremely hectic for them – contacting 150-300 players, evaluating them, and placing them on teams, all within a couple of weeks, requires a huge time-commitment.

Once your child has been placed on a team, the parent liaison, and the coach, (or manager) should be the first point-of-contact if you have problems or need help. If this is not possible, or does not help you, then contact the Level Director.

Participating with your child, and becoming involved with the club, will greatly enhance your enjoyment of the game of hockey!

Ice Hockey Equipment List



Hockey bag



Helmet with cage



Neck guard



Elbow pads



Shoulder pads



Gloves



Shorts with jock (cup)



Hockey pants



Stick



Hockey socks



Skates



Shin pads

Hockeytutorial.com