



AN EQUIPMENT LIST FOR NEW-TO-HOCKEY PARENTS

The uninitiated parent will soon discover that buying hockey gear for child's isn't as simple as it might appear—there's a lot your child is going to need. Guides that help you determine the right hockey gear for your child can be of great service to the new-to-hockey parent. Here's a brief checklist of essential youth hockey equipment for your new player.

Make sure your player is good to go – head to toe


☐ Helmet with face mask*
☐ Mouth guard*
☐ Throat protector/neck guard*
☐ Shoulder pads*
☐ Elbow pads*
☐ Gloves*

☐ Pants*
☐ Sticks (2)
☐ Shin pads*
☐ Skates*

Also available:
☐ Practice jersey
☐ Socks
☐ Skate guards
☐ Athletic cup and supporter*
☐ Moisture-wicking under-apparel
☐ Equipment bag
☐ Tape (2 rolls)
☐ Water bottle
☐ Repair kit

*League required equipment

See reverse side for tips on proper fit.

 **Hockey Equipment Checklist**

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Checklist

- ☐ Hockey stick
- ☐ Hockey skates
- ☐ Skate guards
- ☐ Hockey helmet
- ☐ Hockey shoulder pads
- ☐ Hockey elbow pads
- ☐ Hockey gloves
- ☐ Hockey pants
- ☐ Neck guard
- ☐ Mouth guard (U11 - Atom level and up)
- ☐ Hockey jock/jill protective cup
- ☐ Hockey shin guards
- ☐ Hockey socks
- ☐ Hockey bag (large duffel)
- ☐ Water bottle

YOUTH HOCKEY GEAR HOCKEY STICK

First, your child will need a hockey stick. Sticks come in a variety of materials, flexes, lengths, and for right- or left-handed players. They're also available at different price points, with the higher priced sticks generally including more carbon fiber for lighter, stiffer performance.

Buying a used stick can be smart as long as it's the right length hockey stick for your child. Typically, a stick should reach your child's chin when they're wearing skates. In terms of right- or left-handed, the dominant hand most often goes on top. If your child is right-handed, they'll shoot from the left side and vice versa. That said, some youngsters will choose what feels natural, even if it means the dominant hand is on the bottom. For children just starting (U5 Colts, U7 Initiation), you might want to buy a wooden stick with no curve to see which way your child will shoot.



ICE HOCKEY SKATES

Youth skates come in a variety of fits and at wide-ranging price points—the more expensive skates offer an elite youth skater most of the features found in the skates their NHL heroes wear. But if your child is just starting to skate or is new to the sport, you can procure a pair of reliable and solid hockey skates at a reasonable cost. That said, you get what you pay for. The premium skates offer premium protection and comfort—whether your eight-year-old needs it is for you to decide.

As with the rest of the gear, correct fit is essential. Your child should wear the same socks to the skate fitting as they'll wear on the ice, and lace and tie the skates as if they're about to hit the ice. What may feel initially uncomfortable and stiff should soften up with wear, though hockey skates are designed to be stiff. Much of the internal padding on new skates will mold to your child's natural foot and ankle contours for a comfortable fit and feel.

Often, parents choose to purchase additional insoles - Superfeet are quite popular.

Note that [goalie skates are not the same as player skates](#).

SKATE GUARDS

Try to find high quality skate guards with hard bottoms. Cloth bottom guards do not fully protect the skate blade and can lead to damage and increased sharpenings.

YOUTH HOCKEY HELMET WITH FULL CAGE

Whether your child plans to play organized hockey or just get out on the pond with their friends, a helmet is a must-have, and it's worth paying up for a good one; our hockey helmet guide offers a lot of useful tips. Most child-level leagues require a full cage, and some helmets are sold as a helmet/cage combination.

The helmet should include a HECC sticker, which assures it is certified and safe to wear. Some helmet technologies actually degrade over time and with wear—look for an [expiration date](#), particularly if you're buying a used one or your child receives a hand-me-down helmet.

That said, our recommendation is to spend money on a new helmet and cage.



HOCKEY SHOULDER PADS

Hockey shoulder pads should protect your child's shoulders, chest, back, and biceps from impacts from falling, sticks, pucks, the boards, and other players. Some shoulder pads extend to cover the stomach and lower back. They're especially important once your child plays at a level that allows checking, though it's smart to have a child wear them any time they're playing with other kids. Smaller pads allow for more mobility, and bigger pads make movement more challenging, but offer greater protection.

YOUTH HOCKEY GLOVES

Hockey gloves will keep your little skater's hands comfy and warm, but they're really made to protect them from slashes and stray pucks. They're available with a wide variety of protection and comfort options and at a multitude of price points, though new youth hockey gloves are quite affordable. Mostly made from synthetic leather and nylons, they tend to wear on the palm and insides of the thumb and index finger. Be advised: they're eventually going to smell. *Bad*. Some come with bacteria-reducing agents in the liner, which can help keep the 'rink stink' at bay.

HOCKEY ELBOW PADS

Your child's elbow pads pick up where the shoulder pads leave off, protecting the lower tricep to the upper forearm. They are sport specific, so pads designed for skateboarding or other sports are not appropriate for ice hockey. For hockey, they are usually made especially for the left or right arm. Hockey elbow pads are specifically designed to guard against impacts from falls, hooks, slashes, and the boards.

HOCKEY PANTS

We know—they're not really pants if they don't go below the knee, but pants they are. Hockey pants typically protect the groin, thigh, and hip areas. It'll be important for your child to wear a pair that is not so big they sag, but not so small they leave a significantly exposed area below the cuff and above the shin guard.



NECK GUARD

The neck guard greatly reduces the chances of your child's throat being cut by a skate blade or the odd stick blade. The chances of this injury occurring are already astronomically low, but most organized leagues require a neck guard; they're worth the cost, for sure—and they're one of the less expensive items on our list. Hockey neck guards come in youth, intermediate, and adult sizes.

MOUTH GUARD

A mouth guard is an inexpensive piece of child hockey gear that can save you big dollars later on. They're available in a wide range of prices, the most popular type being the boil-and-bite models you can purchase at sports retailers. You can also spend more for a custom guard your child's dentist makes.

HOCKEY UNDERWEAR: JOCK/JILL AND PROTECTIVE CUP

Another important piece of equipment, the jock (for him) or jill (for her), is available in old-style garter models or as newfangled compression shorts or pants. Some include the protective cup and some do not. Either way, most leagues require them, and when your child understands how important this protection is, they will be happy to wear it.

HOCKEY SHIN GUARDS

Shin guards should be sized to fit from above the top of your child's skate to above the knee—they include knee protection. Made of hard plastics, foams, and a lining, they are an important part of the total package. Shin guards often come especially made for the right or left leg, so pay attention to details. You can also purchase a shin guard-and-pant combination that eliminates the guesswork.

HOCKEY SOCKS

Youth hockey socks are supersized 'sleeves' made to fit over the shin guards. Sometimes a team or club will provide a color-specific pair with a jersey, and other times you have to purchase them. They're long and attach to the jock or jill via garters, or with velcro for the compression shorts. Some players keep them up by wrapping them with hockey tape.



THE HOCKEY BAG

You'll need something to carry all that gear. Rather, your child will. Hockey bags come with or without wheels, with and without compartments, in various sizes and shapes—you get the picture. You can go for the duffle bag, the backpack, or the zip-up, rectangular, wheeled, luggage-style bag. It's important for your child to lug their own gear—it's part of the commitment to the sport. But find one they can manage without too much difficulty.

BUYING USED OR NEW YOUTH HOCKEY EQUIPMENT

When you buy new hockey gear for your child, you're getting equipment in peak condition that will last a few seasons. And if you have multiple young hockey players, you'll be able to pass along your investment. The main challenge you'll encounter in used equipment is finding gear that fits how it should. You don't want to sacrifice comfort, protection, or fit for the sake of a few dollars—the main drawback of purchasing used gear. This is particularly true of the all-important hockey helmet. There are some great stores in our area that help immensely when fitting your child with their equipment. One is [Red's Source for Sports](#) in Lacombe, another is [Coach's Source for Sports](#) in Wetaskiwin, there is also [Play it Again Sports](#) in Red Deer.

Consider purchasing on-sale equipment for your child—usually last year's new stuff—which can include great values.

We hope this helps with your start into the hockey world, if you have any questions, please reach out to any board member for assistance.