Player development in hockey, like many other areas of life, is most effective when it follows a progression. Just like you wouldn’t teach algebra to a first grader, it doesn’t make sense to practice positioning on a power play when you are coaching an eight year old.

The MDM, through utilization of LTAD principles, allows us to integrate training, competition and age appropriate development guidelines so that we can assist each kid in reaching his or her potential. To make an athlete out of a kid. Make a hockey player out of an athlete. The MDM offers equal opportunity for recreation and competition - a key to retaining younger players.

Remember, winning games comes after fun and skill development. A coach’s success is measured by how many kids keep playing hockey.

Thank you!

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The Minnesota Development Model (MDM) is based on the principles of USA Hockey’s American Development Model (ADM). This involves the use of the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) training model.

Minnesota Hockey is providing the following guidelines and best practices, with the goal of assisting associations in developing programming which supports LTAD. The guidelines will be different from association to association based on number of players, personnel and resources.

The Minnesota Hockey ADM Committee, Association Coaching & Education (ACE) Committee, USA Hockey Coach Education Program (CEP) Staff, District Directors and USA Hockey Regional ADM Manager are available to work with associations towards the implementation and support of these guidelines.

Special Thanks to the Minnesota Hockey Partners:
Utilize a ‘Hockey Director’ position to lead and be involved in everyday implementation of the LTAD, including planning of practices and off-ice training sessions.

Utilize a Hockey Development Committee to assist Hockey Director and Administrative Board

Utilize age division coordinators for Mini-Mites, Mites/8U Girls, Squirts, 10U Girls, Peewees and 12U Girls to assist Hockey Director at their level.

Have access to designated off-ice training area (best if located at arena).

Have access to a meeting room with video capability for chalk talk sessions.

Team schedules (practice/game) should be reviewed and approved by the level coordinator or Hockey Director. Documented practice plans should be reviewed by the level coordinators or Hockey Director monthly.

Provide player skill evaluations early and at the end of the season.

Utilize a skating coach to work with Squirt/10U and Peewee/12U teams and/or players periodically during the season. Utilize a puck handling/shooting coach to work with Squirt/10U and Peewee/12U teams and/or players periodically during the season.

Utilize a goaltending coach to work with Squirt/10U and Peewee/12U goaltenders regularly during the season.

Conduct a coach’s education session once per month specific to the Mite/8U, Squirt/10U and Peewee/12U levels.

Complete an association coaching competency review and develop a plan for future improvements, based on USA Hockey Skill Progression Guidelines outlined in Skill Progression Guide

Begin development of players no earlier than Tuesday following Labor Day, form teams no earlier than October 15th, and end season no later than March 31st.

Provide players with some time off during the season (No practices, games, etc)


Use 10U Age Specific (ADM) practice plans and guidelines (station based, small area games).

11-12 skaters & 1-2 goalies per team (non-playing goalie should be encouraged to skate out as forward or defense)

4-5 on-ice sessions per week includes practices and games

75 to 100 on-ice days

Recommend 3 to 1 practice to game day ratio

No more than 35 game days

Pre-season player development sessions count toward practice to game ratio’s

2-3 teams per on-ice practice session.

2 off-ice training sessions per week (30-40 minutes)

1 Chalk Talk/Video session per week

Equal playing time for all players. Rotating positions so that players experience playing both forward and defense positions.