



Dear Hockey Parent,

We know that providing a positive experience for your child is what drives you, and it's also what drives every decision made by members of the American Hockey Coaches Association. We will always put the kids first. That's our commitment to amateur hockey. As part of that commitment, we, the officers and governors of the AHCA, support USA Hockey's American Development Model.

USA Hockey launched the ADM and its high-performance programming for all age classifications of youth hockey in 2009. This age-appropriate, age-specific competition and training model is based on comprehensive research from hockey experts, sport scientists and child development specialists from the United States and around the world. The AHCA embraces this model and we encourage parents to continue supporting their child's hockey experience through the ADM.

We know that participation in youth hockey programs can sometimes be overwhelming for parents. Some feel, in order for their young hockey player to develop, they need to be playing in an environment that more closely resembles what they see in the NHL, i.e., full-ice play, systems and an emphasis on playing and winning games rather than skill development. But this environment is built for adults, physically and emotionally. Youth hockey players aren't miniature adults. They're children. And the best thing for their long-term development is an age-appropriate experience. As it relates to hockey, that's the ADM.

For players to reach their *full* potential, the emphasis in youth hockey needs to shift from wins, rankings and too many games to skill development and age-appropriate competition. The ADM provides an optimal development environment, with progressive age-specific programming to fit every age classification.

Kids are only kids once. By providing an age-appropriate environment to learn and develop skills, we keep every child engaged. We also foster a passion for hockey that will grow with them as they advance. Ultimately it's this passion and the quality of their overall youth experience that will largely determine a child's hockey future.

It's worth mentioning that the NHL fully supports the ADM and works in partnership with USA Hockey to support its implementation, as do our fellow NCAA coaches nationwide. As an organization, we're united in our efforts to let kids be kids, to develop their passion and to support those organizations that embrace the ADM.

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