

8U/Mite Skill Development
Adapted from USA Hockey Skill Progressions

Fun

8-and-Under coaches should never underestimate the value of having fun. While this is true at all ages, it is especially true at this age, where the hockey-for-life seed is planted. If it's not consistently fun at this age, the novelty of the sport will wear off and the young player(s) may eventually quit. Players at this age should have fun every time they are on the ice.

Practice Should Focus On (percentage of time listed after each):

Individual skill improvement (hockey skills, activities, and games) — 85%

Hockey sense (teaching of concepts through small area games) — 15%

Systems (team-play training) — 0%

Player Knowledge

Players should know:

1. Rules
 - a. face-offs
 - b. puck pursuit.
 - c. puck support
 - d. acceptable on-ice conduct
 - e. allowable contact with opponents

2. Common Infractions
 - a. unsportsmanlike conduct
 - b. body checking and checking from behind
 - c. cross-checking and charging
 - d. head contact, elbowing, and high-sticking
 - e. tripping and hooking
 - f. interference and holding

Individual Hockey Skills

Players should learn and master:

1. Skating
 - a. ready position
 - b. edge control
 - c. forward start
 - d. forward stride
 - e. controlled stop: two-foot and one-foot snow plow
 - f. controlled turn
 - g. forward crossover

- h. backward skating
- i. backward stop
- j. ABCs of skating (agility, balance, coordination, and speed drills)

2. Puck Control

- a. lateral (side-to-side) stickhandling
- b. front-to-back stickhandling
- c. diagonal stickhandling
- d. attacking the triangle

3. Passing and Receiving

- a. forehand pass
- b. backhand pass
- c. receiving a pass properly with the stick

4. Shooting

- a. wrist shot
 - b. backhand
- ## 5. body contact
- a. stick on puck
 - b. stick lift

6. Goaltending

At this level, coaches should not designate full-time goaltenders so that players may begin the development of skills that will help improve their long-term skating and athleticism. These are crucial for goaltenders as they progress to higher age levels.

Character Development and Life Skills

Players must learn:

- demonstrate high levels of sportsmanship.
- have respect for their teammates, coaches, opponents, officials and parents.
- balance family, school and other activities.
- be on time for practices and games.