

# Learn to Play Hockey Parents Guide





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## **New to Hockey?**

Area Learn to Play programs are the first step for learning the game of hockey! After “graduation” from a certified Monsters Learn to Play Program, your player begins on the path to more competitive stages of hockey in the 8U (Mite) program or the 10U (squirt) program of the Cleveland Suburban Hockey League (CSHL). The CSHL is the only hockey league of its kind in NE Ohio with almost every rink in the area fielding a CSHL program.

It is recommended but not required before registering for LTP that your player graduates from a Learn to Skate program. Learn to Skate programs are offered at most area rinks and you can find more details on our [rink locator page](#).

Many LTP programs in our area follow this process for teaching your player the game of hockey:

- Certified Monsters Learn to Play program (ages 4-12) for one year!
- 8U (Mite) Blue travel hockey
  - Station-based practices/curriculum similar to Learn to Play, but now featuring other area teams to play against!
- 8U (Mite) White travel hockey
  - Some players will graduate Learn to Play and go straight to Mite White, the second stage of 8U hockey!
  - Station-based practices are still taking place, but more advanced area competition and more games included on the schedule
- 8U (Mite) Red travel hockey
  - This is the last stage of Mite hockey and most competitive stage of 8U.
  - Almost exclusively set for 7 and 8 year old’s to compete and can feature select full-ice hockey games as well.
- 10U (Squirt) travel hockey
  - Depending on age after graduation from LTP, your player may advance to 10U hockey!
  - The CSHL association you are a part of will feature various skill level teams at this age group to help your player make sure they are on the correct team.
  - If graduating from a Mite program, the same procedure will follow with placement on a team of the skill level relative to your player.

## **Understanding Cross Ice Hockey**

- Cross-ice hockey is just one component of the American Development Model (ADM), a proven road to developing top talent while fostering a true love of the game. The ADM and cross-ice training is based on long-term athlete development.
- Shrinking the ice size is just like playing on a smaller field in Little League. There are four main benefits to playing cross-ice hockey: More puck time, age-appropriate training, cost savings and increased competition. Makes perfect sense, right?



## Parent-Coach Relationships

**Parent-Coach Relationship:** You and the coaching staff are working toward the same goal: focusing on what is best for your child. Work with the coaches instead of against them to accomplish that. Coaches will also be your best resource for any questions you might have. How is my child doing? What can he/she do better? What is the team's philosophy here?

## Equipment

**Equipment Check:** There's nothing worse than getting to the rink and realizing you left a shoulder pad, skate or jersey at home. Always double or even triple check your hockey bag to make sure everything is ready to go. Keeping spare laces, socks and mouthguards in the car or side pocket can help, too.

Hockey equipment for most Learn to Play programs is provided at reduced costs or for rental. The following pieces of equipment are required for hockey participants:

- Hockey skates
- Shin Guards
- Hockey Pants
- Girdle/Cup protector (recommended)
- Shoulder pads
- Elbow pads
- Hockey gloves
- Helmet
- Hockey Stick

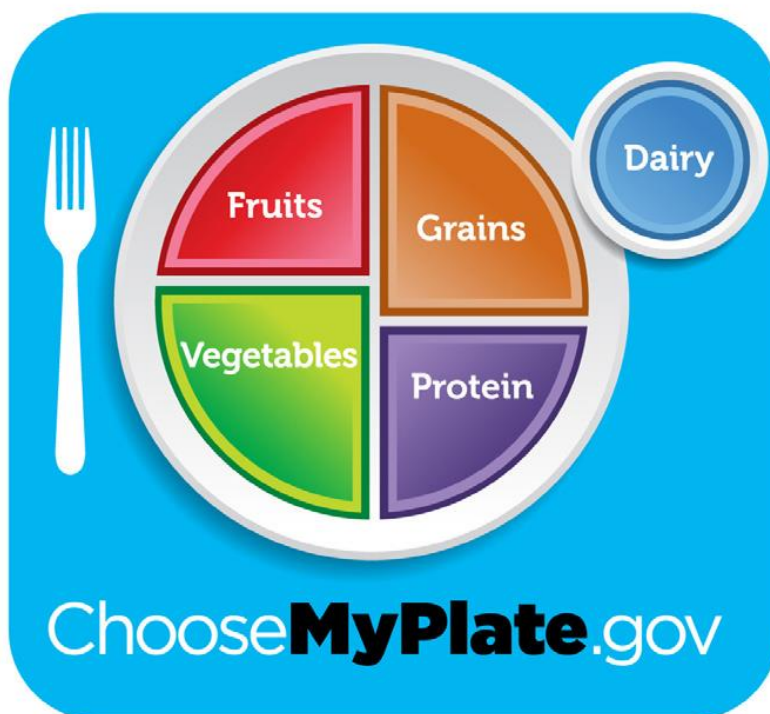
Area LTP programs will provide hockey jerseys and socks to help complete the uniform. When you register for LTP, your association or rink will help direct you to the best stores in the area to help outfit your player. Some programs even offer these above items for free through USA Hockey!



## Health & Nutrition

Hockey players need to eat at least three meals plus one or two snacks every day. Snacks can be healthy and convenient additions to your diet, especially when low-fat and high-fiber foods and beverages are selected. Sparingly eat foods high in saturated fats and oils and sugars, as well as sweets. Be aware that foods containing added hidden fats and sugars are in the other food groups. Each of these food group types provides some, but not all, of the essential nutrients athletes need. The whole team of foods is needed for maximum energy and top performance.

Be sure to include plenty of:



Fluids, breads and starchy  
vegetables  
Vegetables and fruits  
Milk and yogurt (choose low fat)  
Meats (lean) and meat  
alternatives

Try these snacks about 1-2  
hours before a practice or  
game:

Energy or cereal bars  
Peanut butter sandwich  
Yogurt and fruit  
Gatorade  
Applesauce  
String cheese  
Crackers  
Bowl of cereal and low-fat milk

## **Fueling The Tank**

Athletes get most of their nutrition information from their coaches and parents. Players will listen to a coach sometimes better than a teacher or parent. Helping them make wise food choices will give them the ability to play at their best. One way to increase players' performance is to make sure that they show up for practice and games with gas in their tank.

Visit [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov) for information.



## WHAT YOUR PLAYERS EAT WILL DETERMINE HOW THEY PLAY

Muscles are like the engines in cars — feed them the wrong type of fuel and they can't even back out of the driveway, let alone drive down the court for an easy layup.

Tell your players that their muscles need carbohydrates to run up and down the court. It is the best source of fuel for basketball players, and you need to make sure they eat them before, during and after games and workouts. Foods like whole grain cereals (brands low in sugar), whole wheat breads and rolls and any type of fruits and vegetables give players the fuel they need to play longer and harder, as well as the vitamins and minerals they need to grow strong and tall.

Carbohydrates like candy and soda pop can make players feel like they have energy, but because they are so high in sugar they can drop a player like a slam dunk. Avoid eating candy or cookies or drinking soda before practice and games.

## Hockey Parent Code of Conduct

- Do not force your children to participate in sports, but support their desires to play their chosen sports. Children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment. Make it fun!
- Encourage your child to play by the rules. Remember, children learn best by example, so applaud the good plays of both teams.
- Do not embarrass your child by yelling at players, coaches or officials. By showing a positive attitude toward the game and all its participants, your child will benefit.
- Emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit your young athlete. De-emphasize games and competition in the lower age groups.
- Know and study the rules of the game and support the officials on and off the ice. This approach will help the development and support of the game. Any criticism of the officials only hurts the game.
- Applaud a good effort in both victory and defeat, and enforce the positive points of the game. Never yell or physically abuse your child after a game or practice. Work toward removing the physical and verbal abuse in youth sports.
- Recognize the importance of volunteer coaches. They are important to the development of your child and the sport.
- Communicate with them and support them.
- If you enjoy the game, learn all you can about hockey.

**Have Fun:** This is the easy part! Enjoy the smiles on your son's or daughter's face and have fun cheering them on. You get to see firsthand your child making friends and developing as a hockey player. There are few greater things to witness as a parent.



## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)**

### **1. What is the Learn To Play program?**

The Cleveland Monsters/CSHL Area Rink Learn to Play program is a hockey development program designed for players transitioning from a Try Hockey for Free event and into youth hockey programming. The curriculum is designed to introduce participants to the fundamentals of hockey in a fun and exciting environment. Additionally, this program aims to educate parents and include them in their player's athletic development.

### **2. Who is eligible to register for the Learn to Play Hockey program?**

The program is offered to new, first-time participants (boys and girls) between the ages of 4-12.

### **3. Does my child need to know how to skate before they sign up for the Learn to Play Hockey program?**

It is recommended, but not required, that participants enroll in a "learn to skate" program prior to the start of the certified Monsters Learn To Play program.

### **4. Where will the Monsters Learn To Play program be offered?**

Youth hockey associations that have demonstrated a commitment to growing hockey in their local community and that are looking to move Try Hockey For Free participants into their regular programming. All Monsters Learn to Play partners will offer an in depth program available various times throughout the calendar year.

### **5. What equipment is included/required for the Learn To Play program?**

Upon being accepted into the Learn To Play program, we recommend that participants borrow/rent equipment from the rink. Required equipment includes; a helmet with cage, shoulder pads, elbow pads, hockey pants, shin guards, hockey skates, a hockey stick, jersey and socks and an equipment bag. We also recommend a mouth guard, neck guard and athletic supporter for all participants.

### **6. What does Youth Hockey cost for the average program at a young age?**

At the Learn to Play levels, most programs offer an 8-week course for less than \$300. Following Learn to Play, ice time can occur once or twice per week. Most programs have a detailed financial program set up to keep costs minimized per month.

### **7. Hockey looks too dangerous for my child? Should I consider other contact sports?**

While a very physical and contact sport, studies show a lower percentage of hockey players visited emergency rooms than kids who played football, soccer, basketball or wrestled.

- Source-Data analysis by Safe Kids Worldwide, an organization dedicated to preventing injuries among children.

### **8. How much of a time commitment is required for my family with youth hockey?**

In the beginning stages of youth hockey only provide ice time between 1-2 hours per week. The first two years of a child's hockey development should only consist of 1-2 hours per week on ice.



Once your child advances out of the learn to play stages and into a youth hockey program, they will participate 3-4 hours per week rather than the initial 1-2.

**9. What is USA Hockey (USAH)?**

The National Governing Body for youth hockey in the United States.

**10. Why does my child have to be registered with USA Hockey?**

USA Hockey provides a number of resources for the Learn To Play program, including; age-appropriate training modules and practice plans, coaching certification and background screening in addition to insurance for all program participants.

**11. What time should I arrive at the arena?**

You should arrive a minimum of 45 minutes prior to start time for your first on-ice session to provide enough time for your child to check-in and get dressed before taking to the ice.

**12. What is the next step after the Learn To Play program?**

You will be provided with an overview of next step/transition programs by your host facility/organization prior to graduating from the program. All players will typically graduate from Learn to Play into their home association for Mite/Squirt level hockey.

**13. How does Learn To Play Hockey differ from playing for a youth team?**

Learn to Play Hockey and development/tot classes offer 6-15 week sessions primarily focused on a basic introduction to hockey. The youth team season runs from September to March and focuses on hockey skills and team play. They will play sanctioned games vs other area teams.

**14. My Child is 9 years old. Is it too late to get them started?**

It is never too late to start youth hockey. Players have joined and have had success starting as late as age 11 or 12.





**Thank you to our 2018-2019 Cleveland Monsters Learn to Play Partners**



AJ Vincent Beginner's Program at Elyria	North Park Ice Rink	Elyria
Brooklyn Youth Hockey	John M. Coyne Recreation Center	Brooklyn
Canton-Akron Hockey Association	Center Ice Sports Complex	North Canton
Cleveland Heights Youth Hockey	Cleveland Heights Community Center	Cleveland Heights
Cleveland Skating Club	Cleveland Skating Club	Shaker Heights
Gilmour Youth Hockey	Gilmour Ice Academy	Gates Mills
Lake Erie Panthers Youth Hockey	C.E. Orr Arena	Euclid
Learn to Play Hockey at Kent	Kent State Ice Arena	Kent
Mentor Youth Hockey	Mentor Civic Arena	Mentor
North Olmsted Hockey Club	North Olmsted Recreation Center	North Olmsted
OBM Arena Learn to Play	OBM Arena	Strongsville
Parma Hockey Association	Michael A. Ries Rink	Parma
Starter Hockey Program at The Pond	The Pond	Chagrin Falls
Wooster Youth Hockey	Alice Noble Ice Arena	Wooster

**Questions about youth hockey or the Monsters Learn to Play programs?**

Contact us!

**David Aitken-Manager of Youth Hockey & Business Development**

[daitken@theqarena.com](mailto:daitken@theqarena.com) 216-420-2519

**Joe Kummerl-Group Events & Youth Hockey Specialist**

[jkummerl@theqarena.com](mailto:jkummerl@theqarena.com) 216-420-2937

**Noah Volz- Marketing Coordinator**

[nvolz@theqarena.com](mailto:nvolz@theqarena.com) 216-420-2762