

# FLEX DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

## *A Step-By-Step Model To Build A High-Demand Initiation Program*

### INTRODUCTION

Successful hockey programs are built from the foundation of beginner players. Some programs struggle to find that balance of overcoming entry barriers and keeping children engaged.

The Flex Development program lets busy families play hockey and participate in multiple activities while keeping kids engaged, which provides extra value. Three slots are provided per week with the same programming, and lets families decide when it's time for hockey. Families can attend once a week; if they miss a session they have two other times to choose from. If time lends itself, they can attend up to three times a week to advance their child's skills.

### 1. STRUCTURE

- Offer multiple weekly opportunities to attend at different time slots
  - Recommendation of three slots per week
    - One Prime Time Slot
      - Weekend Slot
    - Two Non-Prime Time Slots
      - After-School Slots
- Allow parents to come as much or little as they want; up to 3 times a week

### 2. IDENTIFY BARRIERS TO ENTRY

#### Commitment

- Offering three opportunities per week lets families decide when it's time for hockey
- Allows families to work around other sports and after-school commitments
  - If they miss a practice, no problem! The same practice will be available two more times
- Fall / Winter session starts in October once other youth sports have ended
  - 8 to 12 week sessions
  - Spring and Summer session can also work
    - Summer sessions can go to two non-prime time slots
- Don't wait until next session
  - Prorate current season for all interested players
    - DON'T WAIT TO GET THEM ON THE ICE



### **Equipment**

- Free lender / rental sets
  - Donated from other families
  - Purchase sets from OneGoal, [www.onegoal.com](http://www.onegoal.com)
- For the absolute starters, just require the minimum equipment
  - HECC approved helmet
  - Gloves (don't have to be hockey gloves)
  - Skates

### **Cost**

- Flex Program sells a once-a-week prime time slot
  - Cost of the two non-prime time slots will be recouped with increased participants
  - Builds value with extra training options

## **3. PROGRAMMING**

### **Coaching**

- Plan to have plenty of coaches
- Coaches need to strive to make it the best possible experience
  - Engaging
  - Positive
  - Energetic
  - Educate the parents as well as the kids

### **Grouping**

- Split up the ice for different skill and age levels
  - Cuts down on the intimidation of learning a new skill
- Keep a consistent practice plan for all three sessions every week

## **4. FOLLOW THROUGH**

### **Monitor Your Program**

- Child stops showing up for a couple weeks
  - Call the parents and find out the reason why
  - See if you can fix the barrier keeping them from the rink

**For more information, contact Program Services at  
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