

ESKO YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION
MITE PROGRAMS

FAQ's on Mite Hockey and Registration
MITE HOCKEY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I register my child?

Registration for all players, returning and new, is to be completed during our registration period so that we can plan our teams and levels in a timely manner. Registration information will be available on our website at www.eskohockey.com.

How old does my child have to be to play hockey?

Studies show that players who start too young, frequently do not return the following season. We suggest that your child be 4 years old by July 1st.

Is my child too old to start hockey?

No! It is never "too late" to try hockey! The Mite program runs through age 9 of the eligibility year. There are many Mite players who did not start playing until they were in second or third grade. Players at this age quickly catch up to their peers without difficulty!

What are the eligibility ages for the Mite Level?

Youth 6U / Mini-Mite

Youth ages are typically 6 years or younger. Youth hockey Associations in Minnesota Hockey offer a variety of programs at this age level that focus on teaching the basics of skating and hockey skills. Most programs are very affordable to allow kids to try the sport at a low cost and commitment. Non-checking.

Youth 8U / Mite

Youth ages 7 and 8. Most associations have multiple levels of Mite Divisions (I, II) based upon development, age, and size. There's usually something for everyone! Non-checking.

Is Mite Hockey for Boys, or can Girls play too?

The answer is BOTH!! Girls make up a significant number of Esko Youth Hockey's Mite program. We encourage participation of any player, boy or girl, who wants to learn to skate and play hockey.

Does my child have to know how to skate to start hockey?

NO! Esko Youth Hockey's Mite program is a development program, designed to teach all kids the fundamental skills necessary to play the game of hockey. We will also introduce the beginning concepts of the game itself. Skating is the most fundamental skill of hockey, and teaching the kids to skate is a major focus of the Mite Program.

How long does the season run?

The season runs from mid October to the end of February however the dates are subject to change.

At what Mite level do I register my child?

All players NEW to hockey will register as a "New Player" no matter their age. First year players, Kindergarten age and younger, will start with the Mini Mites. First year players in grades 1, 2, or 3 will play at the Mite 1 level. Some players may be moved to an appropriate level for their age and development needs. Parents may request to have returning or new players at grade level 1 or younger in the Mini Mite level.

If I am new to Hockey or my child is; how do we learn more?

At the beginning of each year we have a Parent Meeting for all families. We introduce all the new families to the program and give them an overview. Board Members and returning Esko Hockey Association families are also available to answer questions throughout the year. You may also go to our website and click on the "Registration Tab" then "Welcome Packet" to gain more information. Please feel free to reach out to a board member for questions.

What is the goal of the Mite Hockey Season?

Esko Youth Hockey Association prides itself on the development of its players, coaches and hockey curriculum. Our goals are to teach all kids to skate, introduce them to the game of hockey, and most importantly have FUN. We do this in an environment that fosters the individual development of each player. We place kids at the most appropriate level based on their development, allowing them to develop as hockey players at their own rate.

What are the Mite Hockey Practices like?

The overall emphasis in all the Mite Hockey Practices is FUN! We want to teach all the kids to love the game of hockey. The curriculum used for the practice for Mites comes from the ADM (USA Hockey's American Development Model). The on ice curriculum has been repeated year after year, and it's proven to be effective. All the practices are a balance of skating drills, puck handling, competition drills, small area games. All practices are led by parent coaches that meet all certification standards. You can find more about how practices are planned at www.admkids.com.

All practices are voluntary. There is no attendance taken in Mini-Mite through Mite 2 level. Your child will benefit from maximum ice time, but there is no penalty for missed practices.

What are the fees for Mite Hockey?

All first year players are FREE for Esko Hockey registration.

All returning players (Mini Mite / Mite 1 / Mite 2): \$200 (\$175 for early registration) for each player

All players are required to register with USA hockey and MN Hockey at www.USAHOCKEY.com. and pay any fees if applicable.

Discounts:

+ Early Registration: Players who register and complete all forms and payment at Esko Hockey's in person registration will receive a discount of \$25 (in person registration dates are TBD each year and will be posted on our website).

+ Family Cap: There is an Esko Hockey Association family cap of \$400

Please see our website for more information at www.eskohockey.com

Does Esko Hockey have a Squirt Program?

Currently Esko does not have a squirt program. If a player turns 9 before June 30th of the current year, they age up to the Squirt level in the Cloquet Youth Hockey program. The Squirt level is dependent on age and or grade level and therefore players cannot leave an association to play at a higher level. For example, if a parent has a Mite 2 player that they think is ready for squirts at an earlier age, they cannot move to a different association to “play up”. Associations typically require you to play in their association for one year before they would discuss a Mite 2 player moving up early to Squirts unless a skater is required to move up due to age. **USA and Minnesota Hockey do not recommend any players move up early.**

Can a request be made to move a player to a different level within Mite Hockey?

The ability to move a player from Mite 1 to the Mite 2 level is a coach’s and Director of Player Development’s (DPD if applicable) decision and would need to be made before December 1st. A parent can approve or disapprove their player moving levels, but cannot request the movement. Parents can request if they want their skater to move down a Mite level but would need to do so before December 1st. **USA and Minnesota Hockey do not recommend any players move up early.** Movement of players is based on the benefit of player’s development and safety as determined by the coaches and Director of Player Development (DPD if applicable).

Mini Mites

What is Mini Mites?

Mini Mites is for beginning skaters typically 6 years or younger whose abilities need further development to integrate into the Mite 1 level. If at any time the coaches and Director of Player Development (DPD if applicable) feel a mini mite can be successful at the Mite 1 level, a player may move to the Mite 1 level with parent permission.

The purpose of Mini Mites:

1. Introduce new skaters to the game of hockey
2. Develop basic skating required for the mite 1 level.
3. Give new skaters of similar abilities more puck time to promote development.
4. Skaters will have one on one attention from coaches.
5. Mini Mites will have scrimmages with other Mini Mite programs to provide in-game experience to prepare Mini Mites for the Mite 1 level.

Mini Mite Practice Structure:

1. Mini Mites will start practice in October.
2. Mini Mites will practice for one hour a week in Carlton during October, November, and December and have one hour of practice or scrimmage time a week outdoors starting in January or as soon as outside ice is available.
3. Practices will follow ADM guidelines.
4. Practices may be combined with Carlton in October, November, and December to keep cost low for both associations and to have more coaches available to help new skaters.
5. Esko plans have a one day Mini Mite jamboree (date TBD).

Mite 1

Who is a Mite 1?

A Mite 1 demonstrates the ability to successfully skate at the ADM Mite 1 set standards. A Mite 1 skater is independent of age, (typically 6 and 7 year olds with returning skater in grades K and first year skaters 1, 2, or 3) but instead will be based on a player's ability and development. If a player's abilities cannot be challenged by the other Mite 1s, the coaches and Director of Player Development (DPD if applicable) will discuss moving player to the Mite 2 level. The ability to move a player from Mite 1 to the Mite 2 level is a coach's and Director of Player Development's (DPD if applicable) decision and would need to be made before December 1st. A parent can approve or disapprove their player moving levels, but cannot request the movement. Parents can request if they want their skater to move down a Mite level but would need to do so before December 1st. **USA and Minnesota Hockey do not recommend any players move up early.** Movement of players is based on the benefit of player's development and safety as determined by the coaches and Director of Player Development (DPD if applicable).

Mite 1 Practice Structure:

1. Use guidelines for Mite 1 (ADM)
2. Typically 8-10 skaters per team.
3. Station-based practices should contain multiple teams to maximize ice time; there should be 8-10 skaters of like ability per station
4. No goaltenders in practice or on game days
5. 2 on-ice sessions per week; maximum of 50 on-ice days, 50–60 minute sessions
6. All in-house game days should be played cross-ice (3v3 or 4v4 based on number of kids); all games/ jamborees should be cross-ice.

Mite 2

Who is a Mite 2?

A Mite 2 demonstrates the ability to successfully skate at the ADM Mite 2 set standards. Typically Mite 2 skaters are 8 and 9 years. Age/grade does not determine if a skater is at a Mite 2 level; coaches and Director of Player Development (DPD if applicable) are the deciding factor to skate at the M2 level. Parent requests will not be granted.

USA and Minnesota Hockey do not recommend any players move up early.

Mite 2 Practice Structure:

1. Follow guidelines for Mites 2 /8U (ADM)
1. Typically 10-12 skaters per team with no full time goaltenders.
2. Give all players the opportunity to play goaltender for games and practices
3. 2-3 on-ice sessions per week including practices and games; 40 to 50 on-ice days, 50-60 minute ice sessions
4. 12 to 14 cross/half ice game days and 28 to 36 practices; no more than six full ice games after December 31st.
5. Players at Mite 2 /8U classification are discouraged from moving up to Squirt/10U classification. Association guidelines shall govern.



8 & Under Mites

1. Practice Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) like running, swimming or jumping. Also introduce the ABC's of athleticism:
2. ABC's - Agility, Balance & Coordination and Speed.
3. Focus on flexibility during this stage.
4. This is the first window for speed training with an emphasis on agility, quickness and change of direction. Less than 5 seconds in duration.
5. Once a week, prior to or after practice, spend 30 minutes off-ice working on the Fundamental Movement Skills and the ABC's. This can be done through games and challenging activities. Keep it fun!
6. Play multiple sports and engage in activities like soccer, running, gymnastics, swimming, skiing or other activities 75% of the time and play hockey the other 25%.
7. Group players into top 1/3, middle 1/3, beginner 1/3.
8. 30 – 60 players each practice session
9. 2-3 ice touches per week
10. 5 months = 20 weeks per season maximum
11. 50 to 60 ice touches per season
12. Min 16 cross ice/half-ice games & 34 practices
13. Max 20 cross ice/half-ice games & 40 practices
14. 9 to 13 players/team; no full time goalies

Parents will get a copy of the ADM at registration and be asked to go through it with their player(s).



Minnesota Development Model

A. Background and Objectives

1. The Minnesota Development Model (MDM) is based on the principles of USA Hockey's American Development Model (ADM) and the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model.
2. MH provides these guidelines and best practices to assist associations in developing programming which supports LTAD. The application of the guidelines will be different from association to association based on number of players, personnel and resources.
3. The MH ADM Committee, 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.
4. The MDM, through utilization of LTAD principles, allows us to integrate training, competition and age appropriate development guidelines so that we can assist each participant in reaching his or her potential. The MDM offers equal opportunity to learn the basic skills for recreation and competition – a key to retaining younger players.
5. Remember, winning comes after fun and skill development. A coach's success is measured by how many kids keep playing hockey.

B. Guidelines for Mini-Mites, Mites/8U Girls

1. Utilize a 'Hockey Director' to lead and implement the LTAD, including practice planning and off-ice training sessions.
2. Utilize a Hockey Development Committee to assist the Hockey Director and Administrative Board.
3. Utilize age division coordinators (Mini-Mites, Mites/8U Girls, Squirts, 10U Girls, etc.) to assist Hockey Director at their level.
4. Use Age Specific (ADM) practice plans and guidelines (station based, small area games, etc.).

5. 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.
6. Provide player skill evaluations early and at the end of the season.
7. Utilize a skating coach and puck handling/shooting coach to work with Squirt/10U & Pee wee/12U teams/ players during the season.
8. Conduct a coach's education session once per month specific to the Mite/8U, Squirt/10U and Pee wee/12U levels.
9. Complete an assn. coaching competency review and develop a plan for improvements, based on the USAH Skill Progression Guidelines.
10. Begin development of players no earlier than the day after Labor Day; form teams no earlier than Oct 15th; end season by Mar 31st.
11. Provide players with some time off during the season (no practices, games, etc)



Esko Hockey Association Player and Practice Guidelines:

1. Esko Hockey will follow the ADM/MDM practice and game guidelines given to it by USA and Minnesota Hockey. Practices will follow ADM recommend practice plans to develop all hockey skills and to make practices interesting and fun to all levels of players.
1. Esko Hockey will provide 40 to 50 on ice practices or cross ices experiences during the season for the Mite 1 and Mite 2 levels. A practice must follow the ADM guidelines, “rink ratting” is not an official practice and will not count towards the above number. The number of practices during the season will be reviewed during that month’s board meeting.
1. Esko Hockey will provide two hours of on ice practice or scrimmages per week, indoor or outdoor, for the length of the season with the exception being the week after Christmas, this time off is recommended by the MDM. If outdoor practices are cancelled due to weather and indoor ice can not be scheduled at some point during that calendar week, another practice will be added to the season. Every effort will be made to reschedule a practice during the week it was originally scheduled. Players will not have long periods of off time except for the schedule time after Christmas.