

# 10-and-Under (Squirts)

**FOCUS POINTS** • Fun • Engagement • Active Practices • Age-Appropriate Training • Basic Hockey Knowledge

**FUN** These players are entering the Golden Age of Skill Development, and coaches should ensure that every session, both on-ice and off-ice, is fun for the players. Hockey is a game that requires a tremendous amount of skill to be proficient at any level, and developing this skill takes a substantial amount of time. If fun is not incorporated into every practice and game, then many players will not invest the amount of time necessary to develop their skills. Fun is a crucial component in the long-term athletic development process. A lack of fun can limit the potential of many young players by deterring them from fully engaging or causing them to quit.

**ENGAGEMENT** Coaches should recognize the importance of engagement. It goes hand-in-hand with fun, but it's more than just fun. Targeting the optimal skill level for each player – not too easy and not too hard. It's designing small games that do the teaching. The players don't need a coach to provide the feedback. The games themselves give the players opportunities to successfully demonstrate targeted skills and concepts. The coach becomes the facilitator – less talking from the coach and more learning by doing.

**AGE-APPROPRIATE TRAINING** Coaches must be very careful when determining what is appropriate for the 9- and 10-year-olds in this age group. It's not what the adults want them to be doing at this age that matters. Instead, it should be about what the players are actually ready to do at this age. Although these players should be ready to learn more of the rules and concepts related to the game, skill development is still the top priority. Players will begin learning and executing skills and concepts related to team play.

**INDIVIDUAL HOCKEY SKILLS** Players must 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 snowplow f. controlled turn g. forward crossover h. backward skating i. backward stop j. ABCs of skating: agility, balance, coordination, and speed drills k. one-foot stop l. backward crossover m. mohawk turn
2. **Puck Control** a. lateral (side-to-side) stickhandling b. front-to-back stickhandling c. diagonal stickhandling d. attacking the triangle e. puck protection f. change of pace g. toe drag h. give and take i. accelerating with the puck (one-hand carry)
3. **Passing and Receiving** a. forehand pass b. backhand pass c. receiving a pass properly with the stick d. saucer pass (forehand and backhand) e. receiving a pass properly with the skate f. indirect pass
4. **Shooting** a. wrist shot b. backhand c. flip shot d. screen shot e. deflection f. off rebound
5. **Body Contact** a. stick on puck b. stick lift c. poke check d. gap control concept e. body positioning and angling
6. **Goaltending** a. positioning i. proper stance ii. angling b. movement i. forward ii. backward iii. lateral c. save technique i. stick ii. gloves iii. body and pads iv. butterfly d. recovery

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

- Individual skill improvement (hockey skills and activities) – 65%
- Hockey sense (teaching of concepts through small-area games) – 25%
- Systems (team-play training) – 10%

**PLAYER KNOWLEDGE** Players should know:

1. Rules a. face-offs b. body contact c. offsides d. icing e. checking from behind
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
3. Penalties a. minor b. major

**GOLDEN AGE OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT** Players between the ages of 8-12 are considered to be in the Golden Age of Skill Development. This is the prime age period for kids to acquire and develop athletic skills. Coaches of players who are in this age range should spend the majority of practice time working on skill development. Although skill development should be a focus at other ages, too, there is no better time than during this Golden Age of Skill Development to optimally affect the long-term skill development of each player.