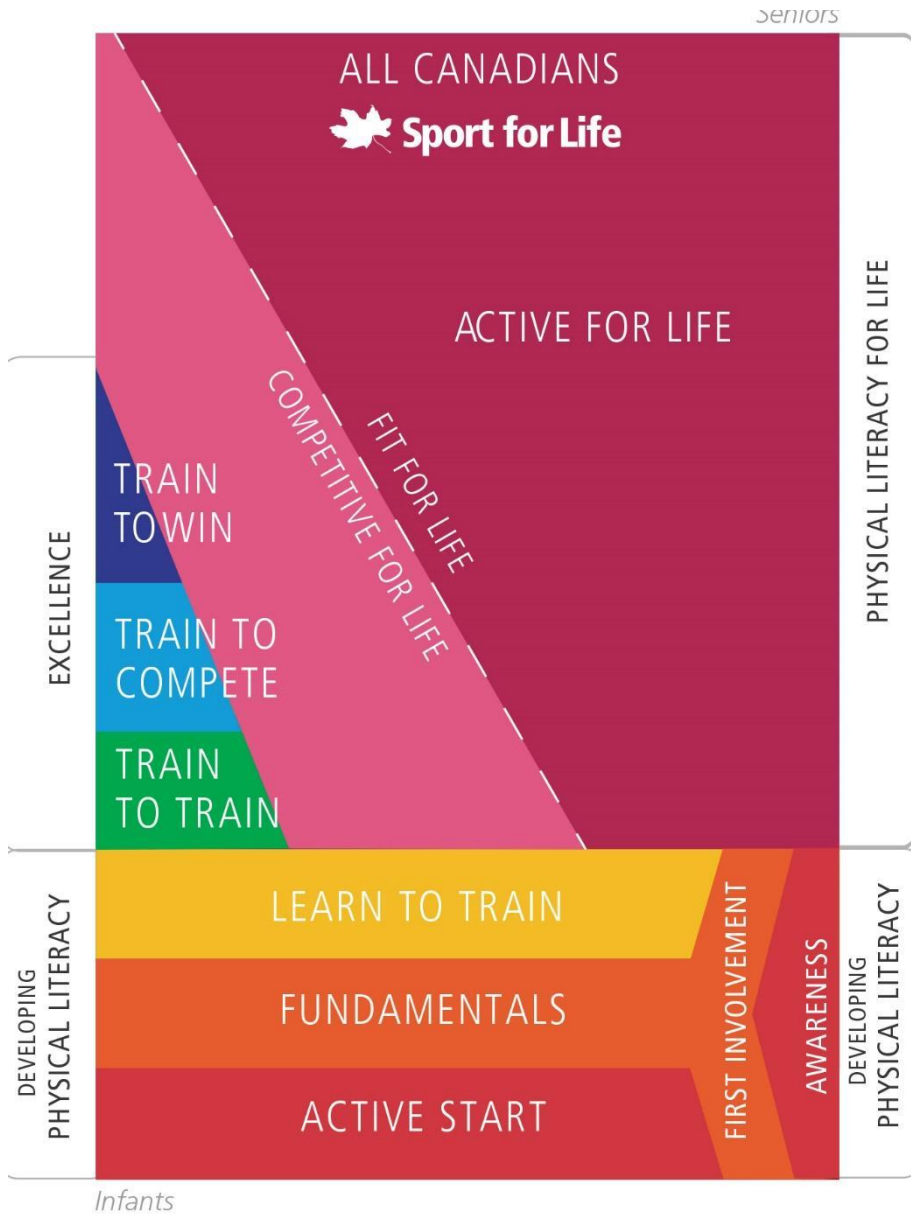




SPORT FOR LIFE - *A parent's guide*



It's become a buzzword that is thrown around a lot in sport – “being active for life”, “promoting sport for life”. But what does it actually mean?

Sport for Life is the name given to a movement to improve the quality of sport and physical activity in Canada. At a national level, the Sport for Life framework brings sport, education and health together and addresses sport and physical activity from policy to program delivery.

A central component of the Sport for Life movement is ***Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD)***. Experts have identified 7 stages of development, each with its own physical, mental, emotional and cognitive traits. This model provides the basis for the optimal training and competition we need at each life stage to enjoy sport the most and perform our best. The multi-stage training, competition and recovery pathway is used by sport organisations to guide an individual's experience in sport from birth through adulthood.

The diagram above shows the 7 stages of LTAD from birth to adulthood. Each stage reflects a different point in athlete development. Field Hockey Canada has developed a “Long Term Hockey Development” framework that provides a guide to appropriate training and support for each of these 7 stages. WVFHC aligns our programming to this framework - by ensuring that our programs are age-appropriate and focused on the individual, we will encourage players to achieve lifelong wellness and be active for life.

Why should I care about Sport for Life?

We know that being active is central to a healthy life. Quality sport and physical activity enable the development of healthy individuals, who, in turn, can make positive contributions to society. But there are some concerning trends in today's society:

- Declining participation in recreational sport and physical activity
- Rise in lifestyle diseases, including obesity, heart disease and diabetes
- Social pressures around winning, performance and specialisation which create a “no fun” sport environment for our kids and contribute towards burnout and drop out
- Poor physical literacy and skill development due to a mismatch between our child's stage of development and the skills and activities that are offered to them

Sport for Life and Long-Term Athlete Development is about providing age appropriate skills development, training and competition so that we can keep kids in sport for longer and encourage them to be active for life.

What can parents do to help?

- ✓ Ask your child's sport clubs and coaches whether they follow Long-Term Athlete Development in their programs. Don't be afraid to ask what skills your child will be gaining and whether the training is age-appropriate. Quality sport organisations should have these clearly defined and accessible for their members.
- ✓ You play an important role in shaping your child's behaviour and attitude to physical activity. Play catching, throwing, hitting and other physically demanding games with your child on a regular basis. And make sure that your child sees you enjoying being active – Why not check out one of our adult programs? We have them for all ages and abilities.
- ✓ Keeping sport fun is essential to encouraging kids to stay in sport. When the focus is too much on winning, sport becomes too pressured and kids are more likely to drop out. Don't be concerned with the score – put the focus on learning, skills development, and having fun

What is WVFHC doing to promote sport for life?

- ✓ We have produced a practical guide to each of the LTAD stages that our coaches use to deliver each program. It includes emotional, social and cognitive considerations as well as technical and tactical sport skills. Check out the Player Development Matrix in your Welcome Pack to see the guide for your child's age group
- ✓ We offer player pathways that are designed to encourage our members to stay active for life. You can start your field hockey experience in one of our junior programs, pursue recreational or high-performance pathways, and move into Women's or Men's League, all while staying within our club. We also offer coaching and umpiring pathways for those of our members who would like to develop in those areas. You can find out more about these in our Player Pathways guide on our website
- ✓ We work with Field Hockey BC and Field Hockey Canada to ensure that there are player pathways from club to provincial to national level. At the most basic level, we aim to ensure that the programs we each offer are complementary

If you have other suggestions, we would like to hear them!
Email: info@wvfhc.com

Where can I find out more?

www.fieldhockeycanada.ca – check out the Long-Term Hockey Development framework
www.wvfhc.com – check out our Player Pathways guide that includes all of our programming and how it relates to long-term athlete development
www.sportforlife.ca – the font of all knowledge on “sport for life”, including all LTAD frameworks