



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How much does it cost?**

Hockey has a reputation as a sport that costs a lot of money to play. However, the cost of getting started is very reasonable. Starter equipment packages are available for a very modest cost (less than \$100 for a complete set of equipment for a youngster), and we have some “loaner” packages available on a first-come, first-served basis. The registration fees for the Learn to Play and Mini-mite programs are very reasonable, and the sessions are divided into eight-week blocks to minimize the cost of trying out the sport. Once your child moves on to travel hockey, the total cost does go up a bit, but remember that your player will be on the ice for practice or games four times a week for about five months, so the per-hour cost ends up being lower than for many other youth sports.

### **Will I have to be at the rink at 5 AM?**

If you believe TV commercials, you might think all hockey practices take place at 5 AM. In reality, the vast majority of practices and games are either in the evening on weekdays (between 6 and 9 PM, with earlier practices for the younger kids), and at reasonable hours on the weekends. The instructional program, the gateway to our Mini-mite and travel programs, this year is scheduled for Saturday/Sunday mornings (Dates and Times TBA)

### **When should my child start?**

While the Learn to Play Hockey program is open to children of all ages, there are advantages to starting your child early. Four- and five-year-olds take to skating very easily, and will have plenty of time to practice their skating and hockey skills before moving on to travel hockey.

### **Are girls welcome?**

Yes! Yes! Yes! Many girls enjoy youth hockey, and the number is increasing every year. Almost all girls start out in a youth hockey organization like [ECHO](#), with boys and girls learning and playing together. As they get older, some girls choose to play for a girls-only team, but virtually all female hockey players got their start playing with the boys at co-ed organizations.

### **Is hockey dangerous?**

After watching pro hockey games, you may worry that your child might get hurt playing the sport. While no youth sport is completely free of dangers, serious injuries are very rare in youth hockey. All players wear protective equipment including a helmet whenever they are on the ice, and physical contact (checking) is not allowed until the Bantam level. Coaches and referees take safety very seriously. Actually, compared to sports played on grass such as soccer and football, the incidence of serious injuries in hockey is quite low.

### What equipment will we need?

Your child will need a standard set of equipment, which includes a helmet, neck guard, elbow and shoulder pads, shin guards, a cup, a stick, and skates. You can get advice and information on equipment by contacting [echoltph@sbcglobal.net](mailto:echoltph@sbcglobal.net) MikeRooney (860-870-8523). We have a limited number of "loaner" starter kits (minus skates and stick) available on a first-come, first-served basis and have recently started a very successful used equipment swap, where gently used equipment is available to skaters free of charge. For more information on Loaner Starter Kits please contact either Mike Rooney (above), ECHO Equipment Manager Mike McDermott ([equipment@echostars.com](mailto:equipment@echostars.com)) or to inquire about our equipment swap items, Kevin Dukett ([kdukett281@earthlink.net](mailto:kdukett281@earthlink.net)). If you want to purchase your child's equipment we will be glad to provide you with a listing of area sporting goods stores and full-service hockey pro shops that will be able to help you.

### How should I choose a hockey organization?

There are over 40 youth hockey organizations throughout Connecticut, and once a family starts out in one organization they tend to stay with the same organization over the years. If your child sticks with hockey, you and your family will spend a lot of time with other families from the organization. So choosing the right organization for your family can be an important decision. We recommend talking to members of the board of different organizations, and even visiting a few practices or games, to get a sense of what the organization is like. At ECHO we are committed to developing the skills and character of young players while having fun at the same time. We hope you will find us to be welcoming and friendly, and a great place to get your kids involved in a sport they can enjoy for life.



**ECHO SKATERS WORKING & PLAYING TOGETHER FOR OVER 40 YEARS!**



**Eastern Connecticut Hockey Organization**  
Teaching Hockey and Life Skills Since 1973