

What's Next?

Hockey Options after in-house

2015

If your child is 7 years old or so, you may be asking yourself in which program to register for next season. We want to give you all the information so that you can make a choice that is right for you and your young player.

USA Hockey Age Groups

USA Hockey groups players in age groups by birth year. For the 2015/2016 season, it goes like this:

- Bantam/U14: 2001-2002
- PeeWee/U12: 2003-2004
- Squirt/U10: 2005-2006
- Mite/U8: 2007-2008

Options in Needham Youth Hockey

In-house

In-house, or learn-to-play, is a super-convenient, pretty regular schedule. Rookies and mites get around 40 touches per season, all on Saturday mornings and Sunday evenings. Beginners get around 30 touches as they only start getting Sunday touches after the first 10 weeks or so. Detailed information on in-house is available here: <http://nyha.org/Page.asp?n=41065&org=nyha.org>

Development

Development is a step up from in-house and is aimed at players that may not be ready for the level of competition of travel, or who would benefit from another year of small-area games to help develop their hockey skills. The development program supports kids that are squirt-aged or younger (born in or after 2005). The Development program gets more touches than in-house (maybe a bit more than 50?), but it still fairly regular with practices each Saturday morning and games on Sunday afternoon. The games are played at Fessy in the Middlesex Cross Ice Hockey League ([MCIHL](#)), where they have a great boards system for hosting multiple small area games at a time. Games are played against other towns in that league.

Travel

If your child is 'of-age' according to the birth years listed above for the USA Hockey Age Groups, then travel hockey is an option. Travel hockey lacks the convenience of in-house and development programs, but includes more touches (about 3.5 per week). Games are played in the [Valley League](#), which is a professionally run league with tons of teams. Because it is so large, they are able to create divisions with great parity so our teams get to play closely matched teams.

Girls

Girls' teams are just like travel in terms of touches and convenience. They play in the Middlesex Yankee Conference Girl's Hockey League ([MYCGHL](#)) and the program is geared to those female hockey players that no longer want to play with the boys – a personal choice.

What's Next?

Registration opens on February 11th. If you think that in-house is still the right place for your child, you don't need to do anything; registration for in-house opens in the Fall. If you want to make a big step and try out for travel, then you need to register and go to try-outs. If they make a travel team, great. If they don't and they are mite or squirt aged, then development will be offered to you as an option.

If you specifically want to join the development program, you still need to register. *There will be an option in the registration declaring that you don't mean to try out for travel.*

The choice of which program is right for you and your child is a personal one. Getting more touches will likely result in quicker skill development, but this does not mean that travel is the right choice for everyone. Hockey has a long season, and we would rather your child be comfortable with the level and commitment than to burn out. Many times, it's more about being with friends than about skills considerations. Be aware that the try-out process may not land your child with his/her hoped-for friends. That being said, there is usually some great new friends to be made on a town team 😊