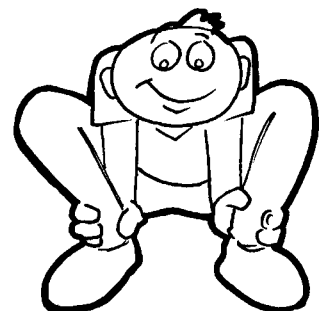




Guidelines for Children's Sport Programs

- Bill of Rights
- General
- Guidelines for Beginners - (Age 5-6)
- Guidelines for Novice - (Age 7-8)
- Guidelines for Rookie - (Age 9-10)
- Turning Adult Versions of Competition into Games for Kids
- Ideas for Achievement Days or Jamborees



BILL OF RIGHTS FOR CHILDREN'S SPORTS

The 10 rights, capitalized, come from *Guidelines for Children's Sports* - Rainer Martens (1979)

➤ RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS

- Provide “no cut” programs
- Provide an opportunity to play a variety of sports and positions.
- Adopt “child first – winning second” (Rainer Martens) philosophies.
- “Full” participation for ALL – equal playing time in competitions.

➤ RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE AT A LEVEL COMMENSURATE WITH MATURITY AND ABILITY

- Flexible age classifications to give late maturing children a chance to participate at current level of maturity.
- Provide various levels of activity within a sport.

➤ RIGHT TO HAVE QUALIFIED ADULT LEADERSHIP

- Provide specialized training for adults working with children 10 years and younger so they understand the characteristics and appropriate programming and interpersonal skills necessary to match those characteristics.

➤ RIGHT TO PLAY AS A CHILD NOT AN ADULT

- Provide activities/competitive situations that have been modified to match the maturity level of children involved – few 5-6 year olds have the physical skills or emotional maturity for team competition.
- Avoid over-structure, over-specialization and overemphasis on seriousness.
- Provide opportunities to tap their creativity, imagination and enthusiastic energy.
- Provide consequence-free activities.

➤ RIGHT TO SHARE IN THE LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING OF SPORT PARTICIPATION

- Allow children to share ideas on their level of involvement.
- Listen as well as dictate – provide as many decision-making opportunities as possible.

➤ RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

- Activities should attend to both physical and psychological safety of children.

➤ RIGHT TO PROPER PREPARATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS

- Provide programs that develop fundamental skills prior to thrusting children into competitive situations.
- Provide more opportunities to practice in “fun” activities, rather than competition.

➤ RIGHT TO AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO STRIVE FOR SUCCESS

- Teach that success is not synonymous with winning, nor failure with losing – success is found in effort and improvement.
- ALL children deserve qualified instruction and an equal opportunity to *strive* for success – including community based programs. Not providing “quality” programs takes the right to choose “excellence” away somewhere down the road, and makes recreational play less healthy, safe, and fun.

➤ RIGHT TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY

- Treat ALL children with sensitivity, understanding and respect.
- There is NO place in children's sports for hecklers or insensitive adults.
- Behavior expectations and consequences of misbehavior should be introduced and meted out with the dignity of the child the number one priority.

➤ RIGHT TO HAVE FUN IN SPORTS

- If the first nine rights are upheld, FUN will be a natural result.



- C** Close scores in competition make it more fun for everyone
- H** Have FUN
- I** Instill values – fair play; co-operation; positive behaviour, hard work, responsibility, and respect
- L** Lots of scoring by everyone is what children enjoy
- D** Design a program that provides an opportunity to learn a variety of fundamental sport skills
- R** Reinforce positively
- E** Environment where laughter, humour and fun can thrive
- N** Never put a child into an adult-like competition before they have developed pre-requisite skills

- I** Inclusiveness is a characteristic of a healthy children’s sport program
- N** Nothing can be learned without making some mistakes along the way

- S** Shout Praise – Whisper Criticism
- P** Provide good role modelling
- O** Opportunity to **learn through play**
- R** Remember they are just kids whose primary goals are ACTION and FUN
- T** Take the emphasis off winning and put it on **process**
- S** Specialization too young is not beneficial to the long-term development of athletes



PHILOSOPHY OF HEALTHY CHILDREN'S SPORT PROGRAMS

WHAT CHILDREN WANT FROM SPORT

- **To have fun** – children have fun when they are active and feel competent.
- **To improve skills and learn new skills** – to be competent enough to play safely and successfully.
- **To be with friends or make new friends** – provided with a variety of play opportunities.
- **For thrills and excitement** – by being actively challenged.
- **To succeed** – measured by feelings of competency resulting in a positive self-image.
- **To become physically fit** – resulting from active participation.

Bold print is from survey of young athletes in USA and Canada (Gould & Horn, 1984)

General Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Children's Sport Programs

The following guidelines match what children, 10 and under, want and need from sport participation. Specific guidelines for three different age classifications 5-6, 7-8 and 9-10 are listed separately. These guidelines should be used to assist program designers and implementers.

- Overall philosophy of “**learning through play**”.
- Focus on the “process” – fun, maximum participation, learning skills, social relationships – rather than on outcome.
- Opportunity to learn a **variety** of movement and motor skills, through play and games, that would apply to various sport activities: stopping/starting, jumping, dodging, passing, balance, flexibility, throwing, running, catching, kicking, etc. Specialization and long seasons in 1-2 sports a year are inappropriate. A multilateral approach, in which children participate in a variety of sporting activities is more beneficial to the long-term development of an athlete as well as being healthier for ALL children, regardless of ability.
- Designed with the long-term cognitive, psychological and social development of children in mind.
- Sport programs acknowledge, encourage and appreciate interests outside of sport.
- Designed to ensure active involvement, positive self-concept, enjoyment of physical activity and healthy lifestyles of ALL children involved, regardless of ability or maturation level.



- Programs are inclusive - encouraging participation from all children regardless of religion, gender, ethnic background, social or economic status.
- Children are involved in activities that allow them to be continuously active. NO waiting in line, elimination games, or long periods of inactivity either by sitting on the bench or by the inherent nature of the games (traditional baseball/softball games).
- Children are not put into adult-like competitive situations before learning pre-requisite fundamental skills necessary to be successful. These can be learned through simple “child-like” games that maximize action, and provide both cooperative and competitive learning opportunities that incorporate the components of sport.
- Activities are adjusted to individual skill levels so ALL participants are challenged while being given an opportunity for high success rates.
- Activities are gender-neutral. Both boys and girls are encouraged to participate, are supported, and are socialized to be successful. Leaders do not make statements that reinforce stereotypes of lack of physical ability of girls. Example: “you throw like a girl” with a negative connotation.
- “Achievement days”, “festivals”, and “jamborees” with a number of skill achievement stations and/or fun stations are more appropriate than tournaments – especially elimination tournaments.
- Awards for all-stars, most valuable player, highest scorer and most wins are avoided.
- Select or “rep” teams are avoided.
- Media attention for individual performances is discouraged – recognizing that early success is often a result of early maturity and has little relevance to future successes.
- Leagues or coaches are not allowed to require specialization to a particular sport.
- Age classifications are in two year age ranges starting no younger than five.
- Teams are formed in a manner to preserve the dignity and positive self-concept of ALL (see module on positive play on page 59).
- Skill award programs play an integral role in promoting involvement, skill development and recognition.
- Equal play rules are established when team competition is introduced.
- No weight loss or gain procedures solely for participation in sport.
- Rules are modified to reduce chance of injury-collision potential as much as possible.
- Leagues and organizations **insist** coaches/instructors are trained and certified to teach skills and work with children at the age-appropriate level.



- Leagues and organizations provide coach/instructor educational upgrading opportunities including cross-cultural sensitivity education.
- Leagues and organizations ask coaches or instructors to sign a code of ethics and/or conduct.
- Leagues and organizations have parents code of ethics/conduct and provide parent education orientations.
- If leagues and organizations use officials in competition, special official's training programs are provided, designed specifically for officials working with children 10 and under.

Note: The following guidelines are general. Sports may vary slightly in the appropriateness of the activities. In some sports the “peak” age is much younger, therefore they would find modifications that would differ from sports where athletes peak later. However, sports where the peak age is young must be very cautious in providing intensive training programs or expect an extremely high drop-out rate between ages 11-13.

Guidelines for Beginners (age 5-6)

Organized sport-specific programs for children under the age of five, especially team sport activity, are unnecessary and inappropriate. Children this age should be creating their own learning opportunities through creative thinking and exploratory play. Therefore the following is considered appropriate only for five and six years. Many five-year-old children also will not be ready for this type of activity.

- Emphasis is on **action** in individual or small group “play” activities rather than on providing feedback on proper execution of skills. Skill development is a by-product of repetitions provided in the action. Learning opportunities provided in the **process** of play is the focus.
- Emphasis is on providing opportunities to develop a broad base of fundamental skills.
- Feedback on skills should be minimal, simple and given in child-like terminology.
- Children are encouraged to try new skills within the realm of safety concerns so they learn to extend themselves.
- No regular competitive teams or separate “practice” times. Practice and competitive situations are provided in lead-up type games not organized league competitions or tournaments. Twelve children in the play area at once is a good number to establish because they can work in mini-groups of 2-3-4-6.

Benefits of lead-up games:

- Skills are developed in a less stressful atmosphere.
- Flexible and easily modified to the skill level of participants on the spur of the moment – therefore suitable for all ages.
- Allow for progressions from simple to complex play – they are stepping stones.
- Simplicity makes them easy to understand, promoting self-confidence prior to being put into complex competitive situations.
- Easier to focus on giving positive feedback on correct techniques rather than outcomes.
- More recognizable to both parents and coaches that the activity is a “teaching tool”, helping to keep sport in perspective.
- Easier for children to get the repetitions necessary for improvement in a fun, motivating child-like atmosphere.
- Easier to provide successful experiences for all participants.
- More conducive to learning a variety of basic fundamental movements and sport skills.
- Easier to provide self-challenge opportunities.
- Easier to control competition at a healthy level.
- Provides opportunities for children’s input on how to modify the rules to address fairness and behaviour issues empowering them and improving decision making.



- Activities where fine motor skills are required to make the activity active and enjoyable (such as throwing/catching from another person) should have a low child-adult ratio (2:1, 3:1) to provide opportunities for quality repetitions. This means high parent (or substitute) participation as a bonus, parents learn skills to play with their children at home and appreciate challenges of working with their child.
- Uniforms are kept to a minimum – just enough for identification while playing if necessary –preferably no more than a T-shirt for sports not requiring additional safety equipment.
- Activity times are limited to a maximum of one hour no more than twice per week.
- Co-ed participation.
- No travel.
- Length of sport programs is 8-10 weeks.
- For individual sports – no competition unless it is a “combined” score format with other children.

Sample Letter To Parents – Beginner (age 5-6)

Dear Parents,

We welcome you and your child to an exciting year of fun, enjoyment and learning in our sport.

Knowing that children in this age group want ACTION, FUN, and an opportunity to LEARN, we are offering a program that is child-centred. We will be playing games that will give ALL children more opportunity to receive the repetitions required to develop the skills necessary for enjoyment. You will notice modifications to team size, rules, and equipment that will result in more action for more children, thereby providing more opportunity to learn, be successful, improve skills, while having fun in a safe environment. The games are designed for very young children. Adult-type competitions don't provide the environment children need to have fun, learn and be successful.

Modifications are made to address the common characteristics of children this age:

- Short attention span
- Love of action
- Different maturing rates
- Low ability to think abstractly
- Low ability to cope with stress
- Low level of fine co-ordination
- Low ability to do complex tasks
- Need for approval and praise
- Low ability to anticipate
- Low ability to make decisions quickly

Since the children are so young, with limited fundamental motor skills, we will be including numerous fun opportunities to develop a variety of motor skills in our warm-up activities. Some may appear to have little relevance to our sport, but are important to overall development in order to enjoy a lifetime of sport and physical activity.

The philosophy of our program is to focus on process – not outcome. We will therefore be rewarding what should be valued most in sport – self-improvement, effort, fair play, co-operation, positive attitudes and behaviour.

The success of the program will depend on your help and support. We will require your assistance (or substitute) in many of the activities to get the proper adult to child ratio necessary for a good learning environment. It is not necessary to be knowledgeable about our sport. All you need is a smile and enthusiasm. It will also be beneficial if you encourage your child to use creative play at home with family or friends to develop fundamental sport skills.

The parent booklet you have received will provide additional ideas on how you can assist us in ensuring your child has a positive sport experience.

If you have questions, the coaches will be very happy to talk with you.

Here's to a FUN, ACTION-PACKED enjoyable year for your child!



Guidelines for Novice (age 7-8)

- Team sports – informal teams where rules, equipment and space of traditional adult games are greatly modified to maximize repetitions, self-improvement, participation, co-operation and FUN for all participants. Emphasis is on process – not outcome.
- For team sports it is better to incorporate practice activities into scheduled competition time than to have separate scheduled practice times. (Example: ½ time on lead-up game activities and ½ time against an opposing team.) If teams are small enough and modifications extreme enough, all children will get a lot of action in the competition time (more of a scrimmage type approach). This will help alleviate a negative attitude to the idea of “practice” that some adults will impose upon children.
- Substitutions are kept to a minimum by reducing team size and allowing “borrowing” of players if necessary.
- Practice time incorporates repetitions in a “play/lead-up game”, fun, atmosphere rather than focussing on drills. Some sports may still require high parent (or substitute) involvement to provide necessary quality learning opportunities.
- Practice/competition times are maximum 1 ¼ hours – no more than three times per week in one sport.
- Feedback on skills is limited, positive and given in age-appropriate language.
- Warm up activities for practices and competitions should include a variety of motor skills not just specific-sport skills.
- Skill development in a variety of positions or events is encouraged – in team sport competition players rotate positions.
- Uniforms are kept to a minimum. Warm-up suits, team bags, team jackets, etc. are unnecessary.
- Co-ed participation.
- Travel kept within city or in case of rural areas to distances within a few close towns.
- League standings or other statistics that put the emphasis on win/loss rather than on process are not kept.
- No tiering. Better to modify the competition to match various ability levels.



Sample Letter To Parents – Novice (age 7-8)

Note: A separate page should be included with specific rule modifications. The covering letter is intended for general information.

Dear Parents,

We welcome you and your child to an exciting year of fun, enjoyment and learning.

Knowing that children in this age group want ACTION, FUN, and an opportunity to LEARN, we are offering a program that is child-centred. We will be playing games that will give ALL children more opportunity to receive the repetitions required to develop the skills for enjoyment. Modifications to the adult version of competition will result in more action for more children, thereby providing more opportunity to learn, be successful, improve skills, while having fun in a safe environment.

The following age-appropriate modifications will be used:

- reduced team numbers to provide more action for more children.
- reduced equipment size and play area to match size of participants.
- softer equipment to encourage proper use of skills and for safety.
- modified rules to provide more scoring opportunities for more children, help keep scores close, and reduce the dominance of highly skilled players.
- no substitutions necessary – all children participate all the time.
- coach will be allowed on the play area to help direct play and provide immediate, positive feedback.
- flexible player rosters – to address inequities in player ability if necessary and to allow borrowing of players in case of absentees. Total team size can then be kept smaller.

The philosophy of our program is to focus on process – not outcome. We will therefore be rewarding what should be valued most in sport – self-improvement, effort, fair play, co-operation, positive attitudes and behaviour.

Since children this age have not fully developed their fundamental motor skills, we will be including numerous fun opportunities to develop a variety of motor skills in our warm-up activities. Some may appear to have little relevance to our sport, but are important to overall development in order to enjoy a lifetime of sport and physical activity.

Prior to playing a modified competition versus an opposing team, we will be spending a portion of the scheduled time playing various sport-specific lead-up games that will best develop the individual fundamental skills necessary in our sport.

The success of the program will depend on your help and support. We will require your assistance (or substitute) in many of the activities to get the proper adult to child ratio necessary for a good learning environment. It is not necessary to be knowledgeable about our sport. All you need is a smile and enthusiasm. It will also be beneficial if you encourage your child to practice at home with family or with friends to develop fundamental sport skills.

The parent booklet you have received will provide additional ideas on how you can assist us in ensuring your child has a positive sport experience.

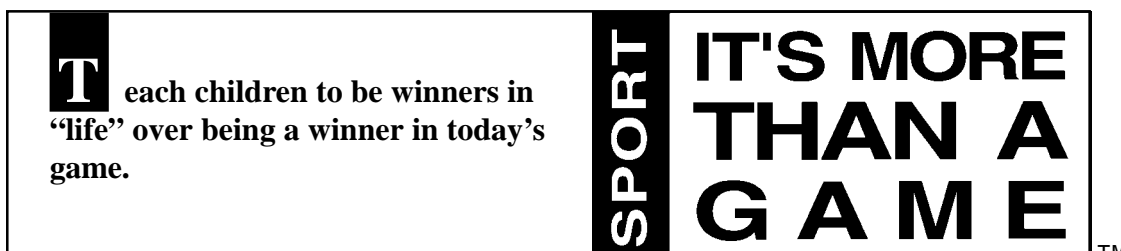
If you have questions, the coaches will be very happy to talk with you.

Here's to a FUN, ACTION-PACKED enjoyable year for your child!



Guidelines for Rookie (age 9-10)

- Although fewer modifications from adult competitions are needed, they are still necessary to ensure action for all participants, close scores and maximum opportunity to score.
- Learning opportunities/repetitions at practice are provided through a variety of well organized game-like, fun activities, not drill-work, making practice just as much, if not more fun, than competitions.
- Practice to competition ratio is a minimum of 3:1.
- Practice times are a maximum 1½ hours.
- Practice/competition total no more than three times per week in one sport.
- Team sport tournaments are of the informal round-robin type format, not elimination, until age 12.
- No out-of-province travel.
- No Provincial or National championships.
- Skill development in a variety of positions or events is encouraged – in team sport competition players rotate positions.
- In team sports – captains and starting line-ups are rotated and “group” substitutions are made with each group getting equal playing time. Example: “red” team in – “blue” team out.
- Limited ability grouping.
- Uniforms are kept to a minimum. Warm-up suits, team bags, team jackets, etc. are unnecessary.



Sample Letter To Parents – Rookie (age 9-10)

Note: A separate page should be included with specific rule modifications. The covering letter is intended for more general information.

Dear Parents,

We welcome you and your child to an exciting year of fun, enjoyment and learning.

Knowing a child's primary purpose in sport participation is for FUN, ACTION and to LEARN, the philosophy of our program is the **holistic development** of the child rather than on competition. We will be playing close to the adult version of competition, but we have made age-appropriate modifications to address the needs of children this age.

The following age-appropriate modifications will be used:

- Reduced team numbers to provide more action for more children.
- Reduced equipment size and play area to match size of participants.
- Modified rules to provide more scoring opportunities for more children, help keep scores close, reduce the dominance of highly skilled players.
- Flexible player rosters – to address inequities in player ability if necessary and to allow borrowing of players in case of absentees. Total team size can then be kept smaller.

Specific competition rule modifications are attached.

The philosophy of our program is to focus on process – not outcome. We will therefore be rewarding what should be valued most in sport – self-improvement, effort, fair play, co-operation, positive attitudes and behaviour. To accomplish this, we will have more practices than competitions. The practices will be fun, active and varied and many children will find them more fun than the competitions versus an opposing team.

Since children this age have not usually fully developed their fundamental motor skills, we will be including numerous fun opportunities to develop a variety of motor skills in our warm-up activities. Some may appear to have little relevance to our sport, but are important to overall development in order to enjoy a lifetime of sport and physical activity.

Players are expected to arrive 30 minutes prior to competition time for a pre-game warm up that will include the opportunity to develop fundamental skills in addition to competition warm-up.

The success of the program will depend on your help and support. We may require your assistance (or substitute) in some of the practice and warm-up activities to get the proper adult to child ratio necessary for a good learning environment. It is not necessary to be knowledgeable about our sport. It will also be beneficial if you encourage your child to practice at home with family or with friends and to participate in other sports to develop a broad base of fundamental sport skills.

The parent booklet you have received will provide additional ideas on how you can assist us in ensuring your child has a positive sport experience.

If you have questions, the coaches will be very happy to talk with you.

Here's to a FUN, ACTION-PACKED enjoyable year for your child!



A Word About Competition

- Competition is healthy if there is a good chance of success. For young children that makes small group activities or lead-up games more appealing than adult versions of team competitions, where strategies and tactical skills are necessary to succeed. Putting children in competitive situations prior to having the basic fundamental skills necessary is setting them up to fail. It makes little sense to put children into official competitions prior to having adequate individual skills required in such a competition. Example: being placed in ball games before they can catch or throw – hockey games before they can skate – soccer games before they can dribble or kick – basketball games before they can bounce or pass a ball.

“Before students learn the rules of complex (adult versions) games and sports, they should learn the skills that will allow them to play these games enjoyably and with confidence.”

(Saskatchewan Elementary Physical Education Curriculum -1999)

Competition Progressions

- Start with simple individual skill competitions – catching, throwing, kicking, shooting.
 - Combine skill combinations – catch with foot on base, jump and catch, receive then send, controlling an object while moving.
 - Simple offence and defense situations – lead-up games.
 - Games with complex rules and specialized positions.
- When children are ready to compete, the focus should be on competing with oneself rather than others.
 - Putting children in competitive situations prior to proper fundamental skill development leads to “coping” skills. Skills that at this stage of development will be most successful in beating others, but long term will not be appropriate for success or enjoyment. Example: in a baseball/softball competition, tossing or rolling the ball underhand to first base instead of throwing it overhand.
 - Team competition for children requires major modifications (often creative modifications) from traditional adult rules for the following reasons:
 - It is more fun and enjoyable when scores are close.
 - Children like a lot of scoring opportunities for everyone involved.
 - Children do not have the fundamental skills to implement team strategies.
 - Children need numerous repetitions to develop individual skills in game situations.
 - Children do not have the cognitive maturity to perform many of the decision-making tasks required in the adult version of the competition.
 - Children do not have the physical strength or aerobic capacity to be successful under adult conditions.
 - The co-operative competitive model should be encouraged – seeking excellence together. We do our best against someone else who is also doing their best. That way everyone is “successful”.



Turning Adult Versions of Competition into Games for Kids

Coakley (1980) found the following characteristics when studying games organized informally by children (no adult intervention).

1. Extensive action resulting in very high scores.
2. Close scores with both teams having a chance to win late in the contest.
3. High degree of action among all participants, not just a skilled few.
4. Numerous opportunities to affirm friendships with teammates and opponents.

This information indicates that modeling organized children's sport activities around what they want instead of the adult model would provide more enjoyable experiences for all participants. "Games" not adult-like competitions provide wonderful opportunities for children to learn a variety of motor and social skills. The younger the child, the more adult versions of competitions must be modified to provide the action, repetitions and fun necessary for them to provide a learning environment as well as be appealing to children. Competitions in sports that are inherently inactive, without strong fundamental skills, (softball/baseball, volleyball) are especially challenged to be creative and innovative. The traditional nine player-a-side, T-ball or parent-pitch competition with children who cannot catch or throw provide more inaction than action and little opportunity to get the repetitions necessary to learn.

Following are **modification ideas** (to give ideas to program designers);

Equipment:

- Change weight and size.
 - Smaller/lighter basketballs, balls, bats, soccer balls, pucks; rings make it easier to use correct skill technique (nerf equipment for very young children)
 - Increase size of contact surface (bats, sticks, rackets, clubs)
- Use softer equipment
 - Softballs/baseballs – softer balls aren't hit as hard and since they have less chance of injury, encourage correct catching technique.
 - Softer soccer balls encourages heading the ball and allows learning without danger of injury.
- Enlarge target size to promote more scoring – baskets, goals.
- Bright colours appeal to young children – yellow balls are easier for children to track.

Space:

- Reduce size of playing area – cross-ice/cross-court/cross-field .
- Reduce distance from target – distance between bases, free throw line, penalty kicks, race distances.
- Reduce height of target – volleyball, basketball, soccer nets.



Time:

- Reduce time to adapt to lower levels of aerobic maturity.
- Use scheduled time to incorporate variety of skill development opportunities in an extended “pre-game” warm-up. Bonus is that players are trained to arrive 30-40 minutes prior to competition time.
- In baseball/softball, change offence/defence on scheduled time instead of outs to preserve as much action as possible.

Numbers:

- Reduce team size to promote more repetitions and provide more scoring opportunities for more children.
- Reduce overall team size so there are few, if any, substitutions necessary. In sports that are inherently inactive, where “running out of steam” is not a factor (baseball/softball), create rules that allow all to be on the field (extras on defence).
- Use more than one ball, puck when possible.
- For individual sports make teams of 3-5 and total their scores to take pressure off individuals.

Rules:

- Maximize scoring opportunities - more chances for low skilled players; higher scores reduce importance of single mistakes.
 - Reduce number of rules, especially rules that reduce action like free-throw in basketball, throw-ins in soccer, time-outs, face-offs, penalties, foul balls.
 - In baseball/softball score points for bases touched
 - In basketball score one point for hitting backboard, two for rim, three for basket (especially if baskets won't lower to suitable children's adaptation).
 - In interactive sports like basketball, soccer, and hockey, add additional points for assists.
 - Use additional goal areas (nets, baskets).
- Equal playing time for all participants regardless of ability. Preferably beginner and novice competitions are modified so nobody is sitting on the bench in team sports (then equal play time is not an issue).
- Maximize the action:
 - Divide teams into groups and play 2-4 “mini-games”, and total the scores to determine a team victory. With this format, children don't have to sit out and it will be easier to match by ability for more equitable play.
 - In baseball/softball implement “no-walks” rule where at 7-8 age it is an “adult from own team pitch” game and at 9-10 age the adult comes in to pitch when there are three balls on the batter. This change increases offence resulting in more defensive opportunities as well.
 - In baseball/softball, let batters go to first base even if they strike out to encourage swinging at the ball and provide opportunity to learn base running skills until hitting skills develop.
 - In interactive sports like basketball, soccer, and hockey, play part of the game with a “no dribble” rule to maximize passing and inclusiveness of all players.



- Keep scores close and/or reduce dominance of highly skilled players:
 - In baseball/softball losing team gets four outs until they get within a specified score.
 - In basketball, soccer, hockey, and ringette, all players have to touch scoring object before the team can score when they get beyond a specified score.
 - Limit number of goals or points a player can get in a game so top players don't dominate (when they reach maximum they will have to focus on developing play-making skills).
 - Only count points by individuals up to a maximum number (limitation of this is that parents or coaches may still be counting).
 - Move dominant players to less strategic positions.
 - Rotate positions with a regular rotational system.
 - In interactive sports like basketball, incorporate "every player must score a point" .
 - Team that is too far ahead or players exceeding individual limits play with non-dominant hand or foot.
 - Flexibility to move players from one team to another.
 - Match lines by ability – best against the best.
 - Give bonus points for correct technique.
 - In individual sports, have "handicap" systems in which points are scored for performances exceeding average personal score.
 - Give points for demonstrations of "fairplay".
- De- emphasize competition by not using officials for games involving children under nine.
- Provide special training for officials working children's competitions:
 - How to "loosen" up the rules to allow for more action. Example: larger strike zone in ball; fewer fouls in basketball and soccer (as long as injury does not become a factor); off-sides in soccer and hockey.
 - How to explain the call to children quickly, positively, and in easy to understand language.
 - Allow coaches on the playing surface to provide immediate, private feedback and to help direct play if necessary.



Ideas for “Achievement” Days; or “Jamborees”

- Use a “theme” that runs throughout the activities. Example: Star Wars, Disney, Olympics, Circus, Special Holidays, and Around the World.
- Set up various skill stations where players compete as a team rather than as individuals – total team scores are compiled. Each player on each team gets an equal number of repetitions or sees how many repetitions he or she can do in specified amount of time. Team average can be used if it is not possible to have equal number of players on each team. Caution: Use a format to ensure children aren’t standing in line waiting a turn.

Baseball/Softball Skills:

- Throwing – distance, accuracy, speed (if radar gun available)
- Running – timed around bases
- Catching – number of catches from a specified distance
- Hit – for distance – points depend on line they hit it over

Basketball/Hockey/Soccer Skills:

- Timed Dribble – weave through or around markers
- Shoot – at targets at various distances
- Pass – One point for every three consecutive accurate passes

Volleyball/Racket/Paddle Skills:

- Accuracy serve
- Keep it up (One point every time the ball is kept up four times in a row)

Football Skills:

- Punt for distance
- Accuracy throws

Bowling or Curling Skills:

- Roll ball at targets (for curling in a gym, slide out on socks and roll object at targets)



General Skills:

- Timed runs
 - Double leg bounds for distance
 - Vertical jumps for height
 - Obstacle courses
 - Timed agility
 - Various walks (lame dog, seal, bear, etc.)
-
- Set up some stations that are “fun” lead-up game type activities.
 - Include modified round-robin competitions if participants are 7 or older.
 - Include campfires, sing-a-longs, hot-dogs, drinks.
 - Include cultural awareness activities. Celebrate our diversity through:
 - Music
 - Food
 - Ethnic dancing
 - Traditional activities or sports
 - Special guest to demonstrate/explain traditions, costumes, etc.
 - Opportunities for children to try traditional activities
 - Include non-specific sport skills as well.
 - If necessary to achieve equity for team competitions in the 9-10 category, have coaches rate players prior to jamboree, then teams are formed according to ability by organizers, with players being assigned to teams when they arrive.
 - Team awards might be:
 - Total scores for skills
 - Team spirit
 - Fair play
 - Hustle

