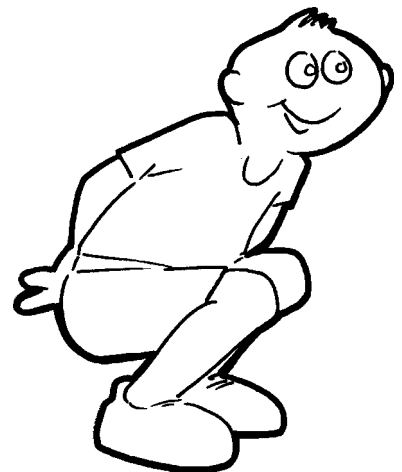


Delivery Strategies & Parent Orientation

- Assessment
- Strategic Plan
- Sample Promotional Pamphlet
- Orientation Outline



PROVINCIAL SPORT GOVERNING BODIES – DELIVERY STRATEGY

Following are suggestions to assist Provincial Sport Governing Bodies (PSGBs) in taking a leadership role in improving the quality of children's sport programs.

ASSESS THE NEED

To assess the need for improvement in offering **quality** programming for children 10 and under, complete the self-assessment tool that is provided in the resource manual – study guidelines. (Pg. 18-23)

PRIORITIZE AREAS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

An effective curriculum is the #1 priority for every sport.

If your sport does not have detailed, progressive, user-friendly lesson plans for beginning coaches, then make it a top priority.

If your sport has lesson plans but they don't include a broad-based skill component of some kind (i.e. manipulative skills in a sport that doesn't use them) that must be improved.

If the competition component of your sport doesn't meet the guidelines, then some creativity may be required so competition modifications are age-appropriate (most team sports fall into this category).

Lesson plans are likely to be an important component of change in this area as well.

If your sport has all of the above, perhaps you just need to improve the delivery process, which would likely include an adult education component for coaches/parents to make it more effective.

NOTE: Keep in mind that your sport may be delivered at the community level, without any affiliation with the PSGB. Although these groups may not be members of your association, the quality of the programming they provide has a tremendous effect on both the image and long term development of your sport. It is not only in the best interest of the PSGBs but it is also their responsibility to take a leadership role in providing quality programming for children at all levels.

COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT FOR NEED TO IMPROVE

- Educate board of directors – **AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING** (many may not understand or have an interest in this part of the big picture). Emphasize long term benefits to children and sport.
- Financial and human resource **COMMITMENT** from board.
- Development of an **ACTION PLAN**.
- Resistance to change is natural. The more effort that is put into implementation processes the greater the chance of success.
- Use the **awareness** (acknowledgement that change is occurring), **understanding** (why and how), **commitment** (believe it is necessary), **action plan** (time and energy invested to implementation) process to implement change.



STRATEGIC PLAN

A detailed plan will be required to address the following:

- What needs to be improved?
- How it is going to be done?
- Who is going to do it?
- What are the time lines?
- How will it be implemented?
- How will progress be monitored/evaluated?

WHAT NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED?

1. **Possible concern:** Lack of detailed, progressive age-appropriate, user-friendly activity plans to assist beginning coaches in providing age-appropriate, effective activity sessions.

Solution: Use the *A Resource Manual for Sport Leaders* along with sport-specific resources to design an age-appropriate, user-friendly, do-it-yourself resource training manual for 8-10 week programs for each of the 10 and under age levels that are involved in your sport.

Include the following in resource materials you design for coaches:

Background information:

- Hierarchy of skills involved in your sport, from entry level to elite performance; including pre-requisite movement skills, social or psychological skills, and expected age level it should be taught so coaches can see the big picture. What skills - when? What rules - when? What tactics/strategy - when?
- Philosophy of quality children's sport programs
- Break down fundamental sport-specific skills into progressive teaching components
- How to communicate and play with kids
- Teaching cues (child-like cue words) for fundamental motor skills used in lesson plans as well as sport-specific skills to be developed
- Suggestions for alternative equipment

Lesson plans:

- Objectives – skills this particular lesson provides
- Equipment necessary for each lesson to maximize action
- Time frame for each activity to address short attention spans
- Broad-based skill development warm-up games (can be selected from resource manual)
- Variety of sport-specific skill development activities – fun age-appropriate “games”
- Follow the **VARIETY** principle:
 - V Variety
 - A Activity maximized
 - R Resources maximized
 - I Individualized
 - E Effective instruction – teaching progressions, cues and age-appropriate feedback
 - T Time allotted for each activity
 - Y Yippee it was FUN



2. **Possible Concern:** Sport specific lesson plans are available but they do not incorporate broad-based movement skills that all children should learn through involvement in sport – various locomotion and movement skills, manipulative skills such as kicking, throwing, catching, striking (outlined in “warm up activities” in introduction module of resource manual. Pg 16)

Solution: Select games from the *A Resource Manual for Sport Leaders* that would provide opportunities to learn skills not currently provided for in current lesson plans. These could be incorporated into the warm-up time of current lesson plans.

3. **Possible Concern:** Too much competition – not enough opportunity to learn skills (most team sports – especially at the community level).

Solution: Use ideas from the *A Resource Manual for Sport Leaders* and the adult education video/resource material to educate sport leaders, coaches, and parents on the characteristics of quality children’s sport programs. Provide coaches with age-appropriate resource materials that will make the activities fun for children.

4. **Possible Concern:** Competition modifications are not creative enough to make them age-appropriate (most team sports). Examples: too much inactivity, children sitting out, dominance by highly skilled players, scores are not close, requires skills children can’t perform yet, emphasis on winning, too many rigid adult-like rules, children developing “coping” skills that are not useful sport skills later on (example: running the ball to first base in softball/baseball) to deal with the importance of outcome (getting runner out), equipment not modified enough to encourage proper use of skills or address safety.

Solution: Use the *Resource Manual for Sport Leaders* to get ideas on age-appropriate modifications. Establish age-appropriate standards for competition modifications for each age level within sport. Design a strategic plan for getting educational information and resources to associations delivering sport programs at the community level.

5. **Possible Concern:** Good lesson plans exist, but adults working with children are not trained in “play leadership” so they don’t know how to communicate with children and maximize the effectiveness of the material.

Solution: Provide a special training course for adults that will be working with children 10 and under. Make sure they receive ideas from the “positive play with children” module from the *Resource Manual for Sport Leaders*.

6. **Possible Concern:** Good lesson plans and age-appropriate guidelines exist but they are not widely used at the community level.

Solution: Design a strategic plan to educate leaders and coaches at the community level who are delivering programs in your sport.



7. **Possible Concern:** Officials are used for competitions, but receive no training on how to communicate with children or assist in making the activity an effective learning opportunity.

Solution: Design a special official education-training program. Recruit officials specifically for the 10 and under program.

8. **Possible Concern:** Good programs exist, coaches are trained, but parents don't understand the philosophy of healthy children's sport programs. Some parents' behaviours are detrimental to a positive sport experience for children.

Solution: Design a strategic plan to educate parents and/or other adults on the philosophy and characteristics of healthy children's sport programs.

- Use information in the *Resource Manual for Sport Leaders*.
- Tap into the Parent Education Program – video; resource material

HOW IS IT GOING TO BE DONE?

- Identify resources: financial and human.
- Request Sask Sport Inc.'s "Children in Sport Skills Development" Grant application form. Check for possible future grants from Sask Sport Inc.
- Using guidelines on the grant application form and information in *Resource Manual for Sport Leaders* create a plan for a new program or to enhance an existing program that will address concerns arising as a result of the assessment or that have been identified through other means.
- Pursue potential funding opportunities through other sources – a possibility with some effort because of the importance and current emphasis on the health and well being of children and families.
 - Jeux Canada Games Grant
 - Health and/or family associated organizations
 - Commercial sponsorship – community conscious companies; health related companies
 - Associated Entities Fund – regional affiliation, good for minor sport or community associations not provincial associations
 - Foundations



WHO IS GOING TO DO IT?

- The person (s) creating resource materials will have to possess the following:
 - Understand the rationale for required improvement and have a strong desire to make a difference
 - Technical expertise
 - Believe in the “child centered” philosophy for children’s sport
 - Believe in the importance of the multilateral approach to both the enjoyment of children in current programs and for the long-term development of athletes
 - Experience working with children
 - Ability to turn technical information into “play” or “games” activities for children
 - Writing ability
 - Research ability – willingness to use resources outside specific-sport material
 - Organizational skills
 - Good verbal communication skills
- Potential program creators
 - Current staff if they have time and possess above skills
 - Volunteer – who has a special interest and a lot of time to devote to such a project
 - Contract out to someone with above skills

WHAT ARE THE TIMELINES?

- Obtaining support
- Obtaining funding
- Securing resource person to create necessary sport specific resource materials
- Outline of content of resource material designed
- Completion of resource material
- Possible pilot projects and refinement processes
- Monitoring progress at critical points in the strategic plan
- Identification of all possible delivery agents of the new program
- Education of delivery agents
- Establishment, implementation and monitoring of marketing and delivery plan
- Evaluation processes – short and long term



HOW WILL IT BE IMPLEMENTED? ACTION PLAN

WHAT? HOW? WHO? WHEN? WITH WHAT?

- Identification of leaders in the sport who have the power to implement change
- Implement awareness and understanding component for leaders – determine their commitment
- Identification of possible delivery stakeholders
 - PSGB membership
 - Community associations – urban and rural
 - Minor sport organizations within community associations
 - Recreation departments
 - PAZ (Provincial Association of Zones)
 - Schools
- Identification of potential promotional marketing tools
 - Current sport network newsletters – PSGB, Coaches Assoc. (CAS), Sask. Parks and Recreation Assoc.(SPRA), Provincial Association of Zones (PAZ), community associations, Sask Sport Inc., Sask. Sport Medicine and Sport Science Program, Sask. Physical Education Assoc.(SPEA), PSGB minor sport organizations, education system, Sask. Assoc. of Recreational Professionals (SARP), health districts
 - Media
 - Stakeholder AGMs or membership meetings
 - Conferences
 - Internet
 - Coaches
 - Parents
 - Administrators
 - Officials
 - Endorsements from successful “name” athletes or coaches
 - Cartoon or children’s adventure stories to accompany program
 - pamphlets – make sure promotional pamphlets are designed to attract interest, **focus on the FUN, ACTION** component (pictures of children having fun if possible) include information on why the program meets the needs of children, is well organized and easy to follow. The PSGB logo and contact information might be included, but should not be the primary focus. Sample included at the end of this module (compliments of Shirley Kowalski). This pamphlet is two –sided and folds into three sections.



- Establish education process
 - Use the **awareness, understanding, commitment, action plan** model to develop a long-term strategy to educate coaches, parents, and administrators in the importance of the philosophy behind any changes that are necessary. Example: Most team sport parents do not understand the concept that for ALL children to “have fun while learning” the current format of emphasizing competition versus another team requires change – it may mean the new format is less “entertaining” for adults until they understand the philosophy.
 - Design promotional material outlining philosophy of healthy children’s sport programs, guidelines for sport-specific program, and resource materials available. Tap into available resource material in this manual.
 - Design specialized coach education orientations to assist coaches working with 10 and under age groups. Content should include the following:
 - Philosophy of healthy children’s sport programs
 - How to play with kids
 - Characteristics of children with resulting modifications necessary at age level they are coaching
 - Familiarity with resource material
 - How to use technical information in resource material effectively (gym session)
 - How to communicate with parents – illicit their “buy in”
 - How to conduct parent orientation meetings – information on available parent orientation resources (outline of parent orientation in this manual pg. 58)
 - Design content for parent orientation meetings to assist coaches and administrators with parent education process (this may be the biggest challenge – especially in team sports).
- Plan for continuous adult education program to ensure forward progress.
- Develop strategies to deal with potential problems.
- Target some key locations and illicit support for a pilot project.
- Focus on pilot project areas to ensure success and future support – especially if drastic changes are necessary.
- Make refinements as necessary then prepare to expand delivery of the program.
- Make direct contact with anyone who delivers your sport programs at the community level to start the education process.



HOW WILL PROGRESS BE MONITORED AND EVALUATED?

- Evaluation should measure progress and identify future additions or deletions
- Establish what needs to be evaluated and monitored
 - Development of resource materials
 - User-friendliness of resource materials
 - Refinement of resource material
 - Continuous financial and board support
 - Coach education process and effectiveness
 - Use and effectiveness of parent education tools – more parents display model sport parent behaviour
 - Continuous expansion of program at community level across the province
 - Support from other delivery stakeholders
 - Understanding, acceptance and implementation of the philosophy behind healthy children's sport programs by adults in the system
- Assign specific monitoring and evaluation duties to individuals
- Evaluation/monitoring tools
 - Questionnaires
 - Interviews
 - Observation
 - Report procedures
 - Accountability procedures
 - Research - if funds available



LEVEL 2

NOVICE (7-8 years)

Ages 7-8 need special programs to address the following:

- Limited ability to catch, throw, hit.
- Traditional “game” focus programs offer little opportunity for repetitions necessary to learn.
- Correct fundamental skill development avoids bad habits.
- Parent pitch only – does not prepare pitchers.
- De-emphasizing competition puts emphasis on skill development where it should be for children.
- Short attention spans demand variety and action.

MODIFICATIONS

- Varied lesson plans provided for 45 minute skill development sessions.
- 45 minute adult pitch or machine pitch scrimmage vs opposing team.
- Pitching included in 45 minute skill development session.
- All players bat each inning.
- Seven pitches to hit fair ball – if ball is not hit, player goes to 1B provided an attempt is made to hit at least four.
- All players play defence – no bench sitters.
- **Shout Praise**
- **Whisper Criticism**

LEVEL 3

WEE PEE (9–10 years)

Ages 9-10 need modifications to address the following:

- Real learning takes place at practice not competition.
- Players have limited fundamental skills.
- Softball has many fundamental skills to be assimilated before they can be used in complex competition.
- Young players have limited abilities to work in complex situations.

MODIFICATIONS

- Variety of activities provided in lesson plan format for a 30 minute pre-game warm-up which trains players to arrive at least 20 minutes prior to game time.
- Maximum six runs per inning.
- Four outfielders allowed.
- No walks. Reverts to adult pitch after three balls. Batters can strike out.
- Pitchers limited to nine outs per games to encourage the development of more pitchers.
- Coach allowed on diamond to help direct.
- 12 runs up - other team gets four outs until caught up.
- No league standings.
- Tournaments in round-robin format only.

LEARN TO PLAY (LTP)

SOFTBALL PROGRAM

A Softball Skills Development Program
for Children Under 10



LOTS OF FUN!

LOTS OF ACTION!



Three hour orientation sessions are available for coaches and parents. The orientations are a valuable tool for introducing the philosophy and activities in LTP. Orientations include a gym session where adults are introduced to methods of teaching softball skills to young children.

CHILDREN WANT...

- **ACTION**
- **FUN**
- **VARIETY**
- **A LOT OF SCORING**
- **CLOSE SCORES**
- **TO LEARN**
- **SAFETY**
- **TO BE SUCCESSFUL**
- **TO FEEL GOOD**

LTP ANSWERS THEIR CALL !!!

**Children must learn to co-operate
Before they can learn to compete.**

HIGHLIGHTS OF LTP

- Varied, FUN, activities in prepared, lesson plans.
- Three flexible ability levels.
- Soft-core ball for safety and to encourage proper use of new skills.
- Scheduled parent involvement to provide maximum repetitions necessary to learn.
- Simple activities provide high success rates.
- Pitcher development.
- Modifications to match characteristics of children.
- Emphasis on skill development encourages proper skills rather than the development of “coping” skills that are often the negative result of traditional “game” focus programs.
- Conducive to co-ed play.
- Gradual progressions and introduction to competition.

LEVEL 1

BEGINNER (5-6 years)

Ages 5-6 need special programs to address the following:

- Difficulties tracking objects and judging velocity, resulting in inability to catch a ball unless thrown very accurately and softly.
- Very short attention spans.
- Low levels of fine co-ordination.
- Limited ability to think abstractly and think ahead.
- Limited ability to make decisions.

MODIFICATIONS

- 12 players on the diamond for small group activities and lead up games.
- 2:1 player/adult ratio for large number of repetitions.
- Introduction to basic skills and group activity.
- Simple activities, are less demanding – encourage use of new skills and provide high success rates.
- Allows for the sequential development within the tolerance level of the child.
- One hour time limit.
- Lead up games to:
 - build confidence
 - involve ALL players
 - modify easily
 - simple to complex activities

FUN!!! ACTION !!!



PARENT ORIENTATION OUTLINE

Details are available with the orientation guide in *A Resource Guide for Parents*. Accompanying the orientation guide is a video and Parent Booklet with information on how to be a model sport parent.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY MINOR SPORT ORGANIZATION DELIVERING CHILDREN’S SPORT PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THERE IS A PARENT ORIENTATION PROCESS IN PLACE AND THAT IT IS CONSISTENTLY USED.

SUGGESTED DELIVERY STRATEGIES

- Hold orientations for various age groups instead of lumping all the “10 and under” information into one session. Parents are interested in what applies to their child at the current time and it will allow the session to be shorter.
- Possible orientation formats
 - “association” orientations, conducted by someone well versed in philosophy and technical basics, where coaches and parents are educated together.
 - “team” orientations where each team’s coaches conduct orientation– if coaches are well enough informed to pass on philosophy of healthy children sport programs.

SUGGESTED CONTENT 45 – 60 minutes

- Philosophy behind guidelines for healthy children’s sport programs
- Guidelines for age-appropriate programs
- Modifications necessary to meet guidelines
 - practice modifications
 - competition rule modifications
- Roles and expectations of coaches/parents/participants
- Parent Video
- Questions
- Handouts
 - team lists, addresses, phone numbers
 - information from *A Resource Guide for Parents*
 - practice and competition schedules
 - maps if necessary

