

GETTING AN ACTIVE START



Participants receive early instruction in basic motor skills and age appropriate play

Focus: Develop play skills through movement and daily physical activities **Skills:** Walking, swimming, running, jumping, balancing

Program considerations: Program leaders should prepare a large variety of activities that emphasize fun and play, and be able to adapt each activity to be age-appropriate for all individuals. Participants will become comfortable and confident with increased repetitions of each activity. Teach activities that can be done at home with minimal equipment.

Recommended: SOC Young Athletes Program Leaders Training (in development); NCCP Fundamental Movement Skills

FUNDAMENTALS



Participants are involved in a structured physical activity program a couple times per week

Focus: Basic sport skills (kicking, catching, gliding, agility, balance, speed, coordination, jumping, throwing, buoyancy)

Coaching considerations: Emphasize speed and power in a fun games setting (ex. Marching with high knees; Be Superman and jump on 'buildings'). Activities should include time for discovery (ex. What are all the ways you can throw a ball?). Choose activities that require little instruction and can be implemented quickly. Use a large variety of sports, giving time for many repetitions of each activity. Skills (physical & social) should be introduced by modeling desired behaviour (ex. Balancing on one foot; Verbal encouragement) and asking participants to imitate the example.

Recommended: SOC Young Athletes Program Leaders Training (in development); NCCP Fundamental Movement skills

Athletes participate in 2 to 3 seasonal sports and compete within their club, city and region

Focus: Develop basic sport skills specific to 2 or 3 sports

Coaching considerations: Emphasize core strength and good posture (ex. Work on straight tall body during stretches). Informally test fitness and sport-skills roughly 2-3x/year; keep records of your observations. Introduce athletes to competitions outside of the club, focus on the athlete's enjoyment and familiarization with the competition experience. Ask athletes to take responsibility for aspects of their training (ex. Running shoes should be on before practice starts). Consider physical strengths/weaknesses and associated disabilities when guiding athletes in their sport selections.

Recommended: SOC NCCP Community and/or Competition Sport Workshop; NSO NCCP Community stream

LEARNING TO TRAIN



Athletes compete in around 2-3 complementary sports at the regional and/or provincial/territorial level; Generic competitions

Focus: Consistent quality training for 2 or 3 sports, focusing on sport-specific skills & sport-specific fitness

Coaching considerations: Develop an annual training plan for each athlete, organizing training so athletes compete 4-6x/year and peak for one competition. Monitor the athletes understanding and following of basic sport rules. Conduct formal fitness and sport-skill testing 2-3x/year; keep records of each test and monitor progress. Seek out appropriate generic competition opportunities. Together with the athlete and caregiver, map out a pre-competition routine (ex. Go to the bathroom 30 minutes before competition then sit with team). Sport training should consistently involve competitive situations; Rehearsing the competition routine before will help the athlete become comfortable with pre-competition plan.

Recommended: SOC NCCP Competition Sport Workshop; NSO NCCP Recommended Course

TRAINING TO TRAIN



Athletes commit to 1 sport and compete at the provincial/territorial and/or national levels, some generic sport competitions

Focus: To become a competent competitor while learning sport-specific skills as defined by the NSO

Coaching considerations: Training sessions need to target sport-specific technical, tactical, physical, and psychological elements (ex. Defensive strategies in soccer; How to do slow breathing prior to a sprint). Ensure athletes are responsible for their own sport equipment. Use test records to individualize an annual training plan for each athlete. Organize blocks of training so that each athlete competes approximately 4-6x/year and peaks for two major competitions. Use a variety of methods to teach understanding of sport rules (ex. Watch a competition together and point out examples of rules). Emphasize a commitment to healthy living (ex. Daily nutrition diaries).

Recommended: SOC NCCP Competition Sport Workshop; NSO NCCP Recommended Course

LEARNING TO COMPETE



Athletes compete in one sport at the Special Olympics National Games, Canada Games, and various NSO competitions

Focus: Optimum preparation through year-round, high intensity, sport-specific training

Coaching considerations: Choose a few competitions for each athlete and organize individualized annual training plans so that athletes 'peak' for each competition. Emphasize mastery of sport-specific skills in a variety of conditions: Environmental (ex. Plan training sessions at different times during the day, in good and bad weather,); Strategic (Ex. Corner kicks in soccer), Tactical (ex. Time and score situations- It is the end of the 8th inning and your team is down by two runs). Use monthly fitness testing and competition results to monitor burnout, overtraining, and injury. Help athletes manage their time outside of sport (ex. Daily schedule with regards to work, training, school, and family).

Recommended: SOC NCCP Competition Sport Workshop; NSO NCCP Recommended Course

TRAINING TO COMPETE



Athletes train frequently and participate in around 2-3 serious competitions per year, at the national and international level

Focus: Podium performances and personal bests

Coaching considerations: Choose approximately 2 or 3 major competitions for each athlete to compete in and peak for every year. Organize individualized annual training plans including scheduled breaks in the athlete's training to ensure optimum health and recovery. Replicate key features of international competition in training sessions to maximize the athlete's familiarity and understanding (ex. Use international rules in scrimmages; Compete against athletes who speak other languages; Compete in unfamiliar environments). Provide precise instruction and monitor athlete's adherence to sport-specific nutrition and rest guidelines. Encourage athletes to provide input and feedback about their training, help the athlete understand why they are doing certain things.

Recommended: SOC NCCP Competition Sport Workshop; NSO NCCP Recommended Course

TRAINING TO WIN



Athletes participate in a variety of low-intensity activities with the goal of being active at least 5 times a week for 60 minutes

Focus: Lifelong physical activity with a variety of sport skills and activities that they enjoy

Program considerations: Participants in this stage are generally older, having moved through at least Active Start and FUNDamentals. Activity choices should focus on social opportunities, enjoyment, physical fitness, and maintenance of strength.

Participation is primarily recreational and any competition is low intensity with the focus on fun.

Recommended: SOC NCCP Community Sport workshop; NCCP Fundamental Movement Skills

