



HOCKEY BEGINNERS STARTER PACK

**A PARENT-FRIENDLY GUIDE TO
SURVIVING YOUR FIRST YEAR
IN YOUTH HOCKEY — CREATED
BY THE PUCK HAUS.**

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Welcome to the Hockey Family!

Congratulations on joining the exciting world of youth hockey! This guide is designed to help you navigate your first season and make it a positive experience for both you and your child. Get ready for a winter full of fun, teamwork, and maybe even a few goals!

10 Things I Wish I Knew Before Starting Hockey

1. You don't need to buy everything brand new — used gear is completely normal. Check out [Sideline Swap!](#)
2. Kids grow fast. Like... really fast. Don't overinvest, and don't oversize for them to grow into it.
3. Rinks are freezing. Dress warm or you'll be miserable.
4. Your kid may fall a LOT. It's part of the process.
5. Hockey has more equipment than any other youth sport.
6. Every rink has slightly different rules and vibes.
7. Hockey parents are some of the most welcoming people you'll meet.
8. Practices run early, late, and everywhere in between. Always check the schedule twice.
9. It's okay if your kid is nervous. Most of them are.
10. It gets easier every single week.

Essential Equipment Checklist

Make sure your player has all the necessary equipment before hitting the ice. Here's a handy checklist:

- ☐ **Helmet with Cage or Bubble:** Properly fitted and certified.
- ☐ **Mouthguard:** Essential for protection. (Not really required until 12U)
- ☐ **Shoulder Pads:** Protects the shoulders and chest.
- ☐ **Elbow Pads:** Protects the elbow joints.

- [] **Gloves:** Hockey gloves are a must.
- [] **Pants:** Hockey pants with padding.
- [] **Jock/Jill Strap:** For protection. (Usually Attached to Base Layers)
- [] **Shin Guards:** Protects the shins.
- [] **Skates:** Properly fitted and sharpened.
- [] **Neck Guard:** Provides neck protection. (Can find a Base Layer with Neck guards)
- [] **Hockey Socks:** To hold up shin guards.
- [] **Jersey:** Team jersey.
- [] **Stick:** Appropriate size and flex. (Cut to size)
- [] **Tape:** Stick and Sock Tape.

The Dressing Order: A Step-by-Step Guide

Getting dressed in full hockey gear can be a challenge for beginners. Everyone does this differently, but here's something to start off with.

1. **Jock/Jill Strap / Base Layers:** Ensures proper protection.
2. **Neck Guard:** Secure around the neck
3. **Shin guards:** Ensure they're secure
4. **Hockey Socks:** Pull them up to your thighs.
5. **Pants:** Over the shin guards and socks
6. **Skates:** Make sure they fit snug. (Some people prefer to tuck tongue under shin pad.)
7. **Shoulder Pads:** Over the head and onto the shoulders.
8. **Elbow Pads:** Secure around the elbows.
9. **Jersey:** Over the shoulder pads.
10. **Helmet:** Fasten securely.
11. **Gloves:** On the hands.
12. **Mouthguard:** Insert into mouth (after the helmet)

How Often Should You Sharpen Skates?

There's no single rule, but here are general guidelines:

- **Beginners:** every 4–6 hours of ice time
- **Learn-to-Play:** every 3–5 hours
- **Older/Competitive kids:** every 2–4 hours

Signs they need a sharpening:

- They keep slipping
- Stops feel hard
- Edges feel dull to the touch

Rink Etiquette: Being a Good Hockey Parent

Being a supportive hockey parent involves more than just cheering. Here are a few key points of rink etiquette:

- **Be Positive:** Encourage all players, not just your own.
- **Respect the Coaches:** Avoid interfering with their instructions during practices or games. Apply the 24 hour rule. If you disagree, wait 24 hours until talking with the coach about it.
- **Stay in Designated Areas:** Refrain from entering the bench or ice surface.
- **Control Your Emotions:** Hockey can be intense, but keep your reactions positive and constructive.
- **Support the Officials:** Referees are doing their best; avoid yelling or arguing with them.
- **Clean Up After Yourself:** Keep the rink tidy and dispose of trash properly.
- **Let the Kids Play:** Resist the urge to over-coach from the sidelines.

Understanding the Game: Basic Rules and Terminology

Key Terms

- **Puck:** The hard rubber disc.
- **Goal:** When the puck crosses the goal line.
- **Offside:** When a player enters the offensive zone before the puck.
- **Icing:** When a player shoots the puck from behind their own center red line, across the opposing team's goal line, without it being touched by another player.
- **Penalty:** A punishment for breaking a rule.

Basic Rules

- Players advance the puck by skating and passing.
- A goal is worth one point.
- Games are divided into periods (usually three).
- Penalties result in the offending player sitting in the penalty box for a specified time.
- The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins.



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The Hockey Laundry + Smell Guide

The golden rule: never leave gear in the bag.

What to wash weekly:

- Base layers
- Jerseys
- Socks
- Jock/Jill shorts

What to wash every few months:

- Shoulder pads
- Elbow pads
- Gloves
- Pants
- Shin guards

How to dry gear:

- Use a drying rack
- Keep gear in a ventilated space
- Spray with disinfectant (sports-safe)

What NOT to do:

- Do not leave skates in the car in winter
- Do not machine-dry pads

What to Expect at Your First Practice

1. Arrive **20–30 minutes early**
2. Coaches and helpers will assist with gear if needed

3. Expect some slipping, sliding, and sitting on the ice
4. Your kid might be nervous — totally normal
5. Most programs separate kids by comfort level, not skill
6. Parents usually stay in the stands unless instructed otherwise
7. Expect cold bleachers — bring a blanket or jacket

How to Save Money in Year One

- Start with Learn to Skate or Learn to Play before committing to travel hockey
- Buy used gear wherever possible
- Wait before buying expensive sticks
- Ask the rink about sharpening packages
- Compare program fees across nearby rinks
- Look for gear swaps or local Facebook groups

Hockey Bag Packing Checklist

Before every practice or game, make sure you pack:

- Skates
- Helmet
- Gloves
- Stick
- Pads (shoulder, elbow, shin)
- Hockey pants
- Jerseys
- Socks
- Mouthguard
- Water bottle
- Tape
- Extra laces

Optional:

- Towel
- Deodorizer spray
- Snack

Bonus: First-Year Parent Survival Tips

- Keep a small emergency kit in your car (tape, laces, scissors)
- Pack snacks! Hockey kids are always starving (And if your kid isn't wanting snacks, some sibling, or "rink rat" will! 🙄)
- Bring a blanket for cold rinks
- Save every practice schedule in your phone calendar
- Don't compare your kid to others — every child learns differently

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Hockey Slang Every Rookie Parent Should Know

- **Barn:** The rink.
- **Bucket:** Helmet.
- **Twig:** Hockey stick.
- **Lettuce:** Hair
- **Sweater:** Jersey
- **Chiclets:** Teeth ("Protect the chiclets!").
- **Top Shelf / Bar Down / Top Cheddar:** When a player snipes the puck into the upper part of the net.
- **Duster:** A player who rarely gets ice time.
- **Gino :** A goal.
- **Flow:** Long hockey hair.

- **Bender:** A skater whose ankles bend inward.
- **Hoser:** Classic playful chirp; basically means goofball.
- **Sauce:** A lifted, floating pass.
- **Chirp:** Trash talk.
- **Wheel:** To skate fast (“He can wheel!”).
- **Snipes:** Nails a great shot.

You're Doing Great

Hockey is a big sport with a big learning curve for parents *and* kids. Every week you'll feel more confident, more prepared, and more knowledgeable.

And remember: this is supposed to be fun.

You've got this.

-The Puck Haus