



Mite (8 & Under) FAQs

Q: How old does my child need to be before starting hockey?

A: That depends on the player. Occasionally we get three-year-olds who hop on the ice and do fine, and sometimes we get five-year-olds who find the noise and the newness of the equipment and ice overwhelming. If your child has done a few successful public skates or has had some skating instruction, he will probably be fine.

Q: Does my child need to know how to skate in order to do your Learn to Play or Hockey 101 programs?

A: Definitely not! There is no minimum skating requirement, and our coaches are great at getting newbies up and going.

Q: What equipment does my player need to participate in the Learn to Play program?

A: All players in all programs require full equipment to get on the ice. This includes an HECC-certified hockey helmet with face protection (usually a cage), shoulder pads, elbow pads, gloves, athletic protector, hockey pants, shin guards, socks, hockey skates, and a stick. You will also want to purchase hockey tape for your stick. We provide the jersey.

Q: Where can I get equipment?

A: Many rinks have pro shops where you can purchase hockey equipment, but we recommend Pure Hockey on Route 46 in Fairfield because of their size, selection, and prices. If you would rather have used equipment, you can try posting on your local garage sale Facebook page or asking friends with hockey players if they have any hand-me-downs. There is a Facebook page called Hockey Swap Essex/Union/Morris where you might be able to find equipment. Whichever way you go, please be sure to purchase a NEW helmet for your player.

Q: My player has participated in a Learn to Play session. What is the next step?

A: The next step after our Learn to Play session is our Developmental Squad. Families have the option to sign up for practices only or for the full program which includes games and tournaments.

Q: My player has done a few Learn to Play sessions. Does it make sense for her to continue with the program, or has she already gotten everything she can out of it?

A: Our coaches strive to split up the players into small groups of similar age and skill so that each child is being challenged without being overly frustrated. We strongly believe that players can't work on their basic skills too much; even NHL players work on skating, passing, shooting, and stickhandling at practice! The stronger a player's foundational skills are, the more successful the player will be.

Q: Do you offer spring hockey?

A: We will have a Learn to Play clinic this spring on Thursdays from 5:45 – 6:45 pm at Codey Arena from 4/25 – 6/13. We will also have Mite Open Hockey on Saturdays which is appropriate for players with at least one year of hockey experience.

Q: I think my child is ready to play on a team. What programs do you offer for him?

A: We offer two travel programs for our 8 & Under players.

- The Developmental Squad (DS) is our introductory travel hockey program. Players on this team have one weeknight practice and one weekend practice most weeks. They participate in the District Mite Jamboree in the fall, which is an opportunity for teams to see where they fit in and which teams would be good competition for them. Once the Jamboree results are released, our Mite Scheduler creates a schedule for each team. Most teams play around 16-20 games and we seek to keep travel to a minimum. At the end of the season, each team participates in our Shamrock Classic tournament at Codey Arena.
- The Advanced Developmental Squad (ADS) is open to our last year Mites (players born in 2011 for the 2019-2020 season). These teams typically have two weeknight practices and one weekend practice. They participate in the Jamboree in the fall and the Shamrock Classic in March, and they also

attend one away tournament during the season. Most teams will play about 20-24 games.

Q: Does my player need to try out for the DS and ADS?

A: This year we are holding multiple Evaluation Skates for our 8 & Under players on 3/27, 3/29, 3/30, 4/4, and 4/6. We will hold parent meetings during each of these skates where we will explain our programs and answer any questions. Players can attend as few or as many of these skates as they like, and every player will be offered a contract for the 2019 – 2020 season.

Q: If you don't cut any players, why do you hold tryouts?

A: The purpose of these skates is for the players and families to get a feel for what Devils Youth is about, and for our staff to see the number, age, and skill level of our players for planning purposes. In addition, the only way for your player to be guaranteed a contract is for him to attend the evaluation skates. While every player who participates in these sessions will have the opportunity to sign a contract, we may or may not have space to add additional players over the spring and summer. Lastly, we will hold parents' meetings while the players are on the ice to explain our program and offer the opportunity to have your questions answered by a member of our staff.

Q: Do I need to pre-register my player for the evaluation skates?

A: We strongly encourage parents to pre-register their 8 & Under players for the evaluation skates at <https://devilsyouth.sportngin.com/register/form/518426141>. There is no cost for 8 & Under players to try out and therefore no financial penalty if you fail to pre-register, but we will still need you to fill out the online registration prior to your child getting on the ice and parents don't usually enjoy completing the form while a line builds up behind them.

Q: What does it mean to be "offered a contract?"

A: In order for a player to be rostered with our organization, their parent or guardian must sign a player contract. We send a link to the contract to each player's family, and the documents are completed online. The contract includes personal, medical, and emergency contact information as well as a promise to abide by the rules of USA Hockey, our District, and our Club. Upon signing a contract, the parent or guardian acknowledges that their player will participate as a member of the Devils Youth organization for the coming season and that they

will fulfill their financial obligation in full. We acknowledge that we will have a spot for the player at the agreed-upon level of play and we will offer the most high-quality program we can. At the Mite level we give parents fourteen days to sign their contracts; at Squirt and above the contracts must be executed within 24 hours.

Q: How will I know which team my player is on?

A: We do not assign players to specific teams until the fall. A lot can happen both physically and developmentally between March and September – especially with our youngest players – and we believe that we can make more accurate assessments, and therefore better placements, if we wait until the fall. The coaches will evaluate players during Summer Hockey School and the first week or two of the season, and families will be notified of their team assignments by email prior to the Jamboree.

Q: What is Summer Hockey School?

A: Every year we hold three weeks of Summer Hockey School (SHS) in August; this year camp will be held during the weeks of 8/5, 8/12, and 8/19. SHS is not included in the tuition for the DS, but players can enroll at a reduced cost. SHS is included in the tuition for the ADS, and if your player is unable to attend the week assigned to her team we will do our best to make arrangements for her to come a different week. Sessions run Monday – Thursday and the 8 & Under players typically skate in the morning from about 8:45 – 11:00 am.

Q: How are the teams selected?

A: Typically we will do a “waterfall evaluation,” meaning that we will select a top team, a second team, and so on. If we have four or more teams, we will usually try to create even teams after the second team.

Q: Do you allow players to “play up?”

A: Depending on a number of factors, we may or may not allow a small number of 2012 players to participate in the ADS. However, we do not allow Mite-eligible players to play at the Squirt level.

Q: What will the schedule be for next season?

A: Every season we create a new schedule from scratch, so it’s impossible to say for sure what it will be for next year. When creating the schedule, we lay out our

ice and assign the youngest teams to the earliest ice slots. Our 8U teams, particularly the DS, will generally practice at Codey Arena because that is where all our equipment is, but these teams will often play home games at RWJBarnabas Health Hockey House in Newark because the players love playing on the Devils' ice. The game schedule will depend on our ice availability as well as the availability of our opponents, so that can vary quite a bit from one year to the next. We encourage you to visit our website at www.devilsyouth.com and look at our calendar to get a general idea of how the schedule might look. You can view the schedule by clicking on INFO -> CALENDAR and then selecting the team calendar you wish to view from the TAG MENU at the bottom of the page.

Q: How long is the season?

A: Aside from the week of SHS in August, the season begins the weekend after Labor Day (9/7/2019) and ends with the Shamrock Classic (3/16/2020).

Q: My child plays soccer (fall ball, track, field hockey, etc.). Is this a problem?

A: Devils Youth Hockey strongly supports a healthy hockey/life balance. We understand the importance of academics and family time, and we encourage our players to be multi-sport athletes. With that said, we ask that you communicate with us as early as possible regarding potential conflicts, both in general and specifically, so that we can plan accordingly. The players' main commitment is to their teammates, and we expect that families of 8 & Under players will take this commitment seriously, will make every effort to attend as many team functions as possible during the "off-season", and will prioritize travel hockey once fall sports are complete.