



**LTAD Testimonials**

*“With the advance of electronic entertainment, more and more kids are not getting enough exercise, not learning fundamental movement skills and suffering from the effects of being overweight, or worse - obese. This means that kids who join sport for the first time often struggle from the outset. We must change our lifestyle habits starting with increased physical activity at the younger ages.”*

*John, Ottawa*



*“When I was 13, I made the U15 regional competitive soccer team. When I was 14, I didn’t make the cut. Looking back, I played 75 games for 3 different teams that season. It was an obvious case of over competing and under training. No wonder my skills had improved little and I was mentally tired.”*

*Luc, Edmonton*

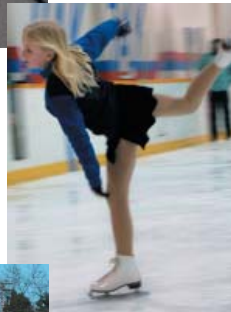


*“I have gone through all the same stages of development as Canada’s other elite athletes. From training hard as a teenager, through learning to compete on the international stage, to standing on the Paralympic podium, my development has taken time and perseverance.”*

*Chantal Petitclerc, Paralympic, Olympic and World Champion*

*“As a kid, I was a typical jock. I spent all weekend out on the rink playing pond hockey and participated in every sport available at school. When I went to University I quickly picked up field hockey and made the varsity team enjoying 4 successful years. A multi-sport background also helped me compete for New Brunswick at the national championships in ball hockey, soccer and hockey.”* **Developing a wide range of fundamental and general sport skills at an early age makes it easy to pick up new sports later in life.**

*Jean, Victoria*



*“When I was 14, I was one of the smallest in my class and while I made the competitive volleyball team, I didn’t see much court time. My parents encouraged me to continue to work hard on my skills and have fun. In grade 10 I started to grow and didn’t stop until I got to be 6’ 3”.*

*With my good skills and new height I began to dominate in my last two years of high school and scholarship offers began to flood in.”* **Late maturing athletes often exceed the performance levels of early maturers as they have more time to focus on skill development.**

*Mike, Moncton*

If you would like to learn more about how you can create the best possible sport for life experience for your children, please visit [www.ltad.ca](http://www.ltad.ca) and access our more

**Information for Parents**

Canadian Sport for Life Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) has been produced by sport experts with many years of experience, working with beginner to national team athletes. It is based on the components of Physical Literacy and it has been adopted by Sport Canada and all provincial and territorial governments. LTAD provides a road map for a better sport experience for all, whether an aspiring Olympian, an aging weekend warrior or participating just for fun. The components of Canadian Sport for Life are not exclusive to athletes; they are for every participant. The result of sports implementing LTAD should be a healthier, more active Canada, with improved national team performances.

**Physical Literacy is...**

*The development of fundamental movement skills and fundamental sports skills that permit a child to move confidently and with control in a wide range of physical activity, sport and dance situations. It also includes the ability to “read” what is going on in their environment and react appropriately to those events.*

**Why is Change Needed?**

Sport makes a major contribution to the health and development of individuals and the communities in which we all live. It provides an opportunity for kids and adults to be active when inactivity rates threaten the health and quality of life of Canadians. Sport also provides participants with valuable lessons on teamwork, fair play and the value of working towards goals. The existing sport system is generally falling short of its potential due to some of the weaknesses explained on the next page.

**Active Start**  
Males & Females  
0 - 6 yrs.  
Fun and varied activity everyday.

**FUNDamentals**  
Males 6-9, Females 6-8 yrs.  
Learn all fundamental movement skills, play many sports, focus on agility, balance, coordination and speed.

**Learning to Train**  
Males 9-12, Females 8-11 yrs.  
Learn overall sport skills as cornerstone of many sports. Play a variety of sports and develop specific skills in three.

**Training to Train**  
Males 12-16, Females 11-15 yrs.  
Build endurance, develop speed and strength towards the end of the stage. Improve sport specific skills. Focus on two sports.

**Training to Compete**  
Males 16-23 +/-, Females 15-21 +/-.  
Optimize fitness preparation and sport, individual and position specific skills. Learn to compete internationally. Focus on one sport.

**Training to Win**  
Males 19+/-, Females 18+/-.  
Ages are sport specific. Podium Performances. One sport.

**Active for Life**  
Any age.  
After becoming physically literate, participate in lifelong physical activity and sport.



### Parents Need to Recognize...

#### Over Competing and Under Training

Many athletes spend too much time resting, traveling, competing and recovering from competition and not enough time preparing for it. In team games players share a puck, ball, or ring, thus limiting skill development. In practice players can have one each.

#### Too Much Emphasis on Winning at Young Ages

Too many coaches and parents focus on the result, rather than performance. This attitude leads to long-term failure as coaches forgo the development of skills to focus on specific game tactics.

#### Inappropriate Training Programs

Too often, adult training programs are imposed on children and boys programs used for girls. Children are not small adults and girls develop differently than boys. Younger athletes (6 to 8/9 years) need to spend more time developing basic movement skills and then (8/9 to 11/12 years) sport specific skills. As athletes get older, the focus should gradually shift towards fitness and tactics.

#### Specialization

As athletes get older, they will need to specialize in 1 or 2 sports if they are to be successful. Younger athletes should participate in several sports and all sports should spend some time developing basic skills such as running, jumping, throwing, balance, agility, coordination and speed. An all around athlete will have the ability to play a variety of sports well and specialize later. An early focus on just one or two sports often leads to injuries, burn-out and limited skill development.

### System Alignment

Coaches of different teams and different sports often compete for an athlete's time and effort, leading to scheduling conflicts and the over-training of athletes. Parents need to understand Canadian Sport for Life LTAD to support alignment of the sports system.

### Factors Parents Should Consider...

**FUNDamentals.** Learning a wide range of movement and sport skills provides the basis for lifelong enjoyment of physical activity and a successful athletic career.

**Specialization.** Athletes should not specialize in one sport too soon.

**Developmental Age.** Children mature at different rates. Early maturers must not get complacent, as late maturing athletes will catch up.

**Trainability.** While coaches need to understand trainability, parents need to educate themselves about proper rest, sleep, fluids and nutrition.

**Physical, Mental, Cognitive and Emotional Development.** Parents need to support the efforts of athletes and encourage fair play, effort, skill development and individual improvements.

**Competition Planning.** Competition should serve the development of the athlete. While athletes should always try to win, winning is not the most important factor - learning from competition is. Athletes who compete too much often train too little. Competition also increases costs.

**System Alignment and Integration.** Coaches need to be informed by parents of a child's other activities so that they can adjust individual training programs.

### No Accidental Champions - Athletes with a Disability (AWAD)

AWADs are first and foremost athletes, and for this reason, virtually everything in the able-bodied LTAD is applicable. Between 10% and 14% of Canadians have a disability and, for optimum health, it is critical that all Canadians, with or without a disability, fully engage in physical activity. Canadians with a disability who aspire to the highest levels of sport performance also need a sport system to help them achieve their goals.



For this reason, and to ensure the long-term health of its population, Canada has created an LTAD model for AWADs.

Athletes, with and without a disability, need to acquire FUNDamental movement and sport skills, or physical literacy, through fun and games, and this needs to be achieved prior to puberty.

#### Children with a disability face difficulties in acquiring FUNDamental skills because:

- overly protective parents, caregivers, rehabilitation facility staff, teachers, and coaches shield them from the bumps and bruises of childhood play.
- adapted physical education is not well developed in all school systems.
- some coaches and programs do not welcome children with a disability to their activities because of a lack of knowledge about how to integrate them.
- it takes creativity to integrate a person with a disability into a group activity where FUNDamental skills are practiced and physical literacy is developed.