



## Mega Hoops Program

### An Introduction to Canadian Sport for Life

Over the past decade, sport science experts have collected a wealth of research on how to create a sporting pathway that leads to both higher achievement in sport and greater health for the nation. This movement has come to be known as Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L). What they have found is a clear – children who are taught the right things at the right times are not only more likely to remain active later in life, but are more likely to reach their sporting potential. This is the logic behind the Long-Term Athlete Development model (LTAD) and the basis for Ontario Basketball’s Mega Hoops Program.

Just as children are taught to read and write, they must learn to be physically literate –to move with competence and confidence in a wide range of physical activities and environments. Physically literate children possess the basic skills to be active for life, as well as the capacity to develop a strong athletic foundation necessary for elite training and performance later in life.

It is recommended that basketball programs for children under the age of 12 place a greater emphasis on developing fundamental movement skills – running, jumping, sliding, pivoting, balancing etc. – than on teaching tactics and strategy (offensive sets, zone defences, screens, etc.). Many of these skills can be practiced and obtained by playing a variety of sports at a young age, and children under the age of 12 should be encouraged to explore and participate in a variety of activities. In short, great athletes make even better basketball players.

Ontario Basketball has been working closely with Canada Basketball and leading experts in the field of sport science and healthy child development to ensure that our programs align with the principles of LTAD and are providing the best possible sporting experience to our members. Enclosed you will find 10 ready-made, fun-filled practice plans developed by Ontario Basketball with Canadian Sport for Life principles in mind.

For more information about the Mega Hoops curriculum, training opportunities for coaches, or how to bring the Mega Hoops program into your school or community group, please contact Melanie Belore, Ontario Basketball’s Coordinator of Community Development at [mbelore@basketball.on.ca](mailto:mbelore@basketball.on.ca),



## Mega Hoops Learn to Train

(ages 8-11 females, 9-12 males)

The goal at this stage of development is for children to master fundamental movement skills and to be introduced to the basic technical/tactical basketball skills. The focus should be on training, with competition used strategically and sparingly as a valuable tool to consolidate skills, practice decision making, and learn how to cope with physical and mental challenges. The coach's primary goal should be to ensure that all players have a fun and positive experience, fostering a love for the game and for physical activity more generally. Participation in other sports should be encouraged, allowing children to continue building a strong athletic base.

Ontario Basketball recommends that Mega Hoop's 10 Learn to Train lesson plans be supplemented by the use of small-sided and modified games at this stage of development. 3-on-3 has been shown to be a better tool for development than traditional 5-on-5 basketball as it allows for the proper teaching of movement and spacing concepts, as well as greater involvement in the game for each player (touches on the ball, number of shots etc.) ultimately leading to greater feelings of competence and enjoyment.

Canada Basketball recommends the following skills be taught at this stage of development:

*Taken from Canada Basketball Athlete Development Model, 2008.*

<p><b>Fundamental movement skills</b> <i>(developed and refined)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agility</li> <li>• Balance</li> <li>• Coordination (throwing &amp; catching)</li> <li>• Proper running technique – forwards, sideways &amp; backwards</li> <li>• Change of speed and direction</li> <li>• Jumping and landing</li> <li>• Starting and stopping Pivoting-front &amp; reverse</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fundamental basketball skills</b></p> <p>Ready Position (without ball)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movement – change of direction, change of pace, faking</li> <li>• Vision, play with eyes up, scanning</li> </ul> <p>Ready Stance (with ball)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Triple threat</li> <li>• Holding the ball</li> <li>• Footwork – pivoting (front &amp; reverse)</li> <li>• Jump stops, stride stops</li> <li>• Starting – being able to push off effectively with both feet</li> </ul>	<p><b>PLAYING PRINCIPLES</b></p> <p><b>Offensive Concepts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playing with a purpose of scoring</li> <li>• Playing 1-on-1</li> <li>• Spacing 3 to 4 metres</li> <li>• Give and go</li> <li>• Cut and replace/fill</li> <li>• Read the defence to attack &amp; score</li> </ul> <p><b>Defensive Concepts</b></p> <p><b>**more time should be spent on offensive concepts than defensive concepts in this stage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce stance</li> <li>• Staying in stance between your player &amp; the basket</li> <li>• Guarding the ball – maintain a gap b/w defender &amp; ball handler</li> <li>• Towards the end of this stage introduce defensive 'triangle' (ball-you-man)</li> <li>• Helping your teammates</li> <li>• Recover to your player when he/she received the ball</li> <li>• Sprinting back on defense</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dribbling</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stationary dribbling right/left hand</li> <li>• Dribbling while moving with left/right hand in all directions</li> <li>• Speed dribble, control dribble, change of direction with left/right</li> <li>• Vision- handle the ball while scanning the floor</li> </ul>	<p><b>Passing and catching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction or refinement of basic stationary passes (chest, bounce, overhead, baseball)</li> <li>• Passing and catching on the move</li> <li>• Passing and catching against an opponent</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Shooting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce 'Ready, Up, In' concepts</li> <li>• Introduce or refine lay-up technique from both sides</li> </ul>	<p><b>Developing One-on-One skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Triple threat stance, squaring to basket</li> <li>• Reading the defense</li> <li>• Ball &amp; foot fakes (small &amp; quick)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Getting open</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moving to get open</li> <li>• Coming to the pass</li> <li>• Pivot to be an offensive threat</li> </ul>