

The background features a large, semi-circular logo for the Hockey Canada Skills Academy. It contains a stylized red maple leaf and a grey silhouette of a hockey player in motion. The text "HOCKEY CANADA SKILLS ACADEMY" is arched over the top, and "CANADA" is written in red block letters at the bottom.

SETTING UP A HOCKEY CANADA SKILLS ACADEMY™



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WHAT IS A HOCKEY ACADEMY?

A hockey academy is an institution that allows students / young hockey players to engage in hockey training during school hours. In many European countries, hockey academies form the base of all hockey development. European hockey academies have been in operation for decades. It has long been known that to develop a talent to its full potential 10,000 training hours are needed. This translates 3 hours of daily training for over 10 years.

Through the co-operation of the Canadian school system, this is now possible. A school has the ability to schedule a timetable that will allow hockey students to participate in daily, semi-weekly or weekly training sessions. A teacher, a coach or both, can run the sessions. The school itself or an independent organization, such as a minor hockey association or a private company, can operate the hockey portion of the program. Training components attached to a hockey academy are very much in line with the role of the school in other areas; to teach and help the students learn and excel.



PHILOSOPHY OF THE HOCKEY CANADA SKILLS ACADEMY™ PROGRAM

At the 1999 Molson Open-Ice Summit in Toronto, the delegation recommended Hockey Canada investigate ways to support the design and delivery of a school-based program that would make use of facilities during regular school hours.

Recommendation # 10 stated:

“Promote cooperative efforts between school boards, local hockey associations and sponsors, to better utilize ice times and school facilities and move towards the development of sport schools.”

This recommendation is now a major priority of Hockey Canada and its member Branches. For this purpose, the Hockey Canada developed a program philosophy along with guiding principles to support the implementation of hockey skills academies.

1. The Program Philosophy:

- ❖ *Must be sanctioned for operation by Hockey Canada and Hockey Canada’s Member Branches.*
- ❖ *Designed to compliment/enhance skill development opportunities within the current Hockey Canada Branches and their minor hockey associations.*
- ❖ *Accessible to male and female students of all ages and all skill levels who may or may not be registered in the local minor hockey association.*
- ❖ *Partner with the school system to support individual skill development and academic achievement.*
- ❖ *Ensure student access by providing aid to participants where required.*
- ❖ *Create an environment that is exclusive to individual student development.*

2. Students:

- ❖ *Any male or female student who is attending a school with a HCSA program is eligible.*
- ❖ *Any student regardless of hockey skill level may register in a HCSA.*
- ❖ *Any student regardless of family income status may register.*



- ❖ The school or school board establishes and monitors student behaviour expectations and sets the standard for student participation.

3. Instructors:

- ❖ All HCSA instructional staff must be fully certified in the NCCP at a minimum of Intermediate Level by Hockey Canada and its member Branches.
- ❖ All HCSA instructional staff must undergo annual professional development through the HCSA training program.
- ❖ HCSA Head Instructors should be trained in Hockey Canada's National Coach Mentorship Program (NCMP) and make themselves available to mentor Minor Hockey Association volunteer coaches.

4. Curriculum Framework:

To ensure that students receive adequate training, Hockey Canada has set guidelines for the curriculum. These guidelines are based on:

- ❖ A HCSA National curriculum framework as set out by Hockey Canada.
- ❖ A HCSA on-ice curriculum framework focusing on individual offensive skills and situational play.
- ❖ A HCSA off-ice curriculum framework focusing on body coordination and skill development.
- ❖ A HCSA instructional curriculum framework supported by skill development guides and instructional videos as developed by Hockey Canada.
- ❖ A HCSA instructional curriculum framework that will be evaluated and updated by Hockey Canada (HCSA Technical Advisory Group) on an annual basis with input from the HCSA instructional staff.

The HCSA National Committee is an Advisory Group providing leadership in the area of instructional curriculum design and resource development. Based on study of European hockey academy models, domestic experience, and research, the Advisory Group has developed a core hockey curriculum. Through frequent feedback and exchange of ideas, participating academies will assist in the continuous refinement of program design to ensure that training activities match the needs of the students and takes advantage of the most up-to-date knowledge, technology and teaching methodologies.



5. Testing:

One of the cornerstones in the curriculum is the on-ice skills tests and the off-ice fitness tests. These tests are designed to measure improvement and assess a variety of teaching methods.

Within the program framework there is plenty of room for each hockey academy program to develop an individual approach. There are enough skill areas within the curriculum to keep any hockey student focused on improvement and working hard on a daily basis for several years.

FUTURE LOOK

The HCSA program is an evolving initiative of Hockey Canada responding to the Molson Open Ice recommendation. The first phase of this new concept was the establishment of a HCSA pilot project. The purpose of the pilot project was to test the operation of HCSA in the province of Alberta during the 2000-2001 school year.

The 2013-2014 school year currently has 108 officially licensed Hockey Canada Skills Academies across Canada, from Port Alberni, B.C to St. John's, NL under the supervision of 11 branches of Hockey Canada. Entering the 11th year of this program, we are working hard to improve our current materials and the services offered to licensed Hockey Canada Academies.

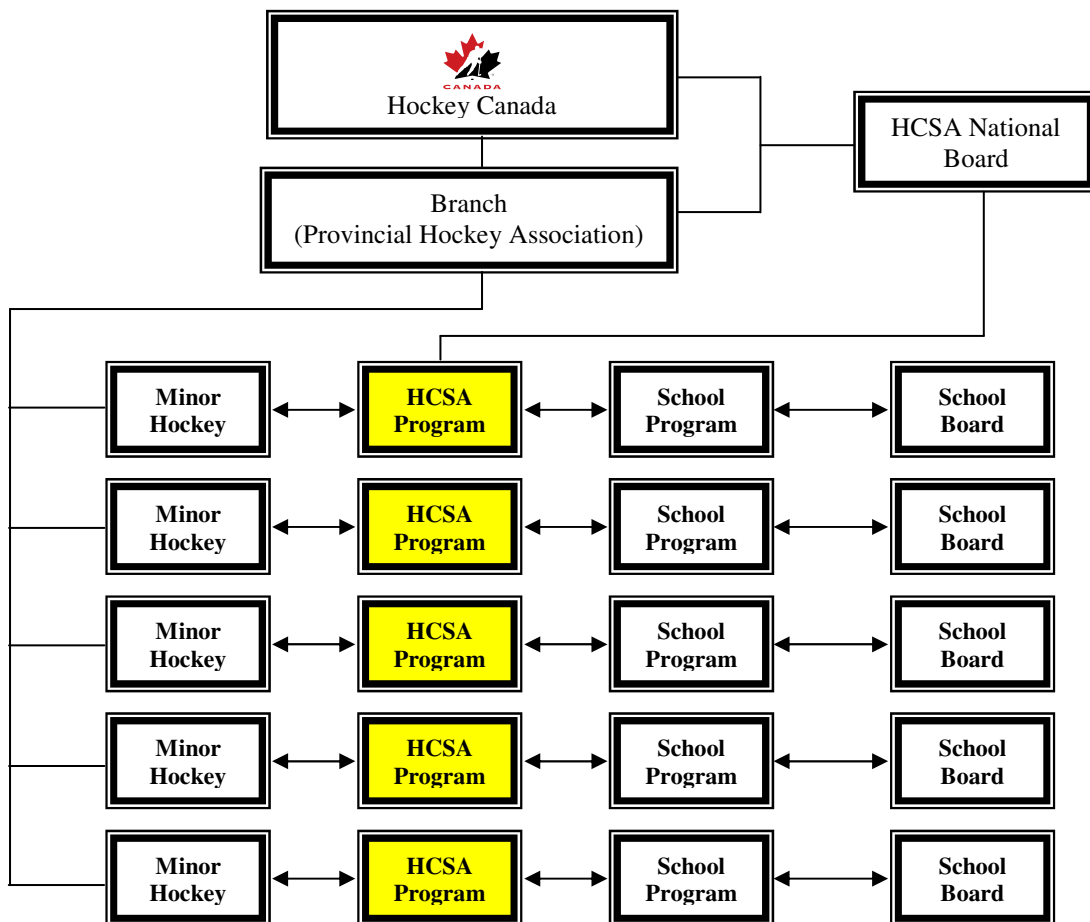
Hockey Canada's long-range vision for the HCSA is to working closely with its 13 member Branches to sanction and monitor HCSA licensed programs operating in both rural and urban centers throughout Canada where both minor hockey associations and arena facilities are available. In other words, if there are 2500 minor hockey associations in Canada, there is the potential for students throughout Canada to receive supplementary skill development training in addition to their minor hockey experience through participation on one of 2500 HCSA's.

The HCSA model has the potential to be a second mainstream player development program mirroring the minor hockey club team system in Canada. Through the evolution of this program, it is important to keep in mind that the HCSA program is a supplement to the club team system and not an alternative to team participation.

The vision of the Hockey Canada Skills Academy Program is that every student will experience a Hockey Canada Skills Academy.



The outcome is to enhance a hockey student's confidence, individual playing skills, self-esteem and opportunities in both academics and athletics beyond the primary and secondary school system all while making efficient use of arena facilities during school days hours.



SETTING UP A HOCKEY SKILLS ACADEMY WITHIN THE CANADIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

A hockey academy program can be established within the governing rules of education system within each Canadian province or Territory. Support is needed from every level of the school structure, before a HCSA can begin operation.

1. Key Individuals

Certain members of the school systems will play key roles to set up and operation of a HCSA. They are:

- ❖ The Principal at the local school
- ❖ The Superintendent at the School Division (School Branch or School District)
- ❖ The Minister of Education (or Consultant of) at the Provincial Department of Education

The school principal is a key individual, excited about the concept and willing to take on the project in his/her school. The principal can apply to the school district superintendent for the permission to start and run a hockey academy as an alternative educational program.

The second key individual may be the school district superintendent, who favours sport development as a part of the students' education and believes there are benefits in bringing the academic and athletic education closer together. The superintendent can ask the Board of Trustees to give the "green light".

Finally the Ministry of Education may be required to approve the endeavour, either by supporting the decision on an existing regulation or if necessary have a new regulation put in place.

2. Infrastructure:

Not every school is suitable for running a hockey academy. In the initial years, everyone has to be prepared to make some compromises within their infrastructures. To run a full-scale hockey skills development program you need access to:

- ❖ Local ice arena
- ❖ Gymnasium
- ❖ Weight room / Fitness room



- ❖ Puck area (an area with durable interior floor surface where you can handle and shoot pucks without damaging the floor, walls or any other interior.)

It would be ideal for scheduling purposes, if these facilities are located within walking distances from the school. However, using *good facilities over nearby facilities* should be the priority. A 20 minute bus ride may be more of a financial concern than a scheduling problem.

3. Scheduling

The ideal hockey skills academy schedule would provide training session on a daily basis. The Canadian school system is generally very flexible and leaves many avenues open to accomplish this, the scheduling can be somewhat challenging. Each province, and to some extent each school district, has different regulations and recommendations for the numbers of hours for each subject. Below you will find information, based on the curriculum in Alberta that may assist you in overcoming these challenges.

a) Elementary School

In elementary school, students are required to attend approximately 950 hours of instruction per school year. Approximately 712.5 of instruction time is directed at core subjects, while 237.5 hours may cover health, physical education and electives. This means that a total of 4.6 hours per day is needed to cover the entire curriculum. If students are required to attend the core subjects, and a hockey program can be substituted for health, physical education and electives, students only have to attend school for 3.4 hours a day. These calculations would leave plenty of time available to add hockey training to the schedule, especially if the training sessions are limited to twice or three times per week.

Grade 1 and 2

950-hours/school year

LA	285	hours	
Math	142.5	hours	
Science	95	hours	
Social	95	hours	
Art and music	95	hours	= 712.5 (= 17 hours /week)
Health and Phys Ed.	95	hours	
Elective subjects	142.5	hours	



Grade 3 to 6

950 hours/ school year

LA	237.5	hours	
Math	142.5	hours	
Science	142.5	hours	
Social	95	hours	
Art and music	95	hours	= 712.5 (= 17 hours /week)
Health and Phys Ed.	95	hours	
Optional subjects	142.5	hours	

b) Junior High School

As an example, a junior high student in Alberta is required to attend a recommended 950 hours of academic instruction in a school year. These hours are divided into 700 hours of core classes (Language, Math, Science and Social Studies) and 250 hours of non-core classes (Elective Courses, Physical Education and Health). In many school districts, the Hockey Skills Academy curriculum has been accredited as an Elective Course and is an approved curriculum for Physical Education and Health. As a result, hockey academy students only need to attend school for 700 hours per school year, in addition to the hockey sessions. A school year consists of 42 weeks. This means 17 hours of academic instruction per week.

Below is a sample schedule of how the core classes of a junior high school can be scheduled to accommodate a student to participate in a hockey skills academy program.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.30	English	French	English	French	English
9.30	English	Science	English	Social	French
10.30	Math	Science	Math	Social	Math
11.30	Social		Science		
12.30	Lunch				
13.30	On-ice	Fitness	On-ice	Theory	On-ice
14.30	Skills Session	Off-ice Skills	Skills Session	Fitness	Skills Session
15.30	School's End				
16.00 - 21.00	Home Work Minor Hockey Training and Games	Home Work Minor Hockey Training and Games	Home Work Minor Hockey Training and Games	Home Work Minor Hockey Training and Games	Home Work Minor Hockey Training and Games

By dividing the educational responsibilities between the school and the hockey student's parents, some schools have accommodated the same flexibility in their scheduling through a *Blended Program*. In a blended program, parents home school their children in parts of the curriculum, i.e. health and physical education,



and the school is responsible for the core subjects. Through a blended program any student in any school could make time available to attend a hockey skills academy.

c) High School

The schedules for the students attending high school could be done on an individual basis, which makes high school students easiest to accommodate. With the credit system in which every student needs a certain number of credits to graduate, it is possible to build very personal schedules without conflicting with the other students or without compromising the academic curriculum. The hockey skills academy students will have to personalize their schedule to ensure they have enough free time to attend the hockey sessions. Many students have arranged their schedules in one or several of these ways:

1. Attend the hockey skills academy during one season/school year only. This has allowed them to accumulate enough credits, during the years without the hockey sessions, to take the afternoons completely off during the year they opt to attend the hockey skills academy.
2. Attend the hockey skills academy one, two or three days a week and spend the days in school full-time.
3. Attend the hockey skills academy one semester and go to school full-time the other semester.
4. Attend summer school for one or two courses every summer.
5. Attend one course on Internet every semester.
6. Some high schools have allowed their students to spread out the studies over one additional year and graduate when they are nineteen.
7. Some high schools have early morning classes beginning at 07:15 AM. This allows the students to attend an additional class every morning, which allows him/her to take the afternoons off.
8. Some students have been credited with working experience credits, after taking part in the hockey training as coaches for younger age-groups, equipment services, etc.
9. In close cooperation between the high school and the hockey skills academy, the hockey curriculum has been adjusted to cover part of the physical-education curriculum.
10. Every province has different academic curriculum. For example, Alberta Learning has a high school course called Special Projects. The hockey skills academy curriculum could be adjusted to meet the criteria of this course. By offering defining the academy as a



Special Projects course students would get credits for participating in the hockey sessions.

Establishing credited courses (point 10 above) would make the Hockey Canada Skills Academy programs almost at par with the European sport schools. In Europe, the sport content counts as one major course, with a value equivalent to any major academic course like Math, English, or Biology.



THE ROLES OF LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

To manage a hockey skills academy in the best possible manner and to take full advantage of all available expertise, co-operation between the local school, the minor hockey association (or junior hockey club) and local hockey expert(s) can be very beneficial. Any of the three suggested organizations could take the lead in operating a program, but the combined energies of these organizations would enhance the HCSA program's success.

The School	
The school can play an active, leading role or a more supportive background role. In the active role the school could administrate the entire program. In a supportive role, the school could be responsible for anything from scheduling to supplying facilities and equipment.	
<p><i>Active and Leading Role</i></p> <p>The school runs the entire operation. School staff is responsible for administration and instruction. The school provides access to gym space, ice rink and a classroom.</p>	<p><i>Supportive Background Role</i></p> <p>The school schedule is coordinated to facilitate participation in an out-of-school activity, such as hockey training.</p>
<p><i>Resources and Proficiency</i></p> <p>The school is the most respected and established institution of the three. It comes with a high degree of credibility and a unique wealth of resources and efficiencies. The following listed components can form the backbone of the entire operation:</p>	
<p><i>Established Relations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Curriculum Know-how ❖ Insurance ❖ Administration ❖ Teachers ❖ Facilities ❖ Equipment 	
<p><i>Shortcomings</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The minor hockey association understands the direct link to the hockey playing youth in the community and their evening and weekend schedules. 2. The minor hockey association (or another non-profit group such as the parent-teacher association) may be a better group for collecting fees to cover excessive costs, such as ice rental, transportation, equipment, instructors, etc. 3. A hockey expert (coach) may be able to provide a better quality of program content, be in a better position to educate and mentor the instructors, and provide an excellent level of instruction to the students. 	



The Minor Hockey Association

The local minor hockey association could also be very active and take charge of delivering the entire HCSA program. In a supportive background role the MHA can do anything from approve the academy to promote it to provide facilities and instructors.

Active and Leading Role

The minor hockey association runs the entire program parallel to their competitive teams and takes care of all administration, recruitment and instruction.

Supportive Background Role

The minor hockey association promotes the academy to its members and/or officially sanctions the program, to make it a part of the minor hockey insurance.

Resources and Proficiency

The minor hockey association is also a well-established and well-respected institution. Minor hockey's community-service based profile and profound hockey knowledge and relationship with players, coaches and arena administrators, has a long list of vital components for a successful operation:

Established Relations

- ❖ Data base
- ❖ Insurance
- ❖ Administration
- ❖ Instructors
- ❖ Access to Facilities
- ❖ Equipment

Shortcomings

1. The school may have better control of the overall program and influence student academic performance.
2. The school may be able to access facilities for less cost.
3. The school and the hockey expert would have quality staff available to instruct during school hours.



The Hockey Expert

The hockey expert can be anything from an experienced coach, a hockey club (such as a junior hockey team or a professional hockey team) to a consultant corporation. This group could run the entire operation either as owner or commissioned by the owner of the program. The hockey expertise can also be hired (or volunteered) to instruct, to educate the staff or to organize any other part of the operation.

Active and Leading Role

The hockey expert runs the entire operation taking care of all administration, recruitment and instruction. This would be similar to the way a summer hockey school is run.

Supportive Background Role

The hockey expert can provide coaching education and mentoring to the instructors.

Resources and Proficiency

The value and success of the whole program is ultimately determined by the quality of the instruction. A well educated and experienced hockey expert/instructor brings the components needed to outline the progression of the teaching and learning. A wide range of personnel falls into the hockey expert category. Each person will have their own set of strengths and shortcomings. Some will bring all the qualities needed to run the entire operation. Others will be better utilized in smaller areas of the program. The list below shows components a well-rounded expert would be able to provide.

Coaching Expert

- ❖ Hockey training know-how
- ❖ Administration
- ❖ Hockey Net-work
- ❖ Sponsor Contacts
- ❖ Marketing Experience

Shortcomings

1. A lack of influence on the school programming component.
2. A disconnect with the school staff with respect to student academic performance in other subject areas.
3. A greater strain on the financial implications of acquiring sports equipment.
4. A disconnect with the arena facility and the ability to secure ice time at a greatly reduced rate.



THE APPLICATION APPROVAL PROCESS

For more information on how to make application for a Hockey Canada Skills Academy license, visit the Hockey Canada website at:

<http://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/Hockey-Programs/Schools/HCSA/Setting-up-a-Skills-Academy>

Hockey Canada Skills Academy License applications are approved by the Branch the HCSA program will be located in. It is important to note that Hockey Canada asks as an information source and a “filter” for the application process. Once an application has been received at the Hockey Canada office and the package is deemed complete, the application package is forwarded to the appropriate member Branch for consideration.

Hockey Canada is responsible to ensure that the documentation produced by potential licensee meets the criteria as outlined in the document “Program License Application Guidelines”. Please download this document from the Hockey Canada website.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on the Hockey Canada Skills Academy Program, visit the Hockey Canada website at:

<http://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/Hockey-Programs/Schools/HCSA.aspx>

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