

## **Intensive Training and Over Training in Young Athletes**

Young athletes should be encouraged to participate in a variety of sports—this can be difficult in the middle of a busy hockey season but over the year and even in the season, encourage a variety of activities. This ensures broad skill development and prevents burn-out (and actually increase performance in the long run). Hockey-hockey-hockey is not healthy.

Realistic parental expectations ensure positive psychological growth and ensure a strong relationship between parents and children—hockey should not be the focus of the relationship.

Overtraining can harm your child physically and psychologically.

### **Watch for signs of overtraining:**

- Weight loss
- Tiredness and disturbed sleep patterns
- General decline in physical performance during training and competition
- Decline in school work
- Loss of confidence

### **To prevent overtraining:**

- Don't put undo pressure on the kids
- Ensure recovery periods (no training/reduced training days)
- Eat high carbohydrate foods (60% of daily calories) in the form of higher glycemic foods (provide whole wheat/complex carbohydrates)
- Ensure adequate iron intake
- Consider providing carbohydrates to children during training and competition (sports drinks—at least for competition)
- Reduce stress that can be controlled in the child's life when other stressors rise (e.g. not scheduling piano exam during school exams)
- Limit high stakes competitions (every weekend should not be the "most important game of your life")
- Ensure adequate rest (the kids seem to be tired at the end of the school week—be sensitive to this)
- Be careful of your child having too many responsibilities/commitments
- Ensure your child has time to relax