

Second hand equipment vs new

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Used vs new hockey equipment

Between league fees, game tickets and gas, having a child in Minor League hockey is a joy, but let's face it, an expense as well--especially if you have more than one player in the family. Many families can't even afford to have a child be on a team for the barrier of purchasing equipment. Being realistic and finding second hand equipment is a great way to save and have your child enjoy a life-long learning experience of being a part of a hockey team.

What to look for

Getting the right fit for the level of player is key to having an enjoyable experience and maximizing your child's abilities.

Hockey pants now come with belts, so it's not so hard tucking that sweater in the right side à la Wayne Gretzky. The key is getting pants with good thigh, hip, and tailbone protection.

Shin guards should fit in the center of the kneecap and go down to the top of the skate. They run from 7 inches in length to 17 inches. If your child is a defenseman, you want to get ones with lots of padding because they will be blocking more shots than a forward, who should get lighter and smaller guards. Defensemen often have padding that wraps right around the back of their legs.

Shoulder pads should be comfortable and not too bulky. The cup should fit right on the shoulder and the pad to almost rest against your neck; anything that's looser in that area may jam into you when your player is checked or falls. Defensemen should get shoulder pads with full frontal protection so they can block shots without worry; forwards can get away with a lot less.

With elbow pads, you want ones that fit properly on the point of the elbow and won't slip up and down. And you want to make sure that they're not so tight that they constrict the flow of blood. Elbow pads come in various lengths; some people prefer to wear a long glove and short elbow pads, while others like a shorter glove and longer pads. Your child's forearm should be covered against slashes and stick checks (if allowed) so it is as well protected as the elbow.

Gloves used to be all leather, but now they're made mostly of Kevlar or nylon or some combination of the two. Look for a glove with a strong thumb, which is an area where many injuries occur. For a good fit, there should be a little growing room at the end of the fingers.

Where to look

Many times families will completely outfit a child for a season of hockey and the child may lose interest, grow out of the gear. This is a great way to get second hand equipment. Your community teams may have a program where you can scout out this type of gear. Your local high school, college or university sports program may have a swap or sale of their used equipment. Local gear stores may have skate trade in programs for a minimal fee. All these sources most likely have the most modern safety approved gear.

Using the resources available on the web may prove just as helpful as local programs, but be sure to look for the most current safety specifications the gear and you'll be shopping safely and wisely.

Refreshing tip: From a hockey mom in Alberta--a great way to refresh used hockey equipment is to soak for one hour in a mixture of cool water with a drop of laundry detergent, ½-cup baking soda and a few drops of peppermint oil.

Online Resources

While we don't endorse any specific resources, our research team came up with these websites where parents may be able to source safe used equipment. We welcome your own suggestions at feedback@scotiahockey.com.

- hockeygoalieequipment.ca
- playitagainsports.com/hockey
- outgrowoutplay.com
- Your local community on kijiji.ca
- Your local community on craigslist.com

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