

## WHY HAVING A PROPERLY SIZED STICK CAN HELP ON THE ICE



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It can be a big surprise for you the first time heading back to the rink and realize that your child's stick is suddenly too small. After growing up through each age group thinking the stick they have would last forever, it's now time to get a new one. Getting the right stick and finding the right comfort level is something that you should invest time in.

The beginning of the season can be the perfect time to get a new stick because you'll be able to account for how much your child has grown since the end of last season. Test out a few different makes and models before deciding which one is best for them.

We all want to find the best stick that is a **combination of price and quality**. Here are some things to remember when buying a new stick.

### SIZING AND LENGTH

Finding a stick that is the correct height for a player will help them be more comfortable on the ice. An incorrectly sized stick could break easier (which means starting this process all over again) and hinder stick handling and shooting. Without skates, a stick should reach between a player's mouth and nose. With

skates, it should be around the chin. Most players want as much as the bottom edge of the blade to be touching the ice as possible. This is the easiest way to determine which stick is right for you.

## **FLEX**

A stick's flex indicates how much it bends. This is helpful on wrist and slap shots to put just a little bit more snap and power into your shot. It also leads to higher accuracy. The higher the flex number, the stiffer it is. These flex numbers are usually standard across all stick makers. Generally, older players, especially taller ones, will opt for a stick that has more flex. Keep in mind that if you cut a stick to resize it, the stick may increase in flex.

## **COST**

Remember that children can quickly outgrow their equipment and that include hockey sticks. Don't invest in a very expensive stick that may only last a year. Take a look at previously owned sticks and try to go into the store with a budget. Do some research into sticks you are considering and see which is the best between price point and fit. Unfortunately some sticks may break during the season so it's always a smart idea to have a backup ready to go.

## **WEIGHT**

This is up to personal preference. Some players prefer lighter sticks because they are easier to handle and move around on the ice. Others choose a stick with more weight because it helps to build up strength while using it and can be tougher for opponents to lift off the ice. Using a heavier stick also allows for more power on your shots.

The material of the stick can also have an impact on the weight, flex and cost. Traditional sticks were made of wood but today's are made from composite materials that help to improve performance.

## **GRIP**

Some sticks come with grip handles that make it easier to maintain control while on the ice. While gloves and tape are meant to increase grip, some factors like sweat, water and ice throughout the game can reduce it. A grip also indicates proper hand placement for a player. This is another choice that can be left up to the player and could depend on how strong you feel going through contact while holding the stick.