

## Overview

The Jr. NBA is the league's official youth basketball participation program for boys and girls ages 6-14 that teaches the fundamentals of the game at the grassroots level to help grow and improve the youth basketball experience for all.



# Philosophy

The Jr. NBA Philosophy is to share the game of basketball with youth across the world by teaching skills, values, and wellness in a positive and fun environment. The Jr. NBA’s holistic approach is intended to strengthen the culture of youth basketball, teach life lessons, and empower youth to live a full and healthy life. The Jr. NBA believes this philosophy leads to developing complete and well-rounded basketball players and individuals.

The Jr. NBA philosophy manifests itself in our curriculum through the ABCD’s of the Jr. NBA. The ABCD’s of the Jr. NBA are the foundation of the curriculum and define what the Jr. NBA stands for. Each element of the ABCD’s of the Jr. NBA is equally important and works with the other components to develop well-rounded basketball players and people. Please see below for the ABCD’s of the Jr. NBA.

## ALWAYS FUN

We love the game of basketball because at its core, it’s FUN! Basketball should be fun at every level, and as Jr. NBA players make progress in their development, their understanding of fun also evolves. So whether it’s encouraging a first-time player as she learns to dribble, or helping a young boy set goals, the game should always be oriented around fun. Fun is always a part of the Jr. NBA curriculum.

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### The ABCD’s of the Jr. NBA

**A**  
**Always Fun**

**B**  
**Building Skills**

**C**  
**Cultivating Values**

**D**  
**Developing Wellness**

### The 7 Ways that Jr. NBA Players Experience Fun

**Achieving Goals**

**Mastering Skills**

**Loving the Process**

**High Fives & Smiles**

**Cheering for Others**

**Interactive Games**

**Positive Encouragement**

## **BUILDING SKILLS**

Building basketball skills is an essential part of learning the game. The Jr. NBA recognizes that skill development is a process that is especially important for youth players. The Jr. NBA uses a skill progression checklist that helps players advance through developmental levels.

As Jr. NBA players master skills and advance in the curriculum, skill categories grow more advanced. This approach helps Jr. NBA players to continually develop and enjoy the positive reinforcement of mastering new skills!

## **CULTIVATING VALUES**

The game of basketball provides everyone involved in the game the opportunity to learn countless life lessons. The lessons learned in the Jr. NBA curriculum will be with our players for a lifetime. Therefore, the Jr. NBA makes it a priority to cultivate these core values throughout all programming.

A key tenet of the Jr. NBA philosophy is to incorporate character-building messages into every practice. Values are also taught in unscripted situations, and we encourage our coaches to embrace those opportunities as well. The Jr. NBA character building lessons will undoubtedly go beyond the court and help youth players in other areas of their lives.

### **Skill Categories**

**Ball-Handling**

**Passing**

**Shooting**

**Footwork & Conditioning**

**Rebounding**

**Offense**

**Defense**

### **Character Building Values**

**Teamwork**

**Sportsmanship & Fairness**

**Leadership**

**Respect**

**Responsibility**

**Confidence & Humility**

**Positivity & Receptiveness**



**DEVELOPING WELLNESS**

One of the best parts of the game of basketball is that it promotes wellness across many aspects of life. The Jr. NBA wants to address, educate, and encourage young players to be healthy in each of these areas.

The Jr. NBA believes that developing as a complete person is more important than developing just as a basketball player. Whether it is understanding more about nutrition or learning time management skills, themes of wellness will be applied throughout the curriculum.

**Aspects of Wellness**

**Active Lifestyle**

**Time Management**

**Injury Prevention**

**Nutrition**

**Rest & Recovery**

**Healthy Relationships**

**Balanced Lifestyle**

# NBA & USAB Youth Guidelines

## WHY THE GUIDELINES WERE DEVELOPED

The NBA and USA Basketball have partnered to develop guidelines designed to promote a positive and healthy youth basketball experience. These guidelines prioritize the health and well-being of young athletes while enhancing enjoyment, participation, and development in the game. Please see the guidelines that follow.

## RECOMMENDED PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

AGE	GAME LENGTH	GAMES PER WEEK	PRACTICE LENGTH	# OF PRACTICES PER WEEK
Ages 7-8	20-28 minutes	1	30-60 minutes	1
Ages 9-11	24-32 minutes	1 to 2	45-75 minutes	2
Ages 12-14	28-32 minutes	2	60-90 minutes	2 to 4
Grades 9-12	32-36 minutes	2 to 3	90-120 minutes	3 to 4



**MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES**

AGE	# OF GAMES/DAY	# OF HOURS PER WEEK IN ORGANIZED BASKETBALL
Ages 7-8	1	3 hours
Ages 9-11	2*	5 hours
Ages 12-14	2*	10 hours**
Grades 9-12	2*	14 hours**

The maximum participation guidelines outlined above are intended to serve as limits on a young athlete’s participation in organized basketball. It is possible that participation in organized basketball within the maximum limits but in excess of the recommendations is also not advisable from a health and wellness standpoint; however, this issue requires further study.

*\* Youth basketball players, parents and coaches should demonstrate caution in scheduling or participating in more than one game per day, especially on consecutive days. If young athletes participate in an event or tournament in which more than one game is played per day on consecutive days, players should have additional time off from sports activities following the event to allow for recovery.*

*\*\* It is recommended that young athletes in these age ranges who are approaching these maximum hour limits not participate in another organized sport concurrently.*



**REST GUIDELINES**

AGE	MIN. # OF REST DAYS PER WEEK	MAX. MONTHS PER YEAR IN ORGANIZED BASKETBALL	RECOMMENDED HOURS OF SLEEP PER NIGHT
Ages 7-8	2	4 months	9-12 hours
Ages 9-11	2	5 months	9-12 hours
Ages 12-14	1	7 months	8-10 hours*
Grades 9-12	1	9-10 months	8-10 hours

\* For 12 year olds, 9-12 hours of sleep is recommended

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**THE NBA  
RECOMMENDS****Delay specialization in basketball until at least age 14.**

Playing multiple sports helps kids make new friends and develop new skills. Medical and scientific experts recommend early sports sampling and delaying single-sport specialization until mid to late adolescence. Playing multiple sports should not be viewed as falling behind, but rather as building the foundation for future success. Research shows that early sport specialization is NOT necessary to produce elite-level performance.

Sports sampling, which is characterized by participation in multiple sports during childhood, provides a young athlete the chance to find a sport that may ultimately fit him or her best. There are several demonstrated benefits of sports sampling:

- › **Prolonged engagement in sports**
- › **More enjoyable and positive early sports experiences**
- › **Healthy physical, psychological, and social development**
- › **Transfer of skill acquired from multiple sports to primary sport if specialization occurs**

Current research does not support the view that early single-sport specialization is either necessary or sufficient to produce elite performance at advanced levels of competition. In fact, early single-sport specialization in basketball and other team sports may be detrimental to long-term elite performance.

Athletes that reach the highest level of achievement have been shown to be more likely to have played multiple sports at a young age compared to athletes that reach relatively lower levels of achievement. With respect to basketball and other similar ball sports, world-class athletes often delayed single-sport specialization until age 16 or later.

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**PLAYER  
SEGMENTATION**

The NBA and USA Basketball have adopted a Youth Basketball Player Segmentation Model designed to help ensure player safety, consistency and competitive fairness and balance for youth basketball players.

This player segmentation model, developed by an expert working group on Playing Standards, has a hybrid age/grade structure that employs strict age groupings through age 13, followed by a grade affiliation model once a player enters the ninth grade. The following are key elements of the model:

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▶ **Age-based segmentation through age 13.**

- › For purposes of eligibility, a “Playing Year” is defined as Sept. 1-Aug. 31.
- › Beginning at age six, players are segmented by single-year age through age 13. Date of birth relative to the Playing Year is the final determinant of eligibility.
- › For age segments, each age designation reflects the maximum age of a player during the Playing Year. For example, using the 2016-17 Playing Year, the 12U segment is for players who are 12 years of age and under as of Aug. 31, 2017. Should a player turn 13 on Aug. 31 or earlier, the player would be ineligible for the 12U segment and would be considered a 13U player.

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▶ **14U or 8th grade - transition year.**

› A transition year between age-based and grade-based affiliation is necessary to allow for players who have been held back in school or are old for their grade. This provides a transition period from playing with one's age segment to playing with kids in the same academic grade.

› Event operators have the option to host a division based on the 14U age-based model and/or adopt the 8th grade-based model.

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▶ **Grade-based segmentation in grades 9 through 12.**

› Players in grades nine through 12 are classified based on the grade they are attending in school as of Oct. 1 of the Playing Year.

› Exceptions: For grade segments only, players must be enrolled in school at the grade level in which they are competing AND can only be up to one Playing Year older than their grade indicates. For example, using the 2016-17 Playing Year, a ninth grade player cannot turn 17 prior to Sept. 1, 2017.