**![minor-gaels-logo[1]]()** **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS**

**5-6 Year old players**

* enjoys free play
* developing hand eye coordination
* enjoys small group cooperative games
* improved body coordination
* will ask many questions, eager to learn
* eager to receive praise and compliments
* learning to cooperate with others
* will need guidance from adults when learning new skills
* can be easily frightened by new experiences

**Try to avoid**

* Activities that involve repeated impacts
* Specializing in a sport and position
* Emphasizing winning and creating pressure to perform
* Comparisons with other players
* Lengthy explanations
* Negative criticism and negative competitive experiences

**Suggestions**

* Establish guidelines of acceptable behaviour and act in a constant and predictable manner
* Praise and compliment frequently and generously
* Demonstrations need to be highly specific, simple, and aimed at the achievement of the objective
* Activities should be short and change frequently
* Develop coordination, balance, proper motor patterns
* Activities that match ability levels
* Players should have the chance to take responsibility, to have an impact on some decisions

**8-9 Year old players**

* High degree of imagination
* Needs well established routines
* Usually interested in several sports
* Wants to act oh his/her own, does not like norms but will accept coach’s instructions if there is a sense that he/she plays a part in the organization of the activity
* Seeks approval of others, wants to be accepted while still being self-centred and individualistic
* Is conscious of own feelings and emotions
* Needs praise and feedback, reacts favourably to positive feedback and praise
* Emphasize motor development and learning the skills
* Could introduce rules of the game and tactical principles
* Limited in their problem solving abilities
* Coordination and stamina improving, greater degree of motor control and autonomy
* Larger growth in larger muscle masses – legs
* Strength gains come from increased coordination and neural factors
* Likes dills with pairs and groups, likes drills that involve moving
* Will assume some responsibility
* Wants to shine

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**10-11 Year old players**

* Develops conscious, morality and values
* May become highly competitive
* May show a defiant attitude
* Athletic background will be varied
* Training should be focused on the acquisition of skills and motor patterns
* Wants to help, interested in group activities
* Loyal to the group
* Expresses feelings easily
* Prefers concrete examples
* Emphasize motor development and learning new skills
* Specialized techniques and tactics may be introduced
* Can concentrate more - focus period of 10 min at a time
* Strength and endurance gains are possible
* Improved flexibility
* Reaction time slowly improving

**Try to avoid**

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* Specializing in a sport and position
* Emphasizing winning and creating pressure to perform
* Comparisons with other players
* Lengthy explanations
* Negative criticism and negative competitive experiences

**Suggestions**

* Participation in several different sports or activities
* Rules should be adapted to increase the probability of success and involvement
* Demonstrations need to be highly specific, simple, and aimed at the achievement of the objective
* Praise and compliment generously and regularly
* Feedback should focus on one point

**12-15 Year old players**

* Major growth spurts occur
* Acquires moral concepts, values, attitudes
* Friends become focus
* Could challenge authority, question decisions, and ask for justification
* Competition becomes more important
* Training should be for all activities, not one sport specific
* Important to separate boys and girls for activities and competitions
* Emotional instability may be present
* Greater wish for independence, reject parental authority
* Develops close relationships with individuals of both sexes
* Develop values of respect, fair play, and work ethic
* Needs change on a regular basis, curious, can concentrate for longer time periods – 20 min
* Good time to consolidate fine motor skills and increase complex tactics
* Strength and endurance training can be introduced, well suited for the development of aerobic fitness and flexibility
* Enjoys challenges to accomplish and will look for the acceptance from peers on their accomplishments

**Try to avoid**

* Pressure to perform
* Negative competitive experiences
* Programs should have more practices than competitions

**Suggestions**

* Always involved in activities, no waiting periods
* Acquisition of more complex sport specific techniques
* Explanations can be more elaborate
* Strength training with own body weight
* Games emphasizing skills and dexterity
* Opportunities to meet with role models, trips to competitions, social activities with the team
* Leadership opportunities, team warm-up, drills at practice

**16-17 Year old players**

* Could have identity problems – in between child and adult
* Seeks greater autonomy and matures emotionally
* Training should remain seasonal and not focus on one sport
* Training volume can increase
* Sexuality becomes focus point
* Friends remain important
* Wants to be considered an adult
* May reject parental authority
* Aware of their own values
* Social activities are especially important
* Develops a wider range of behaviours, can think logically
* Good time to develop aerobic capacity
* Training for power and speed
* Prefers games
* Group activities are important
* Prefers activities to create a particular status in the group

**Suggestions**

* Delegate certain tasks, provide opportunities to solve tactical problems and improve decision making
* Strength endurance should be the priority
* Practice officiating, strategy, and tactics
* Develop respect for others, fair play, and work ethic