



Introduction

This Nursery Brochure is a draft template supporting clubs that wish to develop their underage structures. The Nursery ethos is based around developing Fundamental skills in a fun manner.

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Policy and Information



GUIDELINES OF CLUB NURSERY

INTRODUCTION

The club nursery runs for the school year from September to June. Its principal aim is to introduce children of school going age to Gaelic Games and it continues to provide children until they reach 9 years of age (thus including 4/ 5years to under 9's).

SKILLS WITH FUN

The ethos of the Nursery is “**skills with fun**”. In order to ensure that this ethos becomes a reality the following guidelines are applied to the hurling and football sessions:

- Boys and girls are welcome and are catered for at each session.
- Groups are divided by age. In order to ensure that children are comfortable within the groups, skill level will be taken into account when dividing groups.

- The consistency of times, venues and personnel ensure that children and parents will respond with commitment in attending sessions regularly and on time.
- The nursery co-ordinator ensures that the session equipment is in place and ready to go at the start time and that the equipment is replaced after the session. This requires that the co-ordinator and/or groups leaders arrive at the venue at least 15 minutes in advance of starting time.
- Each session should begin and end at the appointed times.
- Children with special needs should be included and, where possible guidance sought from the parents on appropriate activities and helpers appointed specifically to help these children.
- Each session consists of:
 - **A warm-up (5min)**
 - ⇒ Should consist of gentle running exercises followed by fun chasing and tag games as well as co-operative games and some simple stretching exercises.
 - **Skill development practices (20-30 min)**
 - ⇒ During skill development practices children are as active as possible with preferable a ball between every two children and where appropriate between every four. Children at this age should not practise in groups any larger than this. They develop their skills best with constant involvement and contact with the ball.
 - **A mini-game (15-20min)**
 - ⇒ Mini-games provide opportunities where the younger children play in teams with no more than five on each side while the older groups may form teams of six or seven. The emphasis in this game should be on co-operation with the other players, fair play and the development of particular skills within the game situation.
 - ⇒ The size of the pitch should be appropriate to the stage of development of the children and should be marked clearly with cones and goalposts.
 - **Cool-Down (5min)**
 - ⇒ A cool-down encourages children to slowly recover from exercise and to calm down where necessary!

NURSERY ORGANISATION/STRUCTURES

- There should be a co-ordinator who, with the rest of the group leaders, organises the coaching development of the children over the year.
- The co-ordinator of the sessions is responsible for ensuring that sufficient and *appropriate* equipment (See **Appendix 2**) is sought from the club to run enjoyable sessions for the children.
- There will be identifiable groups leaders for each group within the nursery with as many helpers/coaches as possible with each group. This calls for commitment from group leaders to prepare and organise each session but also commitment from other parents to help. An ideal ratio is one parent/helper for each group of four children.
- The co-ordinator and group leaders should facilitate in organising the mini-leagues, Christmas party and raffles with the help of the juvenile chairperson, club coach and interested parties.
- Each year the co-ordinator and group leaders should try to bring new parents into “the coaching circle” to keep the section fresh and invigorated and to allow parents involved with the under 9’s to move “up” with their own children.
- All children who participate in nursery must be members of the club for insurance purposes. Parents of children should also be encouraged to join as either full or social members.

LOCATION AND CALENDAR

The sessions are held in _____(hurling) and the _____ (football) (although the under 9’s sometimes have matches) and during the winter months some sessions are held indoors in the hall at _____. Some games with other clubs are arranged informally for the younger children while the under 8’s and under 9’s play in a more formal games structure (9-a-side) which is organised by the County Board (no league tables are kept by the County Board). The emphasis is on providing regular matches for the children of this age.

The year starts with Hurling on Tuesday evenings and football on Saturday mornings. Football will run on Saturday mornings from 10-11am. The children will be playing U-8 and U-9 matches on this day.

Mini-leagues in football will be held over a number of weeknights in a designated week in June. All children from the nursery are invited to play in the tournament where all teams play a “final” on the Saturday. A “hurling day” is held in May/June where skill challenges are provided and mini-games played.

A Christmas party is held in conjunction _____

TIMES OF SESSIONS _____

GO GAMES _____

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE COACH TO THE ETHOS OF THE NURSERY

The key word for the coach is “encouragement”. The coach should:

- Praise effort, involvement and improvement.
- Use praise often and where appropriate.
- Never ridicule mistake or make negative comments on a child’s ability or physique. This can be seen as a form of bullying.
- Focus on technique, decision-making and personal achievement.
- Coaches should never use bad or abusive language.
- Use clear signals for stopping and starting the group. The whistle should be used sparingly but efficiently.
- At the beginning of each session children should be welcomed to the session and reminded of the behaviour expected during the session. This might include some basic rules of the game and the purpose of the session. Parents should be encouraged to hear this introduction.
- A roll call should be taken and a record of attendance maintained.
- The group leader always selects the teams or groups so that all players are included and that weaker groups or players are selected “first” (avoiding the constant embarrassment to weaker players who are always left “last” to be selected by their peers).
- Teams should be identified using bibs.
- Rotate players constantly. Avoid children specialising in positions too early (I want to play mid-field/I want to be the goalkeeper). The coach should even consider the need for a goalkeeper in practice matches...where a goalkeeper is used the position should be rotated every few minutes (perhaps in a systematic fashion replacing the goalkeepers by the two midfielders, then the corresponding backs and forwards.
- Progressions, Variations and Challenges:
 - Use one or two clear instructions combined with a demonstration where possible. Stand when talking to the group and gather the group together to make any changes or general teaching points. Make sure everyone is in a position to see the demonstration. Consider children with special needs e.g. hearing difficulty.
 - Vary activities: allow a gradual increase in skill level, provide an increase in challenges and consider carefully how long children will productively practise any one activity. For example, most activities at nursery level need to be varied every two minutes although not necessarily changed: a catching practice might last thirty seconds but by asking children to jump to catch a ball held by the coach for another thirty seconds and to catch and solo once for another thirty seconds holds the attention of the child as a much more interesting way to learn skills.
 - Consider the use of station teaching: different coaches offer different practices and children rotate from one to the next. Each coach can then consider how his or her activity can be adapted to suit the weaker or better player.

- Sanctions should be agreed by the co-ordinator and group leaders to curb any behaviour that is unacceptable. Such behaviour includes refusing to participate in an exercise or being constantly disruptive. Sanctions might be talking to the child who is taken aside and then talking to the parent of the child. The parent is advised that if the behaviour is repeated sanctions will have to be applied i.e. sitting out for a period of no longer than two minutes before agreeing to resume with appropriate behaviour. Children will not be assigned any form of exercise as a punishment e.g. running or will not be sent unsupervised to any area.
- All activities should be conducted with an emphasis on *safety*.
 - If any activity becomes dangerous, stop it immediately and explain why e.g. running outside boundaries, over-vigorous tagging.
 - Equipment should be appropriate to the stage of development of the child. Hurleys should be of the right size and helmets should be worn by all children when hurling. A large ball (Olympic handball size) should be used for hurling especially for the matches' children play within the training session. Tennis balls can be used once children have some experience. Footballs should be of the correct weight (light plastic for the smaller children and size 3 leather only for the older children).
 - Groups should never be too large when playing games in the hall and children should never be asked to run to touch a wall.
 - A first aid kit should be kept nearby.
 - Ensure that all the children have been collected by the parent or nominated person known to the child.
 - When attending to a child if injured or upset, try to ensure that there are other adults present.
 - Do not take any chances: if you are in any doubt as to the seriousness of any injury, have the child checked in hospital.
 - If you have to bring a child home try to have a third person in the car with you.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF PARENTS TO THE ETHOS OF THE NURSERY.

- Parents should be encouraged to help with an aspect of the nursery (*see attached Appendix 1*) and to stay for the training sessions.
- Where parents cannot be present for the full session, they should be advised to be there to collect their children about 5 minutes before the end of the session.
- Parents could help the skill development of the child by regularly practising for short periods of time with them or encouraging them to practise simple skills on their own. Where possible relate these practices to those suggested by coaches at particular sessions.
- Parents should talk with their children about respecting coaches and other children at sessions. Simple practices such as greeting coaches and friends and thanking coaches should be encouraged.
- Parents should always show good example from the sidelines. They should encourage all their children and should show respect at all times to both the opposition and referee.
- Parents should encourage their child to wear the correct club gear and tracksuit when going to matches.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE CHILD TO THE ETHOS OF THE NURSERY.

Aims

- To introduce the child to the skills of hurling and football and so prepare them for participating at competitive or recreational level as a player.
- To produce players who have a basic command of all fundamental playing skills. Note: *Ambidexterity* will be a key focus of coaching in football and hurling.
Football sessions will focus on using both hand (while handling the ball competently) and both feet (using the “sweet spot” when kicking).
Hurling sessions will focus on gripping the hurley correctly (dominant hand on top) and on striking on the ground on both sides competently.
(More detail on the skills focus is provided in the paragraphs “*Suggested skills for nursery hurling*” and “*Suggested skills for nursery football*” below).
- To develop balance, co-ordination and footwork:
 - Some specific footwork practices will be introduced (some using SAQ ladders, hurdles and tyres).
 - Many fun games and activities in the warm-ups will be used to develop basic skills.
- Children can apply the skills that they have developed, in small-sided practices and games and learn team play (more detail on the team play focus is provided in the paragraph “*Skill development and team play in a mini-games situation*”).

SUGGESTED SKILLS FOR NURSERY HURLING

- 1. Holding the Hurley:**
 - a) Ready position, lock position and lifting/blocking position.
N.B. Dominant hand on top
 - b) Running and demonstrating appropriate grip without a ball.
- 2. Striking a stationary ball on the ground (strong and other side):**
 - a) Running to a stationary ball and striking it on the ground.
 - b) Blocking at ground level (frontal and side)
 - c) Dribbling
 - d) Striking a moving ground ball.
- 3. Catching Exercises:**
 - a) Throwing and Catching.
 - b) Hand passing and Catching.
- 4. Lifting the Ball:**
 - a) Jab lifting a ball.
 - b) Roll lifting a ball.
 - c) Running and jab lifting a ball.

5. Solo Running:

- a) Balancing a ball on the hurley...stationary, walking, running.
- b) Hopping a ball on the hurley...stationary, walking, running.

6. Striking:

- a) Striking a ball from the hand on strong side.
- b) Blocking a ball overhead.

7. Tackling:

- a) The side tackle/ground clash/shoulder-to-shoulder tackle.
- b) Hooking a tackle.
- c) Block-down (blocking an aerial shot).

SUGGESTED SKILLS FOR NURSERY FOOTBALL

1. Ball familiarisation Practises:

- a) Passing ball around waist.
- b) Rolling ball.
- c) Picking up a stationary ball/Crouch lift.
- d) Picking up a moving ball.

2. Kicking:

- a) Kicking a ball from the hands (punt kick).
- b) Kicking a ball on the ground.
- c) Kick pass.
- d) Hook kick.

3. Passing the Ball:

- a) Fist pass.
- b) Hand pass.

4. Catching a ball:

- a) Catching a ball while stationary: low level/waist level (body catch)/high.
- b) Catching a ball while moving.

5. Solo Run:

- a) Bouncing a ball.
- b) Toe tap stationary.
- c) Toe tap/solo run on the move.

6. Block-down.

- a) Shoulder-to-shoulder tackle.
- b) Checking.

7. Side-step.

SOME GENERAL PRACTICES TO PROGRESS SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN FOOTBALL AND HURLING.

All of the above skills need to be introduced by giving the child plenty time to master the basic skill and then developed by practices that challenge the child to perform it under pressure e.g. in a given time, with an opponent applying pressure.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND TEAM PLAY IN A MINI-GAME SITUATION.

Playing mini-games (as described above) provides the ideal opportunity for children to develop their skills and their ability to play with a team in an appropriate setting. When children are playing as part of a four, five, six or seven-a-side team they get many opportunities to have contact with the ball.

The following aspects should be emphasised at Nursery level:

- Understanding of basic positional play:
 - Role of defence
 - Midfield
 - Attack.
- Non-specialisation in terms of positioning on the field:
 - Children should experience periods in all training session where they play a defensive role, a midfield role and/or an attacking role.
- Support play:
 - Running ahead finding space to support a player in attack: “One/two, give and go”, pass and move.
- Defensive play:
 - “Covering “ the goal if goalkeeper is out,
 - “Marking” a player.
- Tackling skills:
 - Tackling without fouling.
 - Staying on your feet.
 - No lunging in.
 - Near-hand tackle in football.
 - Getting in close to tackle in hurling.
 - Hooking skill in hurling.
- Placing a kick-out/puck-out and positioning to receive one.

After exposure to initial mini-games coaches might consider modifying the game in some of the following ways

- Encourage all children to practise certain skills in a game by awarding points if they perform the required skill e.g. block down, high clean catch. Also in a match encourage younger children to shoot for points by awarding 2 points for a ball over the bar and only one point for a goal.

- Challenge certain players (more capable) with conditioned games where they are only allowed to play with the weaker foot for a short period of game (and get scores for doing so) or where scoring a point with the weaker foot (football) or on the weak side (hurling) constitutes a double score. This encourages players to apply weaker skills in conditioned competitive situations (they will not try these in “real matches”).
- Organise and administer skills tests challenging children to practise skills over a period and then completing a simple skills test. The achievement of the children can be recorded using a record sheet.
- Encourage all children to:
 - Think about how they are playing by questioning them (e.g. where will you place that kick-out/puck-out? Where was your shoulder facing when you struck that ball? Why did you pass to X?).
 - Look up when you are in possession.

And the coach can award extra scores for good team play as a result. E.g., a well placed kick pass to a team mate having looked up when in possession, a well placed kick out or puck out for a good “call” for a pass could be rewarded by allocating an extra point to the team.

SUPPORTING ROLE OF CLUB COACH

The club coach has the potential to truly support the work of the club at nursery level. Possible means of support are outlined below:

- Visit the nursery football or hurling at regular intervals (once a month).
- Observe the activities and organisation for the various age groups.
- Update the document: Clondalkin Round Tower’s Nursery.
- Assist coaches with small groups in teaching specific skill coaching e.g. kicking/high catch/lift and strike with small group.
- Visit local schools telling about nursery and giving handout describing times of sessions, venues and names and contact numbers for relevant coaches.
- Help maintain notice board in Beechpark and Russell Park with details of all underage sessions.
- Liase with nursery co-ordinator to organise coaching for coaches.
- Co-ordinate the skills and team development thought the different age groups.
- Assist in setting up a meeting of the nursery parents at the start of the season. This meeting provides information to parents of nursery children on ethos, policy and nursery calendar and outlines their possible role.

UNDER 8 AND UNDER 9 HURLING AND FOOTBALL:

- **GENERAL POINTS RE PARTICIPATION IN DUBLIN COUNTY BOARD PROGRAMME**

Best Practice to meet needs of our Under 8’s and Under 9’s is:

- 7-a-side
- Small pitches and goalposts

- 4/5 local teams in a section
- Match every two/three weeks (allows development of coaching between games)
- No winners of league
- Hurling played with larger ball to encourage striking and reduce fear of getting hit with the ball.

CLUB MINI-LEAGUES

- Need to identify a week in early June when calendar is issued in September
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- 6-9 year olds would run over three nights finishing as above.
- Need to consider setting aside a Saturday for a skills challenge and hurling festival of games in May.
- Awarding of prizes should be considered (medals for all)
- Refreshments
- Attached is more detailed information on running of leagues.

ADDITIONAL NURSERY INFORMATION:

- At the beginning of the year compile a list of names, telephone numbers, email and home addresses of all the mentors and distribute a copy to all.
- Know the times that the club shop is open and have a list and prices of gear stocked.
- List Chairperson and officers with contact details of the juvenile section of the club.
- Need to outline the Role of the Chairperson, other committee members when booking a function or ordering equipment.
- Promotional Material:
Croke Park has lots of posters and stickers, which should be distributed, at intervals throughout the year.
- Post this document when fully completed on the website and encourage all parents to download and read.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENT PARTICIPATION IN THE NURSERY

The following is an incomplete list of some of the duties that we need parent to become involved in to keep the Clondalkin Round Towers Nursery Programme thriving and improving:

1. Cleaning Club Jerseys after games against other clubs.
2. Setting up goals/training areas at the beginning of training sessions.
3. Taking down and storing away goals/cones/other equipment after games.
4. Keeping a list of members and collecting membership dues.
5. Coaching/assistant coaching:
 - a) Hurling
 - b) Football
 - c) Nursery beginners
6. Bring coffee/tea/sandwiches for parents
7. Bring juice/fruit/snacks for the children.
8. Set up and manage web page link on the Clondalkin Round Tower's club home page.
9. "Official photographer" with photos available on the web page.
10. Arrange sponsorship of club gear (socks, shorts, jerseys).
11. Contact person responsible for setting up "bongo tree" or group texting to inform parent of matches, practices and cancellations.
12. Write nursery section on the Club's newsletter.
13. Organise Christmas Party.

Parents, on a voluntary basis, currently perform most of these duties. While this may seem like a lot of work, it can be easily achieved with the participation of more parents. You are very welcome to attend a meeting on ----- parents of any children involved in the Nursery programme to discuss the best way of running things this year.

APPENDIX 2: EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR NURSERY (APPROX 100 CHILDREN)

LIST OF NURSERY EQUIPMENT: JANUARY

| QUANTITY | DESCRIPTION |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 20 | LEATHER FOOTBALLS |
| 27 | PLASTIC FOOTBALLS |
| 40 | "ESSO" FOOTBALLS |
| 9 | NET BAGS |
| 6 | WHISTLES |
| 1 | FIRST AID KIT |
| 3 SETS (36 PEGS) | FEG GOAL POSTS |
| 24 | ORANGE CONES |
| 25 | SMALL CONES |
| | BIBS |
| 50 | TENNIS BALLS |
| | HURLEYS |

LIST OF NURSERY/U-9 INDOOR HURLING EQUIPMENT: JANUARY

| QUANTITY | DESCRIPTION |
|----------|---------------------|
| 9 | SIZE 25 HURLEYS |
| 17 | SIZE 28 HURLEYS |
| 16 | SIZE 30 HURLEYS |
| 12 | SIZE 32 HURLEYS |
| 12 | SIZE 34 HURLEYS |
| 12 | YELLOW INDOOR BALLS |
| 10 | INDOOR SLIOTARS |