Tool for Parents

Inclusion

In the *I'm on Board* program, coaches introduce players to life skills such as inclusion.

Your role is complementary: You can reinforce these lessons every day by encouraging inclusive behaviours and discussing them with your child.

What is Inclusion?

Inclusion means making sure that everyone has a place on the team, regardless of their skill level, experiences, personality, or individual characteristics.

It means accepting and valuing differences, giving everyone the opportunity to participate, and creating a respectful, supportive, and welcoming environment for all.

Key Words

- Belonging
- Being welcoming
- Embracing differences
- Making others feel valued
- Making participation possible for everyone

"We need to choose together to let our differences bring us closer rather than divide us."

Caroline Ouellette,
Concordia University Stingers

Why is Inclusion Important?

When players feel included, they develop greater **confidence**, are more willing to **participate**, and feel more comfortable **asking for help** or **expressing their needs**. This contributes to players' **well-being**, as well as team **cohesion** and overall **team performance**.

A team where players feel welcomed and respected is often a team where **communication is stronger**, **cooperation** is greater, and everyone has the opportunity to **improve**.

How to Reinforce Inclusion at Home?

You can support this learning by encouraging your child to:

- Include others in activities and conversations
- Accept and respect differences
- Avoid leaving someone out or making them feel left out
- Avoid words or jokes that make fun of people's differences or could make others feel excluded
- Get to know others and take an interest in them.

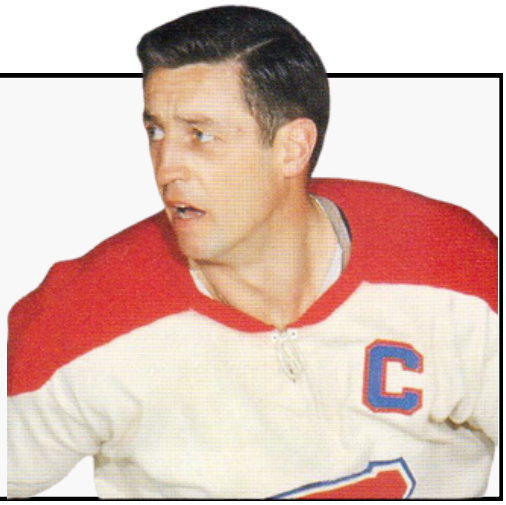
Concrete Examples to Discuss

- Invite a teammate to join a game or conversation
- Respect differences in interests, personalities, preferences, and cultures
- Learn people's names and ask questions to get to know them
- Go talk to a teammate who seems to be alone

Being an Inclusive Teammate

"I've always encouraged my teammates to respect everyone's personality, because it takes all kinds of people to make a great team."

Jean Béliveau,
captain of the Montreal Canadiens for 10 seasons



Questions to Ask Your Child

- What makes you feel included in a group?
- Has someone ever helped you feel like you belonged?
- What could make someone feel left out?
- How can you help a teammate feel included on the team?

By regularly talking about **inclusion** with your child and encouraging inclusive behaviours in everyday situations, you help reinforce the messages shared by coaches and support the development of an essential life skill—one that matters both in hockey and in life.

Recognizing and Reinforcing Inclusion

- ☐ Recognize moments when your child includes others.
- ☐ Help your child recognize actions that promote inclusion, such as inviting someone to join in or reaching out to someone who is alone.
- ☐ Ask your child about inclusive behaviours they notice on their team.
- ☐ Encourage openness to differences at home, at school, and in sport.
- ☐ Lead by example by demonstrating inclusive attitudes and behaviours.