Youth in Triathlon

Triathlon began as an adult sport and is just starting to enjoy mass participation by children and youth. At younger ages triathlon should be one of MANY sports that youth participate in. Specializing (focusing only on triathlon) as a performance goal should not occur until after an athlete has gone through puberty. This usually occurs in the middle to

late highschool years. Time and again it has been shown that specialization in the early teen years (or before) results in athletes becoming injured, burned out, and leaving the sport before they reach their potential.

At the international level, triathlon espouses the philosophy of a balanced "Mind, Body, and Soul". We uphold this at the youth level by:

Focusing on personal performance and enjoyment. Ask questions like "what did you enjoy the most?", "when did you feel the best?" and "what are you looking forward to next time?"

De-emphasizing placing, performance measures, and / or comparisons between athletes.

Noticing and discussing the positive accomplishments of teammates and competitors. Praising others as well as your child. Showing respect for all efforts.

I Like To Tri!

Some young athletes become very motivated and want to do more and more training. It is important to honour their

drive while maintaining a BALANCED approach to practice until after they have finished puberty. The body goes through enormous changes during the growth years. You cannot tell how an athlete will perform in the future based on their results before puberty. Below are some recommended activities and guidelines for parents and athletes at the three developmental LTAD stages.

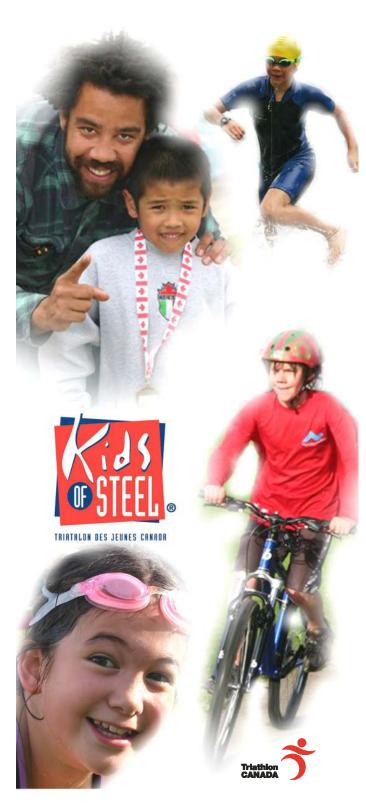
Participate in a wide variety of sports and movement activities when young. Keep it FUN and enjoyable. Teach social responsibility and positive sportsmanship. Respect everyone.

My child is:	Recommended triathlon activities include:							
Active Start 0-6 yrs	Community KOS events (1 or 2 per year) Fun, movement-based programs & clinics Learn to swim, bike, and do gymnastics							
Fundamentals 5-10 yrs	Community KOS events (1 to 5 per year) Fun, technique-based clinics, camps Swim lessons or swim club School XC, track, running team sports Mountain biking; cycling for transportation Cross Country Skiing, snowshoeing							
Sampling 9-15 yrs	SAME as Fundamentals plus: Cycling skills camps, Cycle Cross Triathlon camps, clinics Open water swimming							

Seasonal Participation in Triathlon for Children and Youth

The chart below shows the progression of involvement in triathlon-specific activities throughout childhood and adolescence. Participation beyond these ranges are not recommended if youth wish to pursue triathlon at an Elite level.

LTAD Stage	Ages	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Active Start	0-6												
Fundamentals	5-10												
Sampling	9-15												
Specializing	15-19												





Kids of Steel®

Kids of Steel® or KOS is the National title for youth triathlon events and programs across Canada. All KOS events follow a similar philosophy emphasizing "sport for all", inclusion, and community.

All athletes and parentguardians, whether recreational or competitive, are expected to demonstrate the following behaviours at KOS events:

- respect for everyone
- encourage "finishing is winning"
- turn around at the finish and cheer the next person to the line
- friendly, supportive interactions

Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD)

Kids of Steel® and triathlon Youth Development programs follow LTAD guidelines and are part of the Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) movement.

Competitive triathletes do not peak, or reach their highest performance until 5 to 10 years AFTER puberty.

The recommendations for youth in triathlon are based on growth, maturation, and a holistic approach focused on SPORT FOR LIFE in both performance and participation streams. See diagram to the right for a summary.

Triathlon Training for Children and Youth

Triathlon training for children and youth emphasizes: | fun and friendship | skill development in all sports (swim, bike, run, transitions) | basic techniques and a wide variety of movement abilities within each sport | speed of movement | participation in a wide variety of sports; triathlon as cross training | seasonal participation in formal triathlon activities | swimming, cycling, and running with family for fun and fitness



the sport)

