Coaching young athletes

STEPS PER DRILL

An 8-year-old won't hold a five-step drill. Give one thing, show it, and let them try. Kids remember more when they act it out than when they only hear it.

AGE	DRILL FOCUS	DRILL SHAPE	SAY IT LIKE
6-8 TRY	**One action**	Small-group stations, 3 to 5 minutes each, then rotate. A ball for every kid.	**"Get it to the cone."**
9-11 PRACTICE	**Add one rule at a time**	Add the next rule only once the first one sticks.	**"Catch it, then find the open gate."**
12-14 BUILD	**Short sequences**	Link a few actions. Change the setup so they adapt.	**"Check, receive, play forward."**

> **The one-breath test:** **if you can't explain it in one breath, it's two drills.**

Practical coaching recommendations informed by developmental research and station-based practice models (USA Hockey ADM). Individual needs vary.