



LONG-TERM EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENT (LTED)

What is LTED?

Equestrian Canada, an extensive infrastructure comprised of professional staff and volunteers, in partnership with Sport Canada, has developed a systemic approach to maximize participants'/athletes' potential and involvement in equestrian sport.

The LTED model is a blueprint for building the best sport system possible. It respects the developmental needs of all equestrians, addressing those who are able-bodied and those who have a disability. It also addresses both early and late developers.

The goal of this brochure is to help you understand the needs of young athletes, and what can be done to promote their best interests by staying active and healthy throughout their lives. You will learn about Long-Term Equestrian Development (LTED), a model that provides parents, coaches and athletes with the fundamental tools to support progression from beginner to champion, if that is the athlete's goal. LTED will also help the recreational equestrian develop the skills needed to enjoy the thrill of riding or driving horses.

Why LTED?

This new approach was undertaken in response to programs that have treated young athletes as miniature adults, focusing too much on winning, concerns about Canada's lack of physical activity, particularly among children, and the perceived poor performance of Canadian teams internationally.

LTED sets out recommended training sequences and the progression of skill development for everyone—from under 6 to over 60 years of age.

Parents will be able to use LTED to gain a better understanding of the key stages of athlete development necessary for success, along with the right mix of skills, coaching and support required along the way.

The Stages of Development Apply to All Ages

Children of the same calendar age can differ enormously in their level of maturation. Generally speaking, equestrians should not specialize in a sport or in a discipline until they are at least 12 to 16 years of age.

What does LTED do?

- Focuses on effective training for all athletes and participants, creating a path of success.
- Trains the right components at the right stage of development.
- Encompasses every discipline.
- Encourages long-term participation, enjoyment, and achievement.
- Defines optimal training, competition, and recovery programs based on biological age to maximize the potential of participants and athletes in equine sport.
- Addresses the physical, mental, emotional, technical, and tactical needs of athletes throughout each stage of development.



Why Does Your Child Play Sports?

- To have fun
- To be with friends or make new friends
- To do something they are good at
- To feel good about themselves
- To experience thrills
- To feel accepted
- To improve and learn new skills

A child is far more likely to participate in an activity if they are satisfying their own motives and have the support of their parents. If children are started in competitive sport before they are emotionally or physically ready, they are more likely to experience disappointment and stress. This may lead to the child's desire to abandon the activity altogether.

What Can You Do As a Parent?

Parents can encourage the enjoyment and participation in sports in many ways. In fact, most sport activities would not exist without the contributions of parents as volunteers, fundraisers and cheerleaders. Sporting skills learned in childhood build foundations for enjoyment of sport and physical activity throughout life.

Here are some key suggestions to help you encourage your child:

- Initially emphasize participation and completion rather than immediate success.
- Keep your child's motives and dreams separate from your own.
- Encourage intrinsic rewards, improvement and personal goals. Consider winning as a bonus.
- Allow your child to experience a large variety of activities before specializing.
- Encourage your child to pursue their dreams.

10 Key Factors Influencing LTED & What You Can Do as a Parent

The following key factors encompass the principles and tools upon which LTED is built.

1. **FUNDamentals**

Enrol your child in a variety of activities so they can gain skills in the ABC's of athleticism (gymnastics, martial arts, swimming, etc.). Unstructured play is also very beneficial.

2. **Equestrian Early Start and Late Specialization**

Late specialization means ensuring your child has developed overall motor control, intellect, and emotional maturity before focusing on a specialization in any discipline.

3. **Developmental Age**

Make sure the program in which you enrol your child matches the individual readiness of your child. All children develop at their own rate.



4. Windows of Trainability

Have your child participate in a variety of athletic activities to develop stamina, strength, speed, skill and suppleness during the optimal learning ages.

5. Developing the Equestrian as a Whole Person

Help your child develop all aspects of personal development: physical, mental and emotional.

6. Annual Training, Competition and Recovery Plan

Seek the proper balance of training to competitions for the harmonious blend with your child's optimal stage of trainability.

7. Calendar Planning for Competition

Work with your child's coach to plan an individual competition schedule.

8. System Alignment and Integration

Inform coaches of your child's other activities, and work with other equestrians to create an effective overall system of development.

9. Years to Reach the Top

It is theorized that it takes approximately 10,000 hours of training over 10 years to achieve the highest level of performance. Support your child and be willing to invest in what it takes to succeed.

10. Continuous Improvement

LTED, as a continuously evolving vehicle for change, reflects all emerging facets of physical education, sport and recreation to ensure a systematic and logical delivery of programs to all ages.