



# New Family Orientation Night

## A Step-By-Step Model To Host An Effective Event

Nontraditional hockey families often face several barriers to entry. In addition to the cost and commitment associated with hockey, there is often an unfamiliarity or intimidation factor. For new players and parents, hockey's unique rules and tight knit community can actually discourage them from participating.

To alleviate those concerns, it is critical for associations to provide a welcoming atmosphere to potential new families. One of the most effective ways of doing that is to host an orientation or information night.

### 1. Format & Structure

#### Format:

- On one or two evenings, associations shall host an open house style of event where parents are invited to come and learn more about the association as well as get any questions answered
- Most or all association board members should be in attendance
- Several booths or stations can be set up to cover a variety of important topics including but not limited to registration, equipment, safety, levels of play and age requirements, fundraising, volunteering, etc.
- Can choose to host an in-person registration night or equipment donation/fitting session in conjunction with the event
- Can also organize activities for the kids to participate in while their parents are busy (ex: skating, roller hockey, dry land drills, etc.)

#### Rental Needs:

- Booth space (such as arena or school lobby)
- Tables and chairs
- Ice hours (if desired)
- Dry land training area (if desired)

### 2. Marketing & Communications

#### Communications:

- Promote the event through flyers in schools, email, website, community PSAs and road sign, social media and other mediums.
- If hosting registration or equipment night as well, invite current hockey players through internal communications
- Each booth or station should be clearly labeled so that participants can easily navigate to the areas they are interested in
- Future events such as Girls Hockey Weekend or Try Hockey For Free Day should be promoted



## 2. Marketing & Communications

### Marketing

- All board members and volunteers should adopt a customer service mindset for the night with the goal of helping attendees in any way possible
- Consider promoting the association and its values throughout the night by having members wearing apparel, displaying signage, etc.

## 3. Volunteer Needs

### During the Event:

- Board members and other volunteers to staff booths or tables
- A couple of volunteers should be set aside solely for providing help where needed and interacting with parents not at a specific station
- Coaches may be needed to conduct on- or off-ice activities
- Consider opening the concession stand or providing food if event held during evening hours that conflict with common dinner times

### Post-Event:

- Each potential new player/family should be contacted personally following the event for additional communication and promotion of future opportunities