



EQUESTRIAN  
CANADA  
ÉQUESTRE



# LONG-TERM EQUESTRIAN DÉVELOPPEMENT

*“Long-Term Equestrian Development (LTED) is not only about building successful high-performance athletes, but also about ensuring the highest quality riding experience for every person who engages in equestrian sport, including riders with disabilities.”*

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Equestrian Canada

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# Preface

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It is a pleasure to introduce **Equestrian Canada’s Long Term Equestrian Development 2.0** (LTED 2.0) to you.

Built upon the *Developing Equestrians in Canada* (2007), this document is designed to guide our sport and athlete development for the next decade.

Why do we need 2.0? As the first of the LTAD Competition Reviews was underway in 2012 it became clear that like *The Canadian Sport Policy* and the original LTAD document from Canadian Sport for Life, ours needed to be refreshed and brought up to date. Two important developments had taken place that were particularly relevant for our sport –

- **The addition of the concept and stage “Competitive for Life”**
- **Clearer understanding of the relationship between recreation and sport**

With the addition of these we could better understand and respond to equestrian development with its varied discipline needs and geographic regions in the broader context of the Canadian Athlete Development Model. The original Competition Review Working Group had been proceeding discipline-by-discipline, but there was now a parallel priority – the Master Document needed to be updated. The working group had recommended changes to the original equestrian development stages and had focused its attention on three main principles: **Affordability and Accessibility; Athlete Development Pathways and Meaningful Competition**. These two pieces were the catalyst to create LTED 2.0 and an additional group was tasked with the creation of 2.0.

It is my hope that this document will serve as a touchstone upon which we can develop and deliver programmes at every stage of athlete development that are athlete-centred, coach-driven, and supported by an integrated sport system. This will be enabled by the provincial partners working collaboratively with the national federation – all using the same Long Term Equestrian Development “road map.” This “road map” provides a clear and stage-appropriate pathway for success, whether it is a child or adult wanting to learn to ride/drive or vault, an athlete on the verge of high performance, or an individual or family participating for the pure pleasure of being with their horses and wanting to be involved in the equestrian world.

“Continuous Improvement” is a principle of LTAD and I hope that this document 2.0 will help to bring along the next generation of equestrians. The building blocks that the 2007 group created are now bigger and stronger – our programmes being built now will be more robust and inclusive of those on both sides of recreation and sport with clear interactive pathways. What I love most of all in this model – there is a place for each and every one of us at every stage of our life within this wonderful sport.

And finally, to the numerous volunteers over many years who have given their time, their expertise and their passion to this project,

Thank You!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Welch', written in a cursive style.

Anne Welch

# Long-Term Equestrian Development

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## FOREWORD

Long-Term Athlete Development has evolved significantly since Equestrian Canada published its “*Developing Equestrians in Canada*” document in 2007, and this updated Long-Term Equestrian Development (LTED) model reflects the evolution in thinking that has occurred in the Canadian sport system and within Equestrian Canada since that time. Two major developments have informed this updated model:

- The publishing of *Canadian Sport for Life* (Version 2.0) in 2014, and
- Work undertaken by Equestrian Canada (EC) in its collaboration with Own the Podium (OTP) and the development of EC’s Gold Medal Profile and Podium Pathway.

Long-Term Equestrian Development (LTED) is not only about building successful high-performance athletes, but also about ensuring the highest quality riding experience for every person who engages in equestrian sport, including riders with disabilities. It is Equestrian Canada’s goal to also make sure every person who wants to participate in equestrian sport has the opportunity to do so.

LTED also recognizes the essential roles played by parents, coaches, sponsors, breeders, officials, administrators, sport scientists, and other stakeholders, and as a model, LTED gives the Canadian equestrian community a vision of where we strive to be. Our model will help us to improve our infrastructure, programs and initiatives to ensure the best opportunities for all our athletes and participants, whatever their personal goals or their stage of development.

In developing this LTED model, Equestrian Canada has several objectives:

- To have our sport to flourish in Canada and be recognized for excellence internationally.
- To provide a systematic pathway for a new generation of Canadian athletes to compete successfully at the highest international level, and
- To help increase participation in riding at both competitive and recreational levels, and keeping all equestrians involved in our sport throughout their lives.

**Note:** *This document covers long-term development in equestrian sport but does not provide details on adaptations for each of equestrian's distinct disciplines. For discipline specific details see each discipline's Long-Term Development model as it becomes available.*

*This document also provides guidance to the equestrian industry to help operators systematically assess whether or not the programs they deliver are developmentally appropriate.*

## Some terminology

Understanding some terminology will make following the LTED easier.

**Physical Literacy:** A person who has good physical literacy has the competence (skills) and the confidence to take part in physical activity – in this case ride, vault or drive. While physical literacy can be developed at any time during a person's life, it is important that a good level of physical literacy be developed prior to a child's starting his or her adolescent growth spurt. In simple terms, physical literacy means developing:

- Basic human movement skills (sitting, standing, walking, running, etc.)
- Fundamental movement skills (running, jumping catching, kicking, throwing, hopping, skipping, striking, and riding – and many others; PLUS developing agility, balance and coordination.
- Foundation sport skills – these are the entry-level skills for a multitude of different sports – so that the individuals have the foundation necessary to take part in the activities of their choice later in life. In equestrian this means learning to ride across multiple disciplines.

**Excellence pathway:** Once equestrian athletes start competing and are on their way to becoming high performance athletes, they are on the excellence pathway. To be on the excellence pathway means a planned and conscious effort to strive for success at the highest level of international competition. While many athletes start on the excellence pathway, fewer and fewer remain as the level of competition rises, until it is only a very select few, with the talent, the drive, the commitment and the resources, who make it to be competitive at the Olympic, Paralympic or World Championship level (depending on their discipline).

**Competitive for Life:** Equestrian athletes who compete regularly in competition at any level, and who are not vigorously pursuing international success, are engaged in being competitive for life – which is part of being active for life. Competitive for Life includes Master's level events.

**Active for Life:** At any time after learning to ride/drive/vault, people can participate simply because they love the activity. This can be continued participation in equestrian sport as an athlete or in another capacity, individual or in a group, can be informal or well organized, and can potentially involve tests, or competitive activities, that are not on the excellence pathway, but are designed to allow participants to measure their own progress.

**Athletes with a disability:** Many individuals with a wide range of disabilities learn to ride/drive; as part of a therapeutic riding program, or simply to be “active for life.” Since equestrian is included in the Paralympic Games, there is also the possibility of some athletes with disabilities competing at the highest level. Equestrian events for athletes with a disability are contested under the auspices of the International Equestrian Federation (FEI).

Equestrian became a part of the Paralympic Games for the first time in 1996 in Atlanta and is open to athletes with any type of physical or visual impairment. Events are mixed and grouped according to the athlete’s functional profiles (athletes placed in one of four groups of approximately equal disability). Athletes can compete in dressage events, a championship test of set movements, and a freestyle test to music. There is also a team test that involves three to four members. Riders are judged on their display of horsemanship skills and are permitted to use devices such as dressage whips, connecting rein bars, rubber bands and other aids. An athlete may have either a congenital or an acquired disability.

**Congenital disability:** This is a disability a rider has had since birth. As a consequence the rider will have gone through all of their stages of development as a person with a disability.

**Acquired disability:** This is a disability a rider acquires as a result of trauma or illness later in life. A rider with an acquired disability may have gone through all (or most) stages of human development prior to their injury/illness, and will have to re-learn basic human movements, fundamental movement skills and foundation sport skills with their impaired body. For ease of language this process is called Post-Rehabilitation Active Start, Post-Rehabilitation FUNdamentals and Post-Rehabilitation Learn to Train – Post-rehab for short.

Therapeutic riding programs, using adaptive equipment and taught by certified instructors who are trained in working with a variety of impairments, can help introduce individuals with congenital or acquired disabilities to the mental, physical and social benefits of riding. Therapeutic riding centres generally have adaptive riding equipment available for use by persons with disabilities, while this type of equipment may not be readily available at standard equestrian centres.

**Equestrian vs Equine:** When referring to a person, the term “equestrian” includes participants in all sports under Equestrian Canada’s, umbrella - be they riders, drivers or vaulters, and, although the term “athlete” is often used, this term covers all riders, participants, and competitors in our sport who are called upon to demonstrate athletic attributes and skills. Athlete in this guide refers to the horse/ human combination. Equestrian (or child/adult) will be used for the human and equine (or horse) for the horse, pony, mule, or donkey.

**Equestrian Canada:** Equestrian Canada is Canada’s official National Sport Organization with authority over, and responsibility for, equestrian sport in Canada. The organization is made up of Provincial/Territorial equestrian organizations, and is a member of the Fédération Équestre Internationale (FEI).

## WHO IS THIS DOCUMENT FOR?

This document is designed to encourage a consistent approach to positive rider development, and to guide the actions of everyone involved in our sport, be they athletes, instructors, coaches, parents, event organizers, or horse/stable owners. It provides information that is applicable to individuals working with beginners to advanced riders, to those working with recreational riders and with those who aspire to the highest levels of international competition, and to those working with both able-bodied athletes and those with disabilities.

**Equestrians:** For athletes this guide provides a road map to enjoyable participation or sport excellence. It provides guidance on how long it generally takes to reach the top in equestrian sport, and indicates the amount of training required and what level of competition is appropriate as the athlete improves. Following the guidelines and working with a certified coach will increase the likelihood of achieving excellence, and success. This guide also shows athletes the different programs that are available to them as they develop and learn.

**Parents:** For parents this guide is an education tool. As they become familiar with the stages of development and what is best for the athlete at each stage of development they can support coaches who are doing the right thing, and question coaches whose actions are not in the best interest of the developing athlete.

Positive developmentally-appropriate coaching encourages younger children to participate in multiple sports in order to become well-rounded athletes, rather than encouraging early specialization. Parents who understand LTED are also in a better position to ask important questions when selecting a coach or purchasing, leasing or using a horse. This guide, therefore, provides information for parents and directs them to appropriate resources on topics important to their child's development in our sport

**Coaches:** For Coaches, this guide is a resource to encourage further education and development of their coaching skills related to the context in which they primarily coach. It validates best practices, and orients coaches to what is appropriate for skill building at each stage of athlete development. It helps coaches explain the LTED Stages to parents, helping educate them about appropriate activities at each stage of their child's athletic development. It also helps coaches assist athletes to become self-monitoring, independent, decision makers. In addition it provides guidance on what competitions are appropriate for each stage of an equestrian athlete's development.

**Officials:** By understanding the optimum development of athletes in equestrian sport, officials are in a better position to suggest equipment and rule changes that are stage-of-development appropriate. Officiating guidelines based on the LTED philosophy will highlight the important contribution of officiating in the learning and development of athletes.

**Competition Organizations:** For organizers, this guide helps guide developmentally appropriate competition structure and rules, thus enabling athletes to progress optimally. Well-structured competitions that are meaningful and progressive will encourage more participants to take part, thereby producing competitions that are successful for both participants and organizers.

**Stable and Horse Owners:** For individuals who have an investment in equestrian, to understand their role in equestrian sport and the ways they can provide leadership and support to developing athletes, and collaboratively drive real, measurable growth and success in equestrian sport.

## Equestrian Canada and other Organizations

Equestrian Canada has both formal and informal relationships with other organizations involved in equestrian activities. A formal relationship exists with the Canadian Pony Club, while the important relationship with the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association (CanTRA) remains unformalized.

**The Canadian Pony Club (CPC):** Provides education in English-style riding and stable management to youth ages 6 - 25. The CPC program accreditations are recognized by Equestrian Canada's NCCP coaching program. CPC members are eligible to earn EC rider levels and NCCP Instructor certification (see EC Coaching Program Policy and Procedure Manual for further information on EC/CPC equivalences).

**The Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association (CanTRA):** The Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association is a registered charity that promotes challenge, achievement and empowerment for children and adults with disabilities through the use of the horse. CanTRA also provides education and instructor certification.



# KEY FACTORS IN LONG-TERM EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENT

The Long-term equestrian development model provides a framework for training, competitions and recovery that is based on the development stage of the athlete rather than the chronological age. These key factors are summarized below.

More detail about each of these concepts can be found in Canadian Sport for Life 2.0, available free of charge from [www.canadiansportforlife.ca/resources](http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/resources).



## Sport for Life Ten Key Factors of Long-Term Athlete Development

### Ten Key Factors in Long-Term Athlete Development and Quality Sport

#### 1. Physical Literacy

Physical Literacy is the foundation of both participation in physical activity and excellence in sport, providing a gateway for being active for life. Individuals who are more physically literate move with poise, confidence, competence and creativity in various indoor and outdoor environments, such as on the ground, in the air, in and on water, and on snow or ice.

#### 2. Specialization

There are right times and wrong times to specialize in any one sport or physical activity. Specialize too early, and the athlete may limit their development and success at older ages. Specialize too late, and the athlete may miss key developmental opportunities. In most sports, athletes should not specialize until they are between the ages of 12 to 15. Prior to that age, they should participate in a wide range of sports to ensure they become good, well-rounded athletes who continually develop physical literacy.

#### 3. Developmental Age

Children grow and develop at different rates. Sport and physical activity need to take each child's stage of growth and development into account when designing training, competition and recovery programs.

#### 4. Sensitive Periods

As children grow and develop, there are times when practice and training will have the greatest effect. These "sensitive periods" provide a special opportunity to train and develop important skills and physical abilities that will impact athletic performance through the lifespan.

#### 5. Mental, Cognitive and Emotional Development

Long-Term Athlete Development addresses the complete physical, mental, cognitive and emotional development of athletes – not just physical characteristics and performance qualities. Training, competition and recovery programs need to consider the mental, cognitive, and emotional development of each athlete.

#### 6. Periodization

Simply put, periodization is time management. It outlines all annual and seasonal training within a logical schedule to bring about optimal improvements in athlete performance at the right times, while minimizing injury and burnout. Periodization plans connect the Long-Term Athlete Development stage of the athlete with the training and development requirements of that stage.

#### 7. Competition

Athletes need to train and compete according to training-to-competition ratios that develop skills and fitness while preventing injury and burnout. As well, the quality of competition and the timing of competitive events need to serve the needs of the athlete – not the needs of coaches, parents and administrators.

#### 8. Excellence Takes Time

Research has shown that it takes 10,000 hours of quality training for athletes to achieve their full potential and perform at an elite level. In most examples of top-ranked athletes and other star performers, their 10,000 hours are usually accumulated over at least 10 years of training and competing.

#### 9. System Alignment and Integration

Based on Sport for Life principles, Long-Term Athlete Development promotes system alignment and integration between sport clubs, provincial/territorial and national sport organizations. Sport for Life addresses the overarching system and structure of sport and physical activity in Canada, including the relationship between school sport, physical education and high performance sport at all levels from policy to program delivery.

#### 10. Continuous Improvement - Kaizen

The concept of continuous improvement, which permeates Long-Term Athlete Development, is drawn from the respected Japanese industrial philosophy known as Kaizen. By applying a willingness to always seek improvements in our understanding and practice, Long-Term Athlete Development will continuously evolve to accommodate new breakthroughs in sport science research, new innovations in technology, and evolving best practices in coaching.

sportforlife.ca

## STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT VERSUS STAGE OF LEARNING

LTED is based on the rider's *stage of development*, rather than either their chronological age or how long they have been riding, and there is a reason for this. As children grow and mature, their capacities change; as their brains are able to deal with more complex issues, their nervous system has greater control over muscle functions and coordination, and their bodies respond to training differently because of the level of hormones circulating.

These body changes are genetically programmed and virtually unstoppable, and although every individual goes through the same sequence of development (birth, early childhood, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age) the timing of the sequence is highly individualized – particularly around the age of adolescence.

This means that a 12-year old, or 16-year old, learning to ride bring different abilities to the task than a 7-year old whose body, nervous system and brain is nowhere near as developed. For each rider we have to do WHAT IS BEST FOR THEM, at their particular stage of development in order for them to have the greatest chance of progressing as effectively as possible. This is what is meant by LTED being a framework for *developmentally appropriate* training, recovery, and competition.

### Stages of learning

Equestrians who enter the sport after they have completed adolescent growth DO NOT go through the early stages of LTED – but rather go through stages of learning. This means that while they should go through the same sequence of learning equestrian skills, they are not involved in the development of basic human movement skills, fundamental movement skills or broad foundation sport skills. In fact they bring those fundamental movement skills – developed in other sports when they were younger – to equestrian. Those who developed good agility, balance and coordination earlier in life are likely to learn equestrian faster than those who did not.

**Note:** *Para-athletes with a congenital disability carry their physical or visual impairment with them from birth, and go through each stage of LTED with that impairment. They therefore need to be exposed to developmentally appropriate training and learning at each stage. Athletes with an acquired disability may have passed the developmental stage of growth and development and can be best helped by a focus on learning the sport. For those entering the sport after adolescence the learning curve is frequently much shorter.*

## LONG-TERM EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENT (LTED) IN DETAIL

The Equestrian Canada Long-term Equestrian Development model is designed to overcome identified shortcomings, and reduce their impact.

Shortcomings of Equestrian Sport	Consequences of the Shortcomings
<p>Adult training and competition programs are superimposed on young/developing athletes.</p>	<p>Poor movement abilities and athleticism.</p>
<p>Coaches largely neglect the sensitive periods of accelerated adaptations to training in equestrian sport.</p>	<p>Lack of proper fitness.</p>
<p>Children tend to focus exclusively on horse riding, resulting in fundamental movement skills and sports skills not being taught properly or even explored.</p>	<p>Limited skill development due to undertraining.</p>
<p>Many coaches are not certified in the new NCCP coaching levels, leading to lack of LTED knowledge.</p>	<p>Children not having fun as they participate in adult based programs.</p>
<p>Parents are not educated about physical literacy and ensuring their children are exposed to all types of environments, not just equestrian.</p>	<p>A lack of systematic development in the next generation of international equestrian athletes.</p>
<p>Developmental training needs for para equestrians are not well understood.</p>	<p>Athletes pulled in different directions by school, clubs and stables.</p>
<p>Talent identification in all equestrian disciplines are poorly understood and misused.</p>	<p>Fluctuating national performance due to poor understanding of talent development, identification and transfer within a developmental pathway.</p>
<p>There is no integration between physical education programs in the schools, recreational community programs and elite competitive programs.</p>	<p>Failure to reach optimal performance levels in international competitions.</p>
<p>Equestrian tends to encourage athletes to specialize too early in an attempt to attract and retain participants.</p>	<p>Failure to reach optimal performance level at the desired level of competition.</p>
<p>More focus is given to developing and training the horse than the equestrian.</p>	<p>Unrealistic expectations of both equestrian and equine athletes.</p>

## CREATING SUCCESS

Long-Term Equestrian Development is designed to help Equestrian Canada reach its key objectives of:

- Creating a quality equestrian sport experience in which participants remain in the sport throughout their lives, while achieving their own sport goals, and
- Developing physical literacy, high-performance, excellence and a physically active population engaged in riding and competition.

In developing high-performance athletes, Equestrian Canada is committed to developing programs to provide our best athletes the opportunity to shine on the world stage, including programs to:

- Incorporate advancements in sport science in the development and application of training plans specific to the developmental stages of the athlete.
- Identify emerging talent to ensure that those working toward podium success are supported properly.

Finally, it is essential to ensure that programs exclusively designed for adults are made available to potential new riders to increase our sport's membership base. Such programs should go beyond having an amateur division for competition, and offer lessons and training to adults through adult only "Learn to Ride" programs.

Future Long-Term Equestrian Development initiatives will:

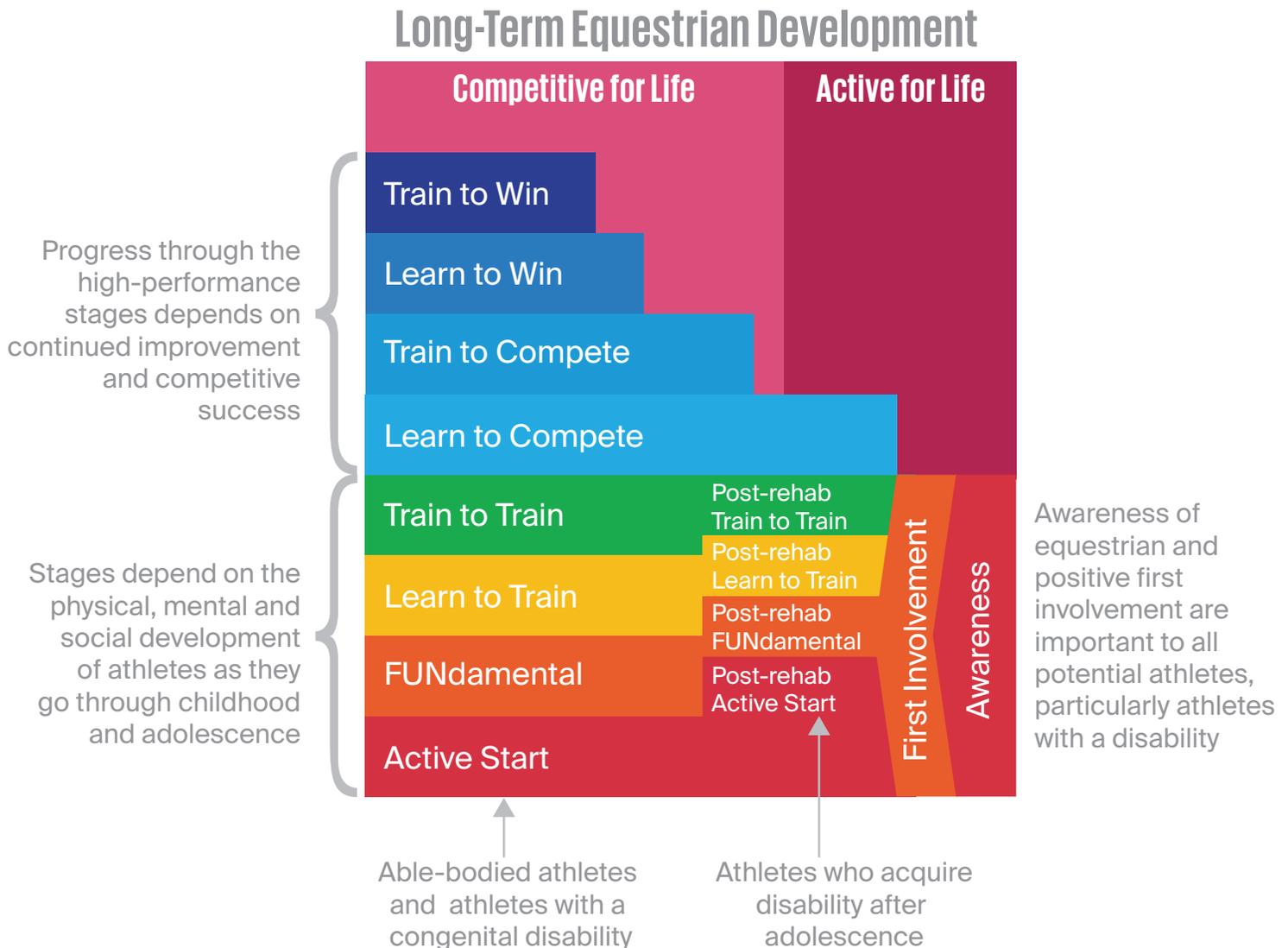
- Provide details on equestrian sport technical skill progression for each stage of LTED;
  - Skills specific to each equestrian discipline.
  - Details on LTED stage-by-stage physical capacity development for equestrians.
  - Guidance on appropriate psychological and life skills to be developed.
  - An outline can be found as Appendix III Support closer alignment of the equestrian community, improving communication among athletes, coaches, parents, grooms, officials, competition organizers, facilities, sponsors and owners.
- Educate the equestrian community on the importance of lifelong development.
- Coach to the goals and objectives of the equestrian, including recreational riders vaulters and drivers.
- Update certification and professional development programs for coaches working in different coaching contexts.
- Educate parents about child and youth development, the need for physical literacy, and horse selection and management.



- Provide guidance on adapting equipment, arenas and other facilities to better suit athletes at different stages of development (for example making a ring smaller for younger athletes).
- Encourage adherence to established guidelines for:
  - Hosting events at appropriate times of year.
  - Accommodating athletes with a disability.
  - Hosting alternate events such as skills or equitation based competitions.

# THE LONG-TERM EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Equestrian Canada framework is a generic framework that covers athletes with a disability as well as able-bodied athletes, and is shown as below. It is adapted from the Canadian Sport for Life model, with two additional, equestrian-specific, stages added.



## THE STAGES OF THE LTED FRAMEWORK

The diagram above represents equestrian sport. There is a place for everyone, from early learning, to the excellence pathway to Active and/or Competitive for Life. It is likely that the majority of equestrians will take part in *Competitive for Life*, since they enjoy competing, but their goals do not include reaching the Olympic or Paralympic level.

Only a select few riders and horses will make it to the ***Train to Win*** stage.

The purpose of this new model is to ensure that all Equestrian Canada and P/TSO programs and supporting educational materials are specifically designed to be fully inclusive and developmentally appropriate and to ensure that no one who wants to take part in equestrian sport is left out.

## THE ATHLETE AS A PARTNERSHIP

Equestrian is not a single athlete sport, and any development process must consider both the human and equine partners, and this complicates development if an equestrian changes horses.

This concept of partnership plays out differently in training and competition, and is different depending on whether the “new” horse is more or less advanced than the one being replaced. There are different scenarios:

- An advanced rider changes to a less advanced horse than the horse previously ridden.
- A developing rider moving up to a more advanced horse, for which they may not be fully prepared.

In the first scenario the rider may have to adjust their competition schedule and expectations to accommodate the new horse, and in the second, there may be a period of reduced success while the rider developmentally “catches up” to the horse.

Ultimately it is the combined ability of the equestrian/equine partnership that determines success, and this means that ultimately there is a need for both equestrian and equine development plans. Since this plan is focused on the equestrian, in the interim, there is a section on the development of horses at the end of this document. Until more information is available, athletes are encouraged to seek the help of a trained professional to assist them in developing their horse-training program.

# Long-Term Equestrian Development at a glance

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# Stage-by-stage Details

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**Movement is the first  
language of the child**

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**Children with  
disabilities**

The healthy development of children with a disability requires participation in regular physical activity and active play. In order for a child with a disability to enjoy sport and stay active for life, communities need to find effective ways to provide activity opportunities and equipment. In childhood children rapidly outgrow expensive mobility and sport equipment, making participation difficult. Equipment swaps and rentals are good alternatives.

## ■ AWARENESS AND FIRST INVOLVEMENT

**Who:** Canadian population, including disability centres.

**Objectives:** To make Canadians more aware of equestrian sport opportunities and ensure that an individuals' first experience with horses and equestrian sport is positive and enjoyable.

**Awareness:** *Individuals who do not know about equestrian are never going to get involved, and this is particularly true of persons with a disability who may not know that riding and driving opportunities exist, and can be pursued regardless of severity of impairment.*

**Positive First Involvement:** *In any sport, and particularly for athletes with a disability, the very first time they interact with the sport or stable can have a profound impact on whether or not they will return. Programs and stables need to carefully plan how they will treat "first time" visitors to make sure that they have a positive experience.*

### Overview

Undertake to make equestrian better known to under-represented groups (new citizens, persons with a disability, and others) and plan to make any individual's first involvement with the sport both memorable and enjoyable. To the greatest extent feasible make sure that equestrian centres are accessible to persons with a disability.

## ■ ACTIVE START

**Who:** Children from birth to age 6.

**Objectives:** *Children develop basic human movements and link them together in active play. They develop habits of daily physical activity and experience unstructured play in a safe environment. Children have their first exposure to horses/stables and learn basic safety around horses.*

### Overview

At this stage, physical activity is essential for healthy child development. Physical activity should be fun, and a part of the child's life every day. Active play is the way young children are physically active.

Optimal child development occurs when adults provide a safe place for children to play, and when all-round movement skills are developed through free play using a wide variety of colourful toys and equipment in the home and other settings away from horses. Active adult role models are important in building habits of activity in children.

During Active Start, exposure to, and respect for, animals should be encouraged, and hopefully children will have their first, safe, exposure to horses.

**Mental and cognitive development:** This is a stage of critical brain development. Active play builds important connections in the brain, and between the brain and children's muscles. Repetition of rhythmic activity allows brain-muscle connections to be strengthened. At this stage children begin using their imagination, as well as developing understanding, memorization and movement presentation.

**Emotional development:** Children experience pleasure from being involved in activities that offer rhythms and repeated, predictable, stimuli. It is important to build on the child's interests, and provide encouragement to explore new activities that build the child's self-confidence and self-efficacy. Children notice and imitate adult's behaviour and attitudes; so if adults have fun and enjoy physical activity, it increases the chance that the child will as well. By performing activities that adults are unable to do, children gain a great sense of achievement.

### Guidelines (General)

- Development of general movement skills.
- Not sedentary for more than 60 minutes except when sleeping.
- Some organized physical activity\exploration of risk and limits in safe environments.
- Active movement environment combined with well-structured gymnastics and swimming programs.
- Daily physical activity with an emphasis on fun.

### Guidelines (Equestrian specific)

- Take children to visit local equestrian facilities.
- Provide first experiences around equines.
- Encourage children to safely pet horses under supervision.
- Have children help brush a horse with assistance.
- Teach children what a horse needs to live, and help with their feeding and watering.
- Teach basic barn safety and rules.
- Do not allow children to be unattended around horses.
- Demonstrate respect for horses (and other animals).

## Children with impairment

Starting early in life, children with various disabilities can benefit greatly from hippotherapy programs. In these horse-based programs, physical and occupational therapists who are also credentialed hippotherapists, deliver children's therapeutic exercises using the three dimensional movement of a walking horse's back. Such exercises have been shown to improve the child's coordination, balance, and strength. This is one way that parents of children with special needs can help their children develop fundamental movement skills through physical movement and play.

While some individuals with a physical and/or intellectual impairment may have their first exposure to equestrian activities in a regular stable, many are first exposed to horses and equestrian activities through organizations that focus exclusively on providing opportunities for persons with impairment. The largest such organization in Canada is the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association (CanTRA).

Equestrian Canada is not formally affiliated with CanTRA; however since children whose early riding experiences with CanTRA may go on to become para riders (or drivers) and eventually compete at the Paralympic Games, references to appropriate CanTRA activities and programs are included in this document.

Additional information on hippotherapy and CANtra can be found at:

Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association CanTRA at: <http://www.cantra.ca/>

## Physical Literacy and Canadian Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guideline

### Physical Activity

Infants (0-1 year), should be physically active several times each day. Interactive floor-based activities are excellent.

Toddlers ages 1-2, and pre-schoolers (3-4) should accumulate at least 180 minutes - that's 3 hours - of physical activity throughout the day. It does not matter if this is made up of many short periods of active play. Play should be at different levels of physical intensity.

By 5 years, children should be engaged daily in at least 60 minutes of energetic play - and that means breathing harder and sweating!

Remember to encourage:

- A variety of activities in different environments
- Activities that develop movement skills
- Activities that develop hand-eye and foot-eye coordination (kicking, throwing and hitting)

### Sedentary behaviour

Infants (0-1 year), toddlers (1-2 years) and pre-schoolers (3-4 years) should have as little time as possible being sedentary. Sedentary behaviour includes sitting or being in a stroller/chair for more than one hour at a time.

For children under 2 years, screen time, such as television, computers and tablets is NOT recommended.

For children 2 to 4 years, screen time should be limited to under one hour per day; even less time is better.

### Canadian Guidelines 0-4 Years

Based on Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines  
and Canadian Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines  
CSEP/SCPE: [www.csep.ca/guidelines](http://www.csep.ca/guidelines)



## Active Start Stage Check List

- Provide opportunity for physical activity for up to 3 hours a day for toddlers and preschoolers.
- Provide unstructured physical activity — active play — for a minimum of 60 minutes a day, and up to several hours per day for toddlers and preschoolers. Toddlers and preschoolers should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time, except while sleeping.
- Provide physical play opportunities every day, regardless of the weather. Starting in their infancy, provide infants, toddlers and preschoolers with opportunities to participate in daily physical activity that promotes fitness and movement skills.
- Encourage parents to be active with their children and provide them and care givers with age-appropriate information about play.
- Ensure that children acquire movement skills that build towards more complex movements since these skills help lay the foundation for lifelong physical activity.
- Encourage basic movement skills — they may not just “happen” as a child grows older, but develop depending on each child’s heredity, activity experiences and environment. For children with a disability, access to age and disability-appropriate adapted equipment is an important contributor to success.
- Focus on improving basic movement skills such as running, jumping, twisting, kicking, throwing and catching. These basic human movements are the building blocks for more complex activities.
- Design activities that help children feel competent and confident while participating in a variety of fun and challenging games and activities.
- Ensure that games for young children are non-competitive and focus on participation. Avoid elimination games since children who are often eliminated first are the ones who need the most practice.
- Because girls tend to be less active than boys, and children with a disability less active than their peers, ensure that activities are gender-neutral and inclusive so that active living is equally valued and promoted for all children.

## FUNDAMENTALS

**Who:** This is the stage during which many children have their first exposure to equestrian activities: Boys from 6-9, Girls from 6-8

**Objective:** *For children to have fun with horses while learning with their peers. Encourage development of fundamental movement skills, emotional control and a positive attitude to new challenges. Develop familiarity with, and respect for, equine behaviour; and responsibility, rules and etiquette for handling and being around horses.*

**Profile:** In addition to developing fundamental movement skills, including agility, balance and coordination, children begin to learn about horses, horsemanship, and riding, driving or vaulting (walk trot & direction). Activity with horses is not discipline specific.

Young equestrians are invariably excited to be around horses for the first time, and such exposure at the FUNdamental stage should be well structured and positive and should encourage kids to have fun.

This is the time for them to learn how to use their bodies and improve physical literacy through engagement in a number of different sports and activities outside of equestrian. Since the FUNdamentals are about children learning how to better control their bodies and move in different ways, equestrian programs should ensure that children do not become specialized at this stage of their development .

A late entry athlete (older than 8 or 9) to equestrian will need to learn fundamental riding and horse skills, but will not be in the FUNdamentals stage since they have physically matured past this stage of development.

### First involvement

It is important that athletes with a disability also participate in learning general stable management. Adjusting to their ability, athletes should learn to care for the horse, tack up, and untack a horse. This allows the athlete to create the horse to human bond and can be physically beneficial to the athletes. Participants should be involved in learning care of horses. They also need to learn being mounted on the horse in this stage of development.



## Equestrian FUNdamentals

Programs Available	What to Develop
<p>P'tit Trot</p> <p>Rider Level 1 (English/Western)</p> <p>Vaulting Level 1</p> <p>Therapeutic Riding for athletes with a disability</p>	<p>Confidence around, and familiarity with horses</p> <p>Ability to control the horse in a group</p> <p>Basic horse and equipment care skills; brushing, cleaning up, putting away equipment etc.</p> <p>Team spirit and cooperation.</p>
Coaches Corner	Parent Actions
<p>Instructor level certification - NCCP Equine Canada</p> <p><b>CanTRA Assistant and Intermediate Instructor</b></p> <p>Use of lunge line for additional control</p> <p>Focus on a positive, enjoyable, experience for children</p> <p>One 30-60 minute session per week</p> <p>Ensure time on barn activities learning basic horsemanship skills</p>	<p>Choose coach trained and certified for this age of rider</p> <p>Encourage children to take part in multiple sports</p> <p>Encourage having fun while developing fundamental skills and social interaction (Fun Days)</p> <p>Ensure child arrives at stable on-time, appropriately dressed, and sufficiently fed/hydrated to focus on and enjoy the activity.</p> <p>Support the Instructor/Coach and trust their knowledge and experience.</p> <p><b>Parents of children with a disability</b></p> <p>Check to see if instructor has TRC* accreditation and certification</p> <p>Support TR instructor by encouraging your child to participate in every part of the lesson to the full extent of their abilities (with or without assistance) in order to develop competence and confidence</p>

### FUNdamentals overview

<b>Stage Objective</b>	<i>For children to have fun with horses while learning with their peers. Encourage development of fundamental movement skills, emotional control and a positive attitude to new challenges. Develop familiarity with, and respect for, equine behaviour; and responsibility, rules and etiquette for handling and being around horses</i>
Training Sessions/ Week	Once per week, 30 - 60 minute session
Competition frequency	Take part in one or two local participation or skills events per season,
Competition objective	Fun experience while developing skills through games
Competition Level	Gymkhana (games) and fun days
Coaching Level	NCCP Instructor CanTRA AI & II Vaulting (not offered by Equestrian Canada as part of the a National Coaching Certification Program)
Adaptation	Smaller and fully fenced, Simulated Competitions (w/Coaching).
	Athletes with a disability: - Horse leaders and rider sidewalkers if required
<b>Training to Competition Ratio</b>	<b>90% Training<sup>1</sup></b> <span style="float: right;"><b>10% Comp.</b></span>

## Check List for FUNdamental stage of LTED

Practice to become proficient in fundamental movement skills, with more equestrian skills being introduced towards the end of the stage.

- Emphasize the overall development of the child's physical capacities, and the ABCs of agility, balance, coordination and speed. Emphasize the development of fundamental movement skills, since individuals who have a better skill base have greater potential for long-term sport-specific development. Develop through games rather than drills.
- Encourage children to learn appropriate and correct running, jumping and throwing techniques through unmounted play or other activities. Encourage children with a disability to adapt these activities to fully use their body capacity.
- Develop linear, lateral and multi-directional speed with many short bursts of activity (less than five seconds), allowing for full recovery.
- Introduce basic flexibility exercises.
- Encourage participation in a wide range of sports. Participate once or twice a week in equestrian, so long as there is also participation in many other sports or activities three or four times per week. Ensure that activities change during the school year and are enhanced by multi-sport camps during summer and winter holidays

<sup>1</sup>The percentage of competition, in the Training to Competition ratio, includes both official competitions, and training that is set up in a competition format to prepare athletes for formal competitions.

Athletes with impairment can participate in equestrian sport, either at a regular stable or one that specializes in therapeutic riding.

Some athletes with a disability can participate equally throughout the Learn to Train stages using appropriate compensatory aids.

At therapeutic riding centres they can also benefit from the assistance of horse leaders and rider side walkers depending on their needs.

- Include strength-training exercises using the child's own body weight as well as medicine ball and Swiss ball exercises.
- Ensure that sporting and disability equipment are size, weight and design appropriate and that communities explore ways to share and provide access to appropriate equipment. Safety equipment must fit well.
- Introduce children to the simple rules and ethics of being with horses.
- Introduce very simple mental skills such as relaxation breathing.

## LEARN TO TRAIN

**Who:** Children from age 8 (girls) and 9 (boys) until they start their adolescent growth spurt.

**Objective:** *Support a multi-sport and diverse life experience while continuing to inspire increased commitment to equestrian activities with some specialization being introduced. Further development and consolidation of basic equestrian skills (aids and position) introduced in the FUNdamental stage. Increase the repertoire of skills for the equestrian. Introduce independent decision making and mental training such as visualization and relaxation.*

**Profile:** At this stage children are becoming more involved in equestrian sport, and depending on the discipline they find themselves in are learning to ride, drive or vault for the first time. To ensure that equestrians find the discipline to which they are most attracted and best suited, they should be exposed to a range of disciplines.

Adults who are learning to ride/drive/vault are not – by definition – in the Learn to Train stage, although they may need to learn the same fundamental equestrian skills. Depending on their physical literacy they may need to work on fundamental movement skills they lack, in order to learn more rapidly and avoid injury.

Learn to Train refers to the equestrian beginning to train as an athlete. While the horse also needs to be trained, this stage refers to the **team** becoming athletes and training appropriately. This stage does not refer to learning to train the horse, which is a separate skill.

Once the basic movement skills have been acquired, it is time to initiate more equestrian specific skills and acquire greater control of the skills introduced at the FUNdamentals stage. Having learned how to balance on the horse or vehicle, they learn to control the horse using their previously developed skills. It is recommended that athletes at this stage continue to engage in other sports in order to be well rounded and physically fit.

## Athletes with a disability

Depending on the level of support that the athlete with a disability needs in order to take part in equestrian activities, they may practice and train alongside their able-bodied peers in a regular stable, or may find programs better suited to their needs in one of the many therapeutic riding centers to be found across Canada. In general, the greater the need for support and assistance (Grade 1 or 2 riders) the better the fit with therapeutic riding centres, and the less support needed (generally Grade 3, 4 and 5 riders) the more appropriate learning to ride at a regular riding centre/stable. At therapeutic riding centres they can also benefit from the assistance of horse leaders and rider side walkers if they are needed.

### Areas of Focus

- Equitation and basic horsemanship skills.
- Multiple sport participation (Yoga, dance, Tai-chi, martial arts, swimming and gymnastics, for example) to improve physical literacy and fundamental sport skills.
- Basic hydration and nutrition.
- Develop confidence around horses and understand equine gestures and behaviour.

### Learn to Train overview

Stage Objective	<i>Support a multi-sport and diverse life experience while continuing to inspire increased commitment to equestrian activities with some specialization being introduced. Further development and consolidation of basic equestrian skills (aids and position) introduced in the FUNdamental stage. Increase the repertoire of skills for the equestrian. Introduce independent decision making and mental training such as visualization and relaxation</i>	
Training Sessions/ Week	Maximum of 2 "lessons" per week, Minimum of 1 lesson per week. May also be supplemented by practice sessions	
Competition frequency	Takes part in one or two local events per season, with no (or very limited) travel	
Competition objective	"Competition" focuses on individual skill improvement, and practice competition	
Competition Level	In House Schooling/ discovery level shows. Demonstrations. Athletes with a disability – Para Equestrian Canada Coast to Coast Video Competition	
Coaching Level	NCCP Instructor CanTRA AI & II Vaulting	
Adaptation	Smaller and fully fenced. As appropriate for the type of event or class or competition Athletes with a disability – Access to leaders/ Side walkers.	
Level of horse	Safe school horse or appropriate personal horse	
Training to Competition Ratio	90% Training	10% Comp.

## Learn to Train LTAD Checklist

- Refine fundamental movement skills and teach a wide range of foundation sports skills. Resist specialization in equestrian sport at this stage.
- Develop strength using exercises that incorporate the child's own body weight as well as Medicine balls and Swiss balls.
- Introduce hopping and bounding exercises unmounted and activities to aid in strength and power development. Encourage climbing and hanging activities to develop upper body strength (particularly for girls).
- Further develop endurance through continuous activity sports, games and activities.
- Develop flexibility through stretching.
- Develop speed by using specific activities that focus on agility, quickness and change of direction during warm-ups.
- Further develop mental skills including relaxation, attention control (focus) and visualization.
- Provide developmentally appropriate competitions.
- Encourage child to play a variety of sports in season, narrowing the focus to equestrian and two other sports by the end of this stage.
- Apply a ratio of 80 percent training to 20 percent competition (the 20 percent includes competition-specific training and actual competitions). Athletes undertaking this type of preparation are better prepared for competition in both the short- and long-term than those who focus solely on winning.
- Continue to encourage unstructured free play in a variety of environments and during all seasons.



## Equestrian Learn to Train

Programs Available	What to Develop
<p>English Rider Level 3-5 Western Rider level 2-3 Learn to Drive</p> <p>Vaulting Walk D</p> <p>PEC Coast to Coast games/ tests and video competition classes</p> <p>P/TSOs may have additional programs available</p>	<p>Controlling the horse at different gaits learning proper horse care with progressive independence and competence</p> <p>Acquiring and consolidating previous and new equestrian skills</p> <p>Working to complete benchmarks outlined in the learn to programs</p> <p>Team spirit</p>
Coaches Corner	Parent Actions
<p>Level: Instructor, Competition Coach, and CanTRA Instructor or Coach, Vaulting Trainer</p> <p>Focus of instruction is still on skill development and healthy lifestyle.</p> <p>Skills taught will simulate those that will be used in next stage, Train the Athlete.</p> <p>Focus on the enjoyment of learning and consolidating skills.</p>	<p>Meet with coach to assess child's goals and requirements.</p> <p>Plan for financial requirements of this stage of LTED, and fundraise for activities</p> <p>Volunteer with theory classes if skilled to do so, or volunteer at the stables, organize fun days, and help with summer camps</p> <p>Maintain a respectful distance during lessons and help only if asked</p> <p>Support the instructor by having the child arrive on time, appropriately dressed and fed, so the child gets maximum benefit from the experience.</p> <p>Connect Therapeutic Riding Instructors with the student's other therapists so that lesson plans, exercises and therapies can supply mutual support and reinforcement</p>

## ■ TRAIN TO TRAIN

**Objective:** *During this stage equestrians will narrow their focused from multi-discipline riding to developing skills in one, or at most two, equestrian disciplines. Introduce participants to the formal competitive experience, and its rules and ethics. Athletes learn to cope with winning and losing, and develop the ability to analyze and evaluate their own and other's performance. Emphasize physical fitness and good training habits (warm up, peak, cool down, and breaks) for both the horse and the participant. Participants work as part of a team with peers and professional support.*

**Profile:** First entry into formal competition at local shows, schooling shows or provincial or EC sanctioned competitions.

Skills taught at this stage of development require the equestrian to consolidate their basic equestrian skills to develop a better understanding of how the horse and equestrian work as a partnership. Riders better understand stable management, horse care and have the commitment to care for their equine(s) several days each week.

At this stage, equestrians receive instruction and practice between lessons to achieve short-term goals. The athlete, parent, and coach work together to set realistic short to medium term goals with a focus on the process of skill improvement. Lessons and practice reinforce correct movement patterns, and working with different horses gives the equestrian a better feel for the sport.

Off horse (unmounted) exercise and training is important for enhanced fitness. Cross training in aerobic activities are important during this stage. Resistance (strength) training increases in importance towards the end of this stage, and the athlete should work to maintain flexibility that often deteriorates during adolescence.

### Learn to Train overview

<b>Stage Objective</b>	<i>During this stage equestrians will narrow their focus from multi-discipline riding to developing skills in one, or at most two, equestrian disciplines. Introduce participants to the formal competitive experience, and its rules and ethics. Athletes learn to cope with winning and losing, and develop the ability to analysis and evaluate their own and other's performance. Emphasize physical fitness and good training habits (warm up, peak, cool down, and breaks) for both the horse and the participant. Participants work as part of a team with peers and professional support.</i>	
Training Sessions/ Week	Max 5 sessions/week in peak season, 2 off season	
Competition frequency	1-2 monthly during peak season. Max of 2 per month, with a maximum of one day of travel to competitions	
Competition objective	Low Key, Fun and Experience. Skills Acquisition	
Competition Level	Schooling, Local Provincial festivals Athletes with a disability Para Equestrian Canada Seas to Sea video competition. Novice and Intermediate tests (1&2)	
Coaching Level	Competition Coach Certified Vaulting Trainer	
Adaptation	Modify the riding area and use adaptive aids as necessary	
Level of horse	School horses and skills development horses (reliable and well mannered), or appropriate personal horse(s)	
Rider Level	5-6	
<b>Training to Competition Ratio</b>	<b>80% Training</b>	<b>20% Comp.</b>



## Train to Train Checklist

- Ensure you know where your athletes are in their adolescent growth, and adjust training accordingly:
  - Make aerobic training a priority after Peak Height Velocity (PHV)
  - Encourage flexibility training, as the rapid growth of bones during this stage leads to stress on tendons, ligaments and muscles.
  - Consider the sensitive periods of accelerated adaptation to strength training for females: immediately after PHV or the onset of menarche. For males, the sensitive period for strength begins 12 to 18 months after PHV.
- Learn to cope with the physical and mental challenges of competition and develop further mental skills.
- Introduce athletes with a disability to specialized sport-specific equipment such as (Para modified tack (saddles/reins)) and compensatory aids. For all athletes, the use of body-size and skill-level appropriate equipment remains important.
- Optimize training and competition ratios and follow a 70:30 percent training-to-competition ratio (the 30 percent includes competition-specific training and actual competitions). Too much competition wastes valuable training time and conversely, not enough inhibits the in-competition practice of technical/tactical and decision-making skills.
- Encourage athletes to focus on two sports based on their desire to participate and their sport-specific potential.
- Utilize single and/or double periodization as the optimal framework for preparation.
- Train athletes for competition through realistic simulated competition simulations during training.

### Starting on the excellence pathway

At this stage of an athlete's career they will need to start thinking about their ultimate goal in equestrian sport, and those who choose to strive for the highest level of competition will follow the excellence pathway. Those who continue to compete — but are not looking to the Olympic, Paralympic, Pan American Games or World Equestrian Games (WEG) move into the “Competitive for Life” component of Active for Life.

Many factors influence the decision to enter the excellence stream, primarily the individual's drive to win and available finances. Coaches and parents need to have a very frank conversation about the cost of competing at this level. Athletes will need an appropriate horse (or horses) to compete with, and the finances to travel to distant competitions. Because of the cost of continuing on the excellence pathway the vast majority of athletes move to Active for Life or Competitive for Life, and continue to participate in equestrian sport for personal enjoyment and satisfaction.

Athletes and their horses can return to the excellence pathway at any time, and their re-entry level will depend on their level of experience and the ability of the horse/athlete combination.

## Equestrian Train to Train

Programs Available	What to Develop
<p>Rider level 5-6</p> <p>Western Level 4 &amp; Intermediate Levels</p> <p>Learn to Drive</p> <p>Vaulting Walk C to Canter D</p> <p>Competitive summer camps offered by private stables or riding schools</p> <p>Skill development clinics</p> <p>PEC Coast to Coast. Sea to Sea (Novice and intermediate tests – 1&amp;2)</p>	<p>Further consolidation of fundamental skills</p> <p>Learning spatial awareness in the arena</p> <p>Learning competition requirements</p> <p>Participation in local, schooling, and/or entry-level competitions</p> <p>Logistics of basic competition skills</p>
Coaches Corner	Parent Actions
<p>Level: Competition Coach Certified</p> <p>Vaulting Trainer</p> <p>Introduction to structured activities</p> <p>Simulated competitions</p> <p>Teach how to read a pattern, course or test</p> <p>Keep training engaging and enjoyable</p> <p>Teach speed control</p> <p>Introduce to schooling shows</p> <p>Para - Coaches choose which Para Equine Canada grade tests to use based on the riders' current skill set</p> <p>Athletes with a disability should be provisionally classified</p>	<p>Volunteer within the sport and support equestrians</p> <p>Educate themselves on the quality of facilities and the care of horses</p> <p>Become knowledgeable about competitions, and support Officials' decisions.</p> <p>Talk to the coach about the equestrian's goals and the associated financial commitment. Support the equestrian financially</p> <p>Para/Therapeutic Riding: Educate themselves on pan equestrian sport opportunities, national para-sport organizations, and classification</p>

## LEARN TO COMPETE

**Who:** Equestrians from the onset until the completion of their adolescent growth. Typically 11-15 for females and 12-16 for males.

**Objective:** *Consolidate and refine equestrian skills and execute them under different competition environments and in the face of distractions. Consistent performance is the goal. Build competitive excellence by introducing ideal performance states, developing independent problem solving skills (decision making), and customized mental training programs. Develop a solid general physical fitness for the horse and rider targeting specific competition requirements. Focus is on stamina, speed, strength, suppleness, and skills.*

**Profile:** Competing on a regular basis at provincial, territorial and regional level

Equestrians in the Learn to Compete phase of the LTED model are consolidating skills, and athletes with talent and drive, and who have access to horses that match their skills, are now ready to begin specialized training. Athletes following the excellence pathway are preparing to eventually compete internationally and ultimately compete at WEG and Olympic, Paralympic or Pan American Games. Their goal is accuracy of performance, developing the ability to train and work with their horses, self-monitoring between lessons, and acquiring the physical and mental skills needed to perform effectively at an intermediate level.

Specific goals for equestrians in this stage are:

- Continue to refine skills and develop closer understanding with horse
- Make participants comfortable in competitions with an understanding of rules and etiquette, plus an ability to analyze, evaluate, and correct performance
- With coach, set short and medium term competition goals.
- Foster healthy priorities in competition through maximum effort, demonstration of good sportsmanship, enjoying the experience, and practicing team-work with crew and peers.
- Focus on the process of using the skills developed in training under a range of competition conditions
- Maintain fitness and involvement in other sports to maintain flexibility, endurance, agility, rhythm, strength, and speed.
- Control of horse through micro movement, understanding biomechanics and training for performance.

**Train to Train** is the period of adolescent growth, and training during this stage takes advantage of the windows of accelerated adaptation to training that this period of hormonal surge provides. An adult equestrian learning to ride who has missed these periods of accelerated adaptation, should still focus on the same goals, and not be rushing into an over-emphasis on early competitive involvement.

Athletes with a Disability can compete in video competitions, EC Bronze Para and schooling shows or provincial/EC sanctioned competitions. able bodied competitions selecting tests at the grade level deemed most appropriate for the rider's abilities or working from grade 1a tests up. Those with impairments must complete and submit an Equestrian Canada Medical Form to entry level competition organizers in order to use any adaptive aids they require.



Learn to Compete overview		
Stage Objective	<i>Consolidate and refine equestrian skills and execute them under different competition environments and in the face of distractions. Consistent performance is the goal. Build competitive excellence by introducing ideal performance state, developing independent problem solving skills (decision making), and customized mental training programs. Develop a solid general physical fitness for the horse and rider targeting specific competition requirements. Focus is on stamina, speed, strength, suppleness, and skills.</i>	
Training Sessions/ Week	Max 5 sessions per week (max. 60 minutes each). Introduction of Yearly Training Plan.	
Competition frequency	Maximum 2 monthly during peak season, with a maximum of one day of travel to competitions	
Competition objective	Develop competition skills in a well-balanced competition environment	
Competition Level	National, P/TSO Para equestrian – S2S / FEI Novice tests,	
Coaching Level	Competition Coach, Competition Coach Specialist, Competition Coach, HP 1 Certified Vaulting Trainer	
Adaptation	Able-bodied riders: None Para – Smaller ring size for lower grades and ride by ability not classification	
Level of horse	School horse(s), skill development horse(s) or appropriate personal horse(s)	
Rider Level	Rider 7-8 or P/TSO Athlete Development program	
Ancillary Training	Develop physical fitness, flexibility, and mental skills. Ensure quality nutrition, and hydration Engage in at least 2 other sports in season	
Training to Competition Ratio	70% Training	30% Comp.

# LONG-TERM EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENT 2.0

## Learn to Compete LTAD Checklist

- Provide year round, high intensity, individual training.
- Teach athletes, who are now proficient at performing basic and sport-specific skills, to perform those skills under a variety of competitive conditions during training.
- Place special emphasis on optimum preparation by modeling competitions in training.
- Individually tailor fitness programs, recovery programs, psychological preparation and technical development.
- Emphasize preparation that addresses each athlete's individual strengths and weaknesses.
- Engage in maximum of two complementary sports in their seasons.
- Utilize single or double periodization as the optimal framework of preparation.

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Athletes following the excellence pathway are preparing to eventually compete internationally and ultimately compete at World Equestrian Games and Olympic, Paralympic or Pan American Games. Their goal is accuracy of performance, developing the ability to train and work with their horses, self-monitoring between lessons, and acquiring the physical and mental skills needed to perform effectively at an intermediate level.

## Equestrian Learn to Compete

Programs Available	What to Develop
<p>Regional, Provincial, Territorial Competitions</p> <p>English Rider Level: 7-8</p> <p>Western Basic Training and Specialized event components</p> <p>Vaulting Canter C</p> <p>Para – Sea to Sea video competitions. PEC novice and intermediate tests (1&amp;2), as well as FEI novice tests.</p>	<p>Confidence in the skills necessary to perform the requirements of their events, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>y Hunter/jumper riders able to ride a course</li> <li>y Reiners memorise a pattern and able to ride required maneuvers</li> <li>y Vaulting requires specific gymnastics skills</li> <li>y Para dressage: Ride accurate figures in correct gait and frame.</li> </ul> <p>Horse(s) needs to be appropriately trained to allow the equestrian to develop skills</p> <p>Further develop understanding of horse care</p>
Coaches Corner	Parent Actions
<p>Level: Competition Coach Competition Coach Specialist Certified Vaulting Trainer</p> <p>Assist in finding appropriate horse/rider combinations</p> <p>Periodize the competition calendar for optimum development</p> <p>Guide parents in horse purchases or leases</p> <p>Assist in schooling the horse for equestrian, if necessary.</p> <p>Select appropriate competitions and give parents information on logistics and licences/memberships</p> <p>Manage horse's nutrition, soundness and equipment as necessary</p> <p>Para dressage riders riding in ability appropriate grade – not by classification</p> <p>Implementing progressive Training Plans</p> <p>Understands correct use of adaptive aids by riders with a disability.</p>	<p>Support equestrian training, and encourage cross training and other sport participation</p> <p>Understand basic requirements of horse care. Support competition logistics</p> <p>Encourage healthy life choices: sleep, nutrition, strength, conditioning, time and stress management</p> <p>Understand, and be prepared for, high costs associated with excellence pathway and understand options</p> <p>Respect coach and training decisions. Give child space to develop independence</p> <p>Para/TR: Support and assist equestrian with a disability in major transition from TRC environment to competition barn and competition mounts.</p>



## ■ TRAIN TO COMPETE

Athletes with disabilities will need to be classified in order to compete in Para classes at Equestrian Canada Silver and Gold competitions.

This classification will allow the athlete to use adaptive aids and specialized tack.

Depending on the classification, the rider may have another person warm-up or lunge their horse at competitions. Prior to classification athletes with a disability compete in able body classes using appropriate aids for their disability.

**Objective:** *Consolidate and refine basic equestrian skills while developing more advanced skills and competing with consistency. Develop ability to analyse and evaluate their performance and make adjustments to competition plan. Learn to adjust to different competition environments and resist distractions when under pressure. Introduce talent identification.*

**Profile:** FEI Young Riders or Junior Riders team competing internationally.

This stage of equestrian is a person who is a confident, effective athlete with a sound understanding of key performance factors associated with their specific discipline.

The equestrian shows some knowledge and has experience of training horses capable of competing at national and international level. They adapt to a variety of horses at various levels of schooling to produce the best performances from them. They are able to identify problems, discuss these problems, and develop and execute plans to resolve or improve the situation. They are able to assess horses presented to them and determine the purpose for which each horse might be best suited. By the end of this stage, the equestrian is able to change horse performance, and critique their intervention to determine effectiveness of their training plan.

### Train to Compete overview

<b>Stage Objective</b>	<i>Consolidate and refine basic equestrian skills while developing more advanced skills and competing with consistency. Develop ability to analyse and evaluate their performance and make adjustments to competition plan. Learn to adjust to different competition environments and resist distractions when under pressure. Introduce talent identification..</i>	
Training Sessions/ Week	5-6 sessions per week (maximum of 90 minutes each) based on Yearly Training Plan	
Competition frequency	Maximum 2/3 monthly during peak season with inter-provincial or North American travel to appropriate competitions	
Competition objective	Consistently achieve personal goals in a variety of competition environments	
Competition Level	National and International Competitions and Championships Para Equestrian Silver & Gold national competitions	
Coaching Level	Competition Coach Specialist, High Performance 1 Certified Vaulting Trainer with 3 years experience	
Adaptation	Able-bodied riders: None Para – Smaller ring size and adaptive aids	
Level of horse	Developmentally appropriate for the discipline - more than one horse is ideal	
Rider Level	Rider 9-10 or P/TSO Athlete Development program	
Ancillary Training	Develop physical fitness, flexibility, and mental skills. Ensure quality sleep, nutrition, and hydration. Engage in complementary sport in off-season	
<b>Training to Competition Ratio</b>	<b>60% Training</b>	<b>40% Comp.</b>

### Train to Compete LTED Checklist

- Train athletes to peak for major competitions – performance on demand.
- Ensure that training is characterized by high intensity and relatively high volume all year round.
- Plan recovery/regeneration breaks to prevent physical and mental burnouts.
- Utilize single or double periodization as framework for preparation.

## Equestrian Train to Compete

Programs Available	What to Develop
<p>English Rider level 9-10</p> <p>Clinics with HP coaches/ athletes/ discipline experts offered by federations or private stables/riding schools</p> <p>Western national and International Shows Vaulting Canter B</p> <p>Para – PEC Novice and Intermediate tests FEI Novice tests and advanced tests</p>	<p>Ability to train and compete with several horses</p> <p>Competition at National and International level shows (Para: silver/ gold shows)</p> <p>Ability to school/train horses</p> <p>Ability to self-assess own performance</p> <p>Active in the training, planning, and taking responsibility for competitive success</p>
Coaches Corner	Parent Actions
<p>Level: Competition Coach Specialist High Performance Coach</p> <p>Certified Vaulting Trainer</p> <p>Manage riders expectations and aid in competition preparation</p> <p>Mentally prepare riders and horses for peak competitions</p> <p>Periodize training schedules to ensure peak performance at the right competitions</p> <p>Encourage riders to ride/ compete multiple horses</p> <p>Athletes with a disability must be classified in order to compete at this level</p>	<p>Support equestrian in the competitive experience</p> <p>Assist with the logistics associated with competition preparation and transportation</p> <p>Be financially invested in the athlete's high performance goals</p> <p>Volunteer where appropriate to help the sport and learn more as a parent about it</p> <p>Develop your knowledge and consider participating in the sports coaching or officials programme</p> <p>Parents should note that not all disabilities and impairments types can be classified (See Equine Canada classification policies and procedures) and should ensure that riders are aware of whether or not they can compete at the Paralympics</p>



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## LEARN TO WIN AND TRAIN TO WIN

The ultimate goal of the excellence pathway for equestrians is being named to the Canadian Equestrian Team (CET). Athletes competing on the CET have dedicated their lives to improving their performance and striving to bring home the gold!

Equestrians at this level require a large financial investment to ensure that they have the best horses with which to compete. Equestrians should have multiple horses to train and compete. Many equestrians at this level are using horses owned by family members, shareholders, partners, syndicates and/or corporations. Recognition of these owners is critical to maintain a successful pool of horses for athletes to access.

## LEARN TO WIN

**Objective:** *Consolidate and refine the equestrian's repertoire of skills. Develop consistent skill execution, and performance. Optimize performance with the goal of consistently placing at the top.*

**Profile:** Elite riders who are on the CET Long List with aspirations to make the CET short-list National team. During the next Olympic/Paralympic quadrennial these riders will be competing on the world stage.

### Learn to Win overview

<b>Stage Objective</b>	<i>Consolidate and refine the equestrian's repertoire of skills. Develop consistent skill execution, and performance based on implementation of sound in competition. Optimize performance with the goal of consistently placing at the top.</i>	
Training Sessions/ Week	30-90 minutes per day per horse, 5-6 days per week	
Competition frequency	2/3 month, plus on additional horses during peak season, with North American and International travel to appropriate competitions	
Competition objective	Optimizing performance, Winning, National team selection	
Competition Level	National Competition, FEI competition in North America, National Championships. Start competing internationally Para – EC National/ International and FEI	
Coaching Level	High Performance 1 Certified Vaulting Trainer	
Adaptation	Able-bodied riders: None Para – Ring size and adaptive aids	
Level of horse	Multiple quality horses appropriate for the discipline	
Rider Level	National Athlete Development programs	
Ancillary Training	Develop physical fitness, flexibility, and mental skills. Ensure quality sleep, nutrition, and hydration. Engage in discipline specific cross-training	
<b>Training to Competition Ratio</b>	<b>60% Training<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>40% Comp.</b>

## ■ TRAIN TO WIN

**Objective:** *Commit fully to international excellence. Refine and maintain all skills and tactical strategies, while ensuring that they are tailored to the strengths of the equestrian and the horse. Optimize and integrate all performance factors for specific international competitions to achieve podium performance.*

**Profile:** Elite riders competing on the world stage. Short list teams competing at World Equestrian Games, Olympics/Paralympics and PanAmerican/ParaPanAmerican Games

Train to Win overview	
Stage Objective	<i>Commit fully to international excellence. Refine and maintain all skills and tactical strategies, while ensuring that they are tailored to the strengths of the equestrian and the horse. Optimize and integrate all performance factors for specific international competitions to achieve podium performance.</i>
Training Sessions/ Week	30-90 minutes per day per horse, 5-6 days per week
Competition frequency	2/3 month, on multiple competition horses throughout competition year
Competition objective	Winning on World stage, World Ranking Points, Prize Money, Team Selection
Competition Level	Major Games (Olympic/Paralympic Games, World Equestrian Games, PanAmerican Games, World Championships), FEI International
Coaching Level	High Performance 1 Certified Vaulting Trainer
Adaptation	Able-bodied riders: None Para – Ring size and adaptive aids
Travel	International
Level of horse	Multiple quality horses appropriate for the discipline
Rider Level	National Athlete Development program
Ancillary Training	Maintain physical fitness, flexibility, and mental skills. Ensure quality sleep, nutrition, and hydration. Discipline specific cross-training
Training to Competition Ratio	<b>60% Training</b> <b>40% Comp.</b>

<sup>2</sup>May vary by discipline

## ■ ACTIVE FOR LIFE/ COMPETITIVE FOR LIFE

**Who:** Individuals involved in equestrian sport at any time after learning to ride.

**Objective:** *Support ongoing commitment to participate in equestrian activities either as an active athlete or by contributing in alternative ways; such as coaching, officiating, sport administration or volunteering.*

**Profile:** In the *Active for Life* stage participants may fall into one or more categories:

- Equestrians who enjoy competition, but who are not on the excellence pathway, and not training at the highest elite level. These individuals are “Competitive for Life” and for them the focus is developing skills and achieving personal bests.
  - Competitions for these individuals and their horses (or categories within existing competitions) are to be further developed, and may include Masters Age Group events or events for equestrians of similar ability.
- Equestrians who continue to ride/drive/vault for enjoyment, personal growth, or social engagement, but who have goals other than competition. These individuals are, “Active for Life”.
- Equestrians who no longer wish to ride/drive/vault, but who want to continue their involvement with the sport in another capacity.

These categories are loosely defined, and athletes are likely to move between them as time, interest, opportunity, health, fitness and access to suitable horses dictates.

Adults at this stage are generally seeking to master a skill as a personal goal, and using occasional competition or test levels as benchmarks for personal achievement. Younger or more competitive athletes at this stage should consider adding exposure to the competitive environment as an important skill testing experience.

Equestrians have many competing commitments including, but not limited to, school, friends, family, work, other sports, and social obligations. Developing programs that recognize the holistic nature of an individual’s life, as well as their personal goals will help entice them to continue coming to the barn and fuel their passion for equestrian sport.

## Late Entry Athletes

Many equestrians begin riding or driving horses later in life. Equestrian Canada recognises this large cohort of members and is providing a development pathway for these athletes.

Since late-entry participants have already passed through the growth and maturation stages of development, they have the physical and cognitive capacity to learn to ride more rapidly than the developing child. For optimum progress in the sport, late entry participants are best served by specific adult learn-to-ride programs and instruction. Such learn to ride programs should be supported by appropriate low-level competitive opportunities. Coaching certification programs offered through Equestrian Canada provide essential tools and knowledge for instructors seeking more information about late entry athletes.

Active for Life overview		
Stage Objective	<i>Support ongoing commitment to participate in equestrian activities as an active rider/driver through adult learn-to-ride programs and opportunities for recreational and social equestrian activities.</i>	
Training Sessions/ Week	To meet the needs of participants	
Competition frequency	To meet the needs of participants	
Competition objective	Fun and social introduction to low-level competition, and to test skills and measure personal progress	
Competition Level	InHouse and local	
Coaching Level	Instructor or coach as appropriate for the rider/driver	
Adaptation	Introduce persons with a disability to therapeutic riding	
Travel	Travel to educational or skill development events	
Level of horse	School master, depending on the level of equestrian, or appropriate personal horse(s)	
Rider Level	Appropriate to the level of the rider/driver	
Ancillary Training	To maintain fitness for riding	
<b>Training to Competition Ratio</b>	<b>95% Training</b>	<b>5% Comp.</b>

### Competitive for Life overview

<b>Stage Objective</b>	<i>Support ongoing commitment to participate in equestrian activities as an active rider/driver through opportunities to compete.</i>	
Training Sessions/ Week	To meet the needs of participants	
Competition frequency	To meet the needs of participants	
Competition objective	Friendly competition for personal growth, to test skills and measure personal progress	
Competition Level	All levels up to Nationals to meet the needs of participants	
Coaching Level	Variable depending on level of competition and personal goals	
Adaptation	Consideration of competition scheduling	
Travel	To meet participant needs and dependent on personal resources	
Level of horse	Appropriate for participants skill and competition level	
Rider Level	Appropriate to the level of the rider/driver	
Ancillary Training	To maintain fitness for competition	
Competition roles	Athlete, lungeur, groom, navigator, (Official – with training)	
<b>Training to Competition Ratio</b>	<b>70% Training</b>	<b>30% Comp.</b>

### Other equestrian involvement overview

<b>Stage Objective</b>	<i>Support ongoing commitment to participate in equestrian in a non-athlete role.</i>	
As coach	Complete appropriate Equestrian Canada NCCP Coaching courses and Professional Development opportunities.	
As official	Complete Equestrian Canada and FEI (Fédération Équestre Internationale) official's courses and obtain certification	
Athletes with a disability	If eligible, become a Classifier	
As executive member	Seek election on Equestrian Canada or Provincial/Territorial Equine organization	
For Therapeutic Riding	Take courses to become certified CanTRA instructor	
As a volunteer	Volunteer to assist with barn activities, or at equestrian events. Learn to support Therapeutic Riding organizations. Raise funds for equestrians needing better horses to advance in the sport, or for other fundraising needs.	

# About Equestrian Canada's Programs

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The Equestrian Canada Coaching Program and Learn to Ride programs are delivered in partnership with our equestrian Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations.

## EQUESTRIAN CANADA ***LEARN TO RIDE,*** EQUESTRIAN PROGRAMS

**Equestrian Canada's "Learn to" initiatives include; English Learn to Ride, Western Learn to Ride, and Learn to Drive programs.**

The Equestrian Canada developed its English Learn to Ride, Western Learn to Ride, and Learn to Drive programs for individuals who wish to learn safe horsemanship skills and practices. The purpose of the program is to produce well-rounded equestrians, who are able to care for and ride/drive their horses in a correct and safe manner.

Learn to programs provide a systematic approach to introduce new riders/drivers to equestrian sport. Proper riding or driving technique is best developed with the aid of a certified instructor. National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) certified Instructors and Coaches deliver these programs.

An accredited Equestrian Canada Evaluator, conducts an evaluation for each level, and upon successful completion of a program level, equestrians receive a certificate and badge.

The Equestrian Canada Coaching Program and Learn to Ride programs are delivered in partnership with our equestrian Provincial/Territorial Sport Organizations.



## EQUESTRIAN CANADA AND THE NATIONAL COACHING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Equestrian Canada's coaching program is developed in partnership with the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) of the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC), which is supported by Sport Canada. Equestrian Canada is one of 67 sports participating in the NCCP, a program to enhance coaching excellence in Canada.

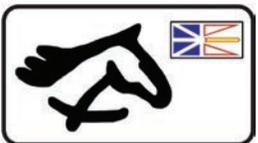
Equestrian Canada and the NCCP provide coaches and instructors with the tools necessary to make the equestrian experience safe and enjoyable for all equine and human participants, and to develop excellence in horsemanship. Developing equestrian athletes is the result of good instruction and coaching over time.

Whether a participant is starting out, enjoying equestrian as a leisure activity, or engaged in competition, there is an Equestrian Canada certified coach or instructor trained to work with participants regardless of the level of their ability. Whatever the level of equestrian participation the goal of the NCCP program is to provide the best possible experience and an optimal learning environment.

As in any sport, athletic accomplishment, teaching or coaching require different skills. In equestrian sport, horsemanship (ability to work with and train horses) is another required area of competency. Therefore, just being a good athlete or accomplished trainer does not necessarily give a coach/instructor the skills required for effective teaching and coaching.

Equestrian Canada certification recognizes the coach/instructors' teaching and coaching skills as meeting professional, and internationally recognized standards for coaching practice.

The Equestrian Canada coaching program is the only Canadian equestrian coaching and instructor certification program recognized internationally (FEI, IGEQ), and by Coaches of Canada and the Canadian Olympic Committee. The Equestrian Canada coaching program is the nationally recognized certification program for equestrian coaches and instructors.



## What Certification Means

Obtaining and maintaining certification as an Equestrian Canada coach or instructor testifies to the coach/instructor's professionalism and competence as an equestrian teacher. To first obtain a certificate, candidates are evaluated and must meet the national standards established by the NCCP. A coach or instructor who maintains their certification is a professional who is actively involved in the equestrian community and maintains currency through regular professional development and First Aid updating. To remain actively certified, coaches and instructors must maintain a current First Aid/CPR certificate and current police check.

## Parents Check List for Coaches and Instructors (Horse Council BC)

Maintaining the highest standards of instruction and coaching in Canada requires parents, guardians and those who employ/pay coaches to become educated consumers, and this means asking the right questions when evaluating a potential coach.

- Is this coach certified?
- Is this coach insured?
- Does this coach ask that students carry appropriate liability insurance?
- Is this coach well respected in the equestrian community?
- Does this coach practice appropriate risk management?
- Does the coach hold current First Aid certification, and are they able to use it?
- Is the safety of the student a prime concern?
- Is the lesson area safe, contained and free of clutter?
- Is the coach punctual and reliable?
- Do the students receive instruction for the full lesson time?
- Does the coach avoid cancelling lessons on short notice?
- Does this coach practice good business procedures?
- Does this coach provide supervision at all times?
- If there are lesson horses, are they in good health and condition?
- Are lesson horses well-mannered and appropriate for the student's ability?
- Are horses in the barn well fed on a regular basis, and subject to sound feeding practices?
- Does this coach have a zero-tolerance policy towards horse abuse?
- Does this coach have a zero-tolerance policy regarding the abusive use of drugs and medication for horses and athletes?
- Does the coach use correct, well-fitted tack that is in good condition?

- Does this coach encourage goal-setting for their students?
- Does this coach follow developed lesson plans?
- Is this coach able to demonstrate what they teach?
- Does this coach regularly update their professional knowledge and skills?
- Does this coach understand different learning styles and teach accordingly?
- Does this coach use appropriate teaching aids to enhance instruction?
- Is rider fitness, nutrition and mental skills training part of the program?
- Does this coach relate well to students and provide appropriate feedback?
- Is the coach neat, clean and business-like?
- Is this coach able to communicate well with students and parents?
- Does this coach challenge the student appropriately?
- Does this coach explain clearly what the student should do?
- Does this coach use appropriate warm-up and cool-down procedures for horse and rider?
- Has this coach produced good riders with correct skills?
- Is this coach a good role model for your child?

## LONG TERM HORSE DEVELOPMENT (LTHD)

Equestrian is a unique sport because two athletes work together as one. This LTED guidebook addressed the development of the equestrian, and although the development of the equine is equally important, it is not addressed here.

Developing as an equestrian is dependent on having access to an appropriate horse. Equestrian Canada's Guide to Selling/Purchasing a Horse is an available resource. In addition, it is recommended that (unless people are very knowledgeable about horses) professional help is sought when purchasing or leasing a horse. Too often, horses that are inappropriate for the level of equestrian are purchased/leased. An unsuitable match can create a sub-optimal training situation with potentially dangerous outcomes.

For more information see: [Equestrian Canada Guide to Buying and Selling a Horse](http://www.equestrian.ca), at [www.equestrian.ca](http://www.equestrian.ca)

# Glossary of Equestrian Terms



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**Adaptation.** Refers to a response to a stimulus or series of stimuli that induces functional and/or morphological changes in the body. The level or degree of adaptation depends on the genetic endowment of the athlete. Physiological research identifies general trends or patterns of adaptation and clearly delineates the various adaptation processes such as development of muscular endurance or maximum strength.

**Adolescence.** Is a difficult period to define in terms of the time of its onset and duration. During this period, most bodily systems become adult both structurally and functionally. Structurally, adolescence begins with acceleration in the rate of growth in stature, which marks the onset of the adolescent growth spurt. The rate of growth in height reaches a peak, begins to slow, and ends with the attainment of full adult height. Functionally, adolescence is usually viewed in terms of sexual maturation, which begins with hormonal changes and concludes with the attainment of mature reproductive function.

**Aids.** The manner in which one communicates with the horse so that he understands and we are able to direct him. The natural aids are the legs, hands, weight of the equestrian's body and voice. Artificial aids are spurs, crops, martingales or various other pieces of equipment. The artificial aids are complimentary to the natural aids, and details of approved aids can be found in Appendix II: Compensating (Adaptive) Aids.

**Ancillary Capacities.** Refers to the knowledge and experience base of an athlete and includes warm-up and cool-down procedures, stretching, nutrition, hydration, rest, recovery, , regeneration, mental preparation, tapering and peaking.

The more knowledgeable athletes are about these training and performance factors, the more they can enhance their training and performance levels. When athletes reach their genetic potential and physiologically cannot improve further, performance can be improved by using the ancillary capacities to full advantage.

**Annual Training Competition and Recovery Plan (YTP).** A yearly plan that outlines the appropriate activities with the adequate degree of difficulty, and in the right sequence to reach the training and competition objectives sought.

**Athlete.** Equestrian(s) + Equine(s) as a team.

**Athlete with a disability.** All athletes with a disability can compete in able body classes with aids appropriate for their disability. Once an athlete reaches international level, they may be classified and compete in Para competitions.

**Childhood.** Ordinarily spans the end of infancy, the first birthday, to the start of adolescence and is characterized by relatively steady growth and maturation and rapid progress in neuromuscular or motor development. It is often divided into two periods – early childhood (one to five years of age) and late childhood (six years of age through to the onset of adolescence).

**Chronological age.** Refers to the number of years and days elapsed since birth. Children of the same chronological age can differ by several years in their level of biological maturation.

**Coaching.** The coach's role and relation (in terms of planning, management, emotional, social, training and competition support) in the life of a developing athlete / participant through the various stages of development.

**Cognitive Development.** Development of the ability to interpret and process information.

**Development.** The interrelationship between growth and maturation in relation to the passage of time. The concept of development also includes the social, emotional, intellectual and motor realms of the child.

The terms “growth” and “maturation” are often used together and sometimes synonymously. However, each refers to specific biological activities. Growth refers to observable, step-by-step, measurable changes in body size such as height, weight, and percentage of body fat. Maturation refers to qualitative system changes, both structural and functional in nature, in the organism's progress toward maturity; for example, the change of cartilage to bone in the skeleton.

**Developmental Age.** Age measured in terms of the child's readiness to perform specific tasks based on physical, emotional, social and cognitive criteria.

**Emotional Development.** The development of self-concept and emotional control.

**English riding.** Is a form riding featuring a flat English saddle without the deep seat, high cantle or saddle horn seen in Western style riding.

**Equestrian.** Includes participants in all sports within the competence of Equestrian Canada, be they riders, drivers, or vaulters.

**Foundation Sport Skills.** The skills that form the basis for later sport participation.

**Horse.** Refers to the equine partner and applies to horses, ponies, mules, and donkeys.

**Ideal Performance State.** The physical, mental and emotional state when an athlete performs at his or her best.

**Menarche.** The onset of the first menstrual cycle.

**Peak Height Velocity (PHV).** The maximum rate of growth in stature during the growth spurt. The age of maximum velocity of growth is called the age at PHV.

**Physical Development.** The growth and development of the body's muscles, bones and energy systems.

**Physical Literacy.** Initial development of basic human movements, fundamental movement skills and foundation sport skills, and the continued evolution of those skills throughout life.

**Puberty.** The time during which an individual is maturing sexually and by the end of which they are able to reproduce.

**Readiness.** The child's level of growth, maturity and development that enables him/her to learn or perform tasks and meet the demands of training and competition.

**Skeletal Age.** The maturity of the skeleton determined by the degree of ossification of the bone structure. It is a measure used to determine whether a child is an early, average or late developer

**Trainability.** Malina and Bouchard (1991) defined "trainability" as the responsiveness of developing individuals at different stages of growth and maturation to the training stimulus.

**Western riding.** A form of riding using a deep seat saddle, high cantle and riding horn.

**Windows of Trainability.** The point in development of a specific physical capacity when experience or training has an optimal effect on development.



*Whether a participant is starting out, enjoying equestrian as a leisure activity, or engaged in competition, there is an Equestrian Canada certified coach or instructor trained to work with participants regardless of the level of their ability. Whatever the level of equestrian participation the goal of the NCCP program is to provide the best possible experience and an optimal learning environment.*

# Appendix I

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## EQUESTRIAN DISCIPLINES

**English:** English and western are the two basic styles of riding and are distinguishable by their differing equipment and attire. English style riding features a relatively flat saddle that positions the rider ideally to perform tasks required of the english disciplines. English disciplines include: dressage, hunter, jumper, eventing, saddle seat and breed sport english pleasure divisions.

**Western:** Western style riding features a saddle with a high cantle and horn and positions the rider ideally to perform the tasks required of the western disciplines. Western disciplines include: reining, gymkhana, western dressage, ranch activities, western speed events (barrel racing/pole bending), and breed sport western pleasure classes.

- **Driving.** Drivers and groom/navigators ride on a vehicle drawn by a single or multiple horses. A Combined Driving Event consists of three phases: Dressage, Marathon and Obstacle Driving. Final placing is determined by the sum of the penalties accumulated over the three trials. Other driving competitions include Pleasure Driving, Draft Driving, “Recreational” Driving Competitions (TREC, Country Heritage, Sleigh Rallies, and Continuous Drives), as well as breed-specific driving or harness classes.
- **Dressage.** Horse and rider are expected to perform from memory a series of predetermined movements, known as figures (volte, serpentine, figure of eight). The completely flat arena, measuring 60 x 20 m., is skirted by a low rail along which 12 lettered markers are placed symmetrically indicating where movements are to start, where changes of pace or lead are to occur and where the movements are to end. In all competitions, the horse has to show three paces: walk, trot and canter as well as smooth transitions within and between these paces.
- **Endurance.** An endurance ride is a test of horse and rider teams over challenging terrain of distances up to 160 kilometres in one day. The welfare of the horse is paramount and vet checks are used to monitor and evaluate each horse’s ability to maintain the level of exercise being undertaken. To be successful, the competitor must have knowledge of pace and efficient and safe use of his or her horse for the duration of the race over varied terrain.
- **Eventing.** An English event that is an all-around test of horse and rider of three distinct tests that takes place on separate days. The Dressage test is followed by Cross-Country, a timed test that includes a series of solid jumps set in natural terrain. Jumping is held on day three, in a stadium ring. This test is also timed and is designed to exhibit the horse’s jumping ability and willingness to continue after the previous day’s exertions.

- **Gymkhanna.** An equestrian event consisting of speed pattern racing and timed games for riders on horses. These events often emphasize children's participation and may be organized by a recognized Pony Club or a 4-H club.
- **Hunter.** An English style of competition where horses are judged on conformation, temperament, manners and their ability to manoeuvre a course of jumps and on the flat. As a horse's ability and experience increases, so does the difficulty on the course. A good show hunter must possess excellent jumping form, be brave and demonstrate that he is a willing partner.
- **Show Jumping.** Horse and rider are required to complete a course laid out by an accredited course designer comprising between 10 to 13 removable timber obstacles erected typically in the form of barriers, fences, gates and other fillers and located in an enclosed arena. The objective of this course is to test skill, accuracy and training. The aim is always to jump the course in the designed sequence – all obstacles are numbered, with no mistakes, this is considered a clear round. If any part of an obstacle is knocked down or if the horse refuses a jump, “faults” are accumulated. Style is not considered and does not affect the scoring.
- **Para-Equestrian.** Para-Dressage and Para-Driving are the two disciplines now recognized at the International level. Athletes in Para-Equestrian are judged on their functional capacity and not the level of disability. This sport is for athletes with a physical disability and visual impairment. They follow patterns based on their grade of classification. Para athletes are classified and compete in national and international level completions.
- **Reining.** A judged event designed to show the athletic ability of a Western type horse in a show arena. In Reining, competitors are required to run one of several approved patterns. Each pattern includes small slow circles, large fast circles, flying lead changes, roll backs, 360 degree spins done in place, back ups and the exciting sliding stops that are the hallmark of the Reining horse.
- **Vaulting.** Vaulting is a competitive discipline where both dynamic and static gymnastic elements are combined and performed on a moving horse. It requires outstanding physical condition from the vaulter and a harmonious relationship with the horse is imperative if a display of strength, coordination, rhythm, suppleness and balance is to be achieved

# Appendix II

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## COMPENSATORY (ADAPTIVE) AIDS

Adaptive aids are used by riders to compensate for the physical or sensory limitation resulting from their impairment, thereby enabling them to ride a horse. For example, a hand hold on the front of the saddle enables someone with a high level spinal cord injury to balance on the horse.

An adaptive aid is not to be used to compensate for lack of riding skill or provide an advantage to the rider as an aid to enhance the horse's performance – this would be considered a training aid. The well-being of the horse is paramount in considering the use of any compensating aid.

Please note that at Equestrian Canada Bronze Level competitions, all Para-Equestrian Dressage (PEC and/or FEI) tests and Para-Equestrian Canada Video Competition classes may be commanded. At Equestrian Canada Silver and Gold level competitions, all Para-Equestrian Dressage tests may be commanded, but FEI Para-Equestrian Dressage tests may only be commanded if a commander is listed as an approved compensating aid on the athlete's Classification Card. Only those Athletes with intellectual impairment, visual impairment or following head injury leading to short term memory loss, may have a commander to read their tests as a compensating aid.

Athletes with an intellectual impairment are not eligible for classification under the current FEI rules, if no other physical or visual impairment exists, but are permitted to compete in any class in the Para-Equestrian Canada Video Competition Series.

Please refer to the Rules of Equestrian Canada, Section M, for the correct use of aids in competition.

## CLASSIFICATION

Only accredited Equestrian Canada National and Fédération Équestre Internationale (FEI) Classifiers can assess and assign a 'Classification Grade' to an athlete. According to the Rules of Equestrian Canada, only riders wishing to compete at Equestrian Canada Silver and Gold level must hold a Para-Equestrian Athlete Classification Card. Riders wishing to compete at Equestrian Canada Bronze level must use the Equestrian Canada Para-Equestrian Medical Form.

Please visit our website to download the Medical Form and for more information about classification and adaptive aids - [http:// www.equestrian.ca/sport/para-equestrian](http://www.equestrian.ca/sport/para-equestrian)

“Adaptive aids are used by riders to compensate for the physical or sensory limitation resulting from their impairment, thereby enabling them to ride a horse. For example, a hand hold on the front of the saddle enables someone with a high level spinal cord injury to balance on the horse.

# Appendix III

## EQUESTRIAN CANADA DEVELOPMENT MATRIX

	Active Start	FUNDAMENTALS	Learn to Train	Train to Train	Learn to Compete	Train to Compete	Learn to Win	Train to Win	Active for Life
<b>Technical Skills</b>									
Equestrian skills	<b>Introduce</b>	<b>Develop</b>	<b>Consolidate</b>	<b>Refine</b>	<b>Maintain</b>	<b>Train to Compete</b>	<b>Learn to Win</b>	<b>Train to Win</b>	<b>Active for Life</b>
	Comfortable being with horse Approaching the horse Basic horse safety	Basic horse and stable safety Basic horse language/terminology Basic Grooming	Horse terminology Horse preparation Basic horse care Horse warm-up and cool down	Shares responsibility for care and maintenance of horse Feeding and watering Identification of horse problems	Takes responsibility for care of horse(s), and seeks appropriate advice and support as necessary.	Takes full responsibility for care of horse(s), and seeks appropriate advice and support as necessary. Can determine suitability of horse-rider combination for different events	Takes full responsibility for multiple horse(s), and with others selects and trains horse(s) for specific competitive situations. Has access to high quality horses	With assistance selects and rides horse(s) appropriate to their needs.	Selects and trains world-leading horses with help of support team.
Technical riding skills: As described in rider level documents	<b>Introduce</b>	<b>Refine</b>	<b>Consolidate</b>	<b>Refine</b>	<b>Learn to Compete</b>	<b>Train to Compete</b>	<b>Learn to Win</b>	<b>Train to Win</b>	<b>Maintain</b>
	Not Applicable	English 1-2 Western 1	English 3-4 Western 2	English 5-6 Western 3	English 7-8 Western 4	English 9-10 Plus discipline specific skills	Discipline Specific		Appropriate to level of rider
<b>Physical Capacities</b>									
Stamina (aerobic endurance)	<b>Developed</b> through play	<b>Developed</b> through play of increased duration	Increase duration of play in aerobic non-equestrian sports	Aerobic training in addition to equestrian sport	Aerobic training in addition to equestrian sport	Maintenance of aerobic fitness to support equestrian sport			Sufficient to maintain health and enjoyment of equestrian sport
	Developed through play	Developed through play, encouraged to climb and use upper body to support body weight.	Use of body weight and medicine ball exercises, introduction to specific strength training	Specific strength training with focus on correct form. Increased intensity after peak height velocity.	Optimum time for developing strength through specific training. Ensure balanced development, and building core body strength.		Maintain strength, particularly core body strength.	Maintain strength for health and enjoyment of sport.	
Strength	Developed through play	Developed through play, encouraged to climb and use upper body to support body weight.	Use of body weight and medicine ball exercises, introduction to specific strength training	Specific strength training with focus on correct form. Increased intensity after peak height velocity.	Optimum time for developing strength through specific training. Ensure balanced development, and building core body strength.		Maintain strength, particularly core body strength.	Maintain strength for health and enjoyment of sport.	

	Active Start	FUNDAMENTALS	Learn to Train	Train to Train	Learn to Compete	Train to Compete	Learn to Win	Train to Win	Active for Life
Speed	Developed through play	Developed through play	Optimum time to develop quick hands and feet through high speed drills	Optimum time to develop whole body speed through activities requiring rapid stops, starts and changes of direction	Maintain body speed through riding and in-gym training				Maintain speed for enjoyment of sport
Souplesse	Developed through reaching, stretching and twisting games	Developed through reaching, stretching and twisting games	Optimum time to develop range of motion through specific stretching activities	Critical time to maintain flexibility (particularly for males) through specific stretching activities	Maintain flexibility through systematic stretching activities as part of every warm-up and cool down in training sessions				
<b>Psychological</b>									
Executive Function: Building working memory, cognitive flexibility and inhibition control. For details see: <a href="http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/executive-function/">http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/executive-function/</a>	Build through games in which children must focus on both what they are doing and on external signals, keep track of multiple objects, and refrain from moving until signals is given.		Continued evolution function through these stages, with equestrians being given greater and greater responsibility for decision making and self regulation. Tendency to focus on potential positive outcomes of decisions		Executive function at adult levels, with good decision making now related more to previous experiences than analysis of situation. Tendency to focus on potential negative outcomes of decisions.				Not applicable
Motivation	Enjoyment of being around horses	Positive experiences around horses	Positive reinforcement from making progress in skill acquisition, feeling of being part of a group at stable, some competitive success.	Positive reinforcement from making competitive success, being accepted by peers as part of the equestrian group, and feeling that equestrian sport and care of animals is important	Competitive success, being part of a team, and belief that representing Canada on the world stages is important				Skill improvement, being part of social group, believing equestrian sport in be important to them.

	Active Start	Fundamentals	Learn to Train	Train to Train	Learn to Compete	Train to Compete	Learn to Win	Train to Win	Active for Life
Anxiety Control	Positive environment in and around stable	Positive learning environment	Positive learning environment and controlled breathing, learn progressive relaxation	Focus on the process of competing, not results, use controlled breathing and progressive relaxation in competition environment	Use controlled breathing and progressive relaxation on demand in competition environment Develop and use "post-error" strategy to focus on what needs to be done right, not what was done wrong	Ability to use well developed anxiety reduction techniques, on demand and under pressure from competition expectation and public scrutiny. Have developed and well trialled strategy for recovery from errors	Select horse and activities with which equestrian is comfortable		
Positive Self Talk	Child prompted to "Think out loud" and re-frame negative self-talk with positive self-talk	Positive self-talk is externally prompted through questioning Participant asked to suggest positive wording	Participant identifies areas of negative self talk and is guided to substitute positive wording Focus positive self-talk on areas under the control of the equestrian	Assist equestrian by questioning what elements of course they are focusing on	Participants identify triggers and keeps tracks of own negative body language and outwardly expressed talk Individual develops, scripts and tracks implementation of positive self talk Support team develops interventions for externally expressed negative talk	Positive self talk with focus on areas under the equestrians' control			
Focus/Attention	Play games that required increased attention	Progressively increase duration of activities	Assist equestrian by questioning what elements of course they are focusing on	Development of specific skills visualization techniques with focus on positive outcomes, time-accuracy of visualization and engagement of multiple senses. Develop and use pre-competition visualization	With coach and support team, develop strategy for which external elements of competition environment to focus on.	Develop strategy about elements to focus on			
Visualization	Developed through creative play, and "make believe" activities		Introduction of adult led visualization exercises with focus on equestrians being comfortable with the process	Broaden visualization application to total events as well as skills Have well developed competition visualization skills and strategy that are a routine part of preparation at start of performance (visualizing the course, or application of tactics or strategy)	To meet the needs of the equestrian				
Goal setting	Use of immediate challenges, "Lets see if we can jump this puddle?"	Adult initiated and guided goal setting, often with limited goal	Adult led goal setting, to set short term equestrian goals	Collaborative goal setting among equestrian, coach and parents	Self-initiated equestrian goal setting supported by	Self directed goal setting with support of high performance integrated Support Team and financial backers	To meet the needs of the equestrian		

	Active Start	FUNDAMENTALS	Learn to Train	Train to Train	Learn to Compete	Train to Compete	Learn to Win	Train to Win	Active for Life
Error reduction/correction	Focus any intervention on what the child needs to DO, not on what they did wrong		Through questioning, help equestrian to self-identify errors made or what went wrong Build acceptance that there is no progress without making errors	Encourage routine reflection on training or competition performance to identify areas in need of improvement Determine source of errors and direct correction to: lack of competence (skill deficit) lack of confidence, or decision making	In collaboration with equestrian focus error correction/reduction on improved competence, confidence or decision making Track and record errors to identify patterns and triggers in order to focus interventions	Encourage reflection on cause of errors and potential error reduction strategies and actions			
Nutrition/ Hydration	Parents control nutrition and hydration		Equestrian assists in preparing own snacks for pre and post training	Equestrian takes greater responsibility for own nutrition and meal preparation Ensures healthy eating	Equestrian takes responsibility for own nutrition and meal preparation with focus on adequate nutrition and hydration of self and equine in training and competition	Nutrition and hydration for long-term health			
Disordered eating and eating disorders (if suspected, contact specialists for help)	Encourage parents and other adult role models to focus on healthy eating and physical activity, not dieting for body shape modification		Because rider/vaulter weight can be a concern in equestrian sport, focus on healthy eating habits, energy balance and healthy body image Raise awareness among athletes and coaches of disordered eating, and eating disorders in both male and female athletes Understand signs and symptoms of disordered eating and eating disorders Coaches understand their role as potential triggers of disordered eating (undue focus on athletes' weight) Know where outside professional support can be obtained (e.g. eating disorder clinics) Develop strategies to identify disordered eating and eating disorders in athletes along with treatment and recovery strategies						
Develop self confidence and self esteem	Develops confidence in physical abilities through successful skill development	Develops positive body image, and increased confidence in physical ability	Has well developed self-respect, and appropriate self confidence	Develops confidence in performance capacity in sport, and confidence outside of sport (identity is not exclusively in being a successful equestrian)		Builds performance confidence and belief in ability to succeed in life outside equestrian sport			Has stable self confidence and realistic assessment of abilities

	Active Start	Fundamentals	Learn to Train	Train to Train	Learn to Compete	Train to Compete	Learn to Win	Train to Win	Active for Life
Moral and Ethical Development	Learns about rules through narrative and stories, and can describe the reasons for basic rules Cares for welfare of horses	Understands and applies the concept of "Fairness" and "Fair play" Understands the rules of equestrian sport and the need to have them	Understands sport's rules and etiquette Understands ethical treatment of horses Doping is cheating	Understands ethical treatment of horses Treats everyone in equestrian sport with respect Understands they are subject to doping control	Understands the concepts of strict liability and takes full responsibility for all substances in both their body and in horse Makes conscious effort to engage in ethical sport Willingly complies with all anti-doping requirements and has planned response to media questionations about other's doping violations Treats all horses ethically with their best interest in mind when making decisions about care and treatment	Engages in ethical personal behaviour and treats horse ethically			
Doping control	Not applicable	Introduce basic concept as part of the rules and ethics of sport (keeping bad substances out of the body)	Understand that all competitors are subject to doping control procedures If prescription drug use is required work with medical team to ensure compliance with Canadian Anti-Doping Agency regulations, and seek Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) if required	Understand you obligations and rights in doping control Practice doping control procedures and carry required documentation at all events: including Therapeutic Use Exemptions, prescriptions and athlete and horse biological passport if appropriate Use only tested and approved supplements for self and horse	Be fully aware of and comply with doping control procedures for in and out of competition testing Vigorously defending your rights by not signing off on improperly collected samples				
Training environment	Build a training environment with a climate of acceptance and social connection, since this is the cornerstone for rewarding and long-lasting engagement in the sport. This is particularly true for female athletes. Include regular use of role models (more senior female athletes) to demonstrate how progress can be made.	Develop awareness of potential classification, and whether disability is eligible for FEI or Paralympic Competition. While all disabilities can benefit from equestrian involvement, those entering the sport should understand whether or no they can pursue the sport to the highest level.							
Classification of athletes with disability			If eligible, obtain temporary classification for equestrian	As early in sport involvement as possible, obtain permanent equestrian classification.				Determine equestrian classification if desired	

*Developing as an equestrian is dependent on having access to an appropriate horse.*

*Equestrian Canada's Guide to Selling/Purchasing a Horse is an available resource. It is recommended that (unless people are very knowledgeable about horses) professional help is sought when purchasing or leasing a horse.*

# Canada

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