**FIRST® LEGO® League Jr. Frequently Asked Questions**

Thank you for your interest in FIRST® LEGO® League Jr. We have developed this FAQ sheet to help teachers, parents, and community members better understand the program and how to get involved.

**WHAT IS FIRST and FIRST LEGO League Jr.?**

**FIRST** (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) provides innovative, engaging, mentor-based programs designed to inspire young people (grades 1-12) to be science and technology leaders and innovators. The programs not only build science, engineering and technology skills and interest, they also help to foster well-rounded life capabilities including self-confidence, communication, and leadership. There are four FIRST programs in total: **FIRST LEGO League Jr.** is the program for younger elementary school students, ages 6-10.

**How is FIRST LEGO League Jr. Structured/Organized on a local level?**

**FIRST** partners with regional organizations to make their programs available to youth worldwide. Here in Idaho, the University of Idaho’s Extension 4-H Youth Development program is the **Affiliate Partner** for **FIRST LEGO League Jr.**, **FIRST LEGO League**, and **FIRST Tech Challenge**. As the Affiliate Partner, UI Extension 4-H Youth Development oversees the program and provides support for teams throughout the state. We are your primary point of contact for these programs, so if in doubt, call us!

**My child is a gifted preschooler/kindergartener who loves LEGO. Can they participate in FIRST LEGO League Jr.?**

In Idaho, we have on occasion allowed 5 year olds to participate in **FIRST LEGO League Jr** at the team/coach’s discretion, **AND** provided they are enrolled in an accredited Kindergarten program during the school year. Please be aware that having a 5 year old on a team will require quite a bit of involvement from parents and coaches because the program as a whole is more than just LEGO. Teams are expected to learn about a challenge theme and work together to create a team poster and “Show Me Model™” related to what they’ve discovered. Completing these tasks does require some reading and writing skills (each team member keeps an engineering notebook throughout the season, and the youth are expected to do the work), and while the program is an excellent way to make learning fun, it can also be frustrating for both youth and coaches/parents when the team members just want to play with the LEGO. We do not permit any youth under the age of 5 to participate.

**How do I get my child on a team?**

Due to the popularity of **FIRST LEGO League Jr.** and the limit of 6 youth members per team, it can be difficult to find a team that is looking for new members. If you are able to locate a team that is accepting new members, please be aware that being a part of a **FIRST LEGO League Jr.** team requires commitment from both team members and parents. Teams expect their members to be present and ready to work on the project at every meeting. They may expect parents to help with team meetings, fundraising and/or chaperoning optional team field trips or at the Expo.

Due to child protection and internet privacy regulations, University of Idaho 4-H Youth Development cannot disclose contact information for existing teams and coaches. With your permission, we can give your name and email address to our existing coaches and ask them to contact you directly if they have an opening. There are also a few schools, libraries, and out-of-school time programs who run open teams that form at the beginning of each season. You might want to ask the organizations in which your child is already involved – if they don’t have a team, they might be interested in starting one!

**How can I guarantee my child will be able to participate this season?**

The only way to be 100% sure your child is able to participate in the upcoming season is to form a new team. The first step is to find similarly interested youth and their parents who will commit to seeing the program through. The **FIRST LEGO League Jr.** season in Idaho runs from August 1st through the end of the school year, with most teams meeting once a week for 12 weeks prior to their local Expo. Start asking your child’s friends and their parents. Check with your neighborhood association, homeschool group, scout troop, church, or any other organizations, clubs or sports teams with which your family is involved to see if there is interest in forming a robotics team. **Teams can have anywhere from 2-6 youth team members.**

Each team is required to have two adult (age 18+) coaches. No technical expertise is required: Coaches are there to facilitate and encourage the team’s learning process, and to keep the team on track, not to demonstrate building or programming step by step. In addition to the UI Extension 4-H Robotics office, which you are welcome to call or email any time for help, we provide...
weekly e-newsletters, educational webinars and online open Q&A sessions, and we can help connect rookie teams with more experienced teams who are willing to mentor them through the first season.

Once I find others who are willing to commit, how do I start the team?

The next step is to register the team with FIRST. This is done online through the FIRST website at www.firstinspires.org. Create a user account by clicking the Sign Up link at the top right of the homepage and filling out the online form. Please use an email address you will check regularly during the season, as this is the contact information our office will receive for you, and email is our primary means of communication. Once you have a user account, you can log in to view the Dashboard where you can complete the team registration process, order your team’s LEGO WeDo 2.0 kit, and pay via credit card, purchase order, or check. If you have any questions, please call the UI Extension 4-H Robotics office for help.

What kind of equipment will our team need and how much will it cost?

UI Extension 4-H Robotics estimates a rookie team will spend between $350-700 for their first year of competition. This includes investment in the WeDo 2.0 Robotics kit, a laptop or tablet for programming (if you don’t already have one) and materials to make your team Show Me Poster. In subsequent years, team costs drop significantly, to around $150-200. Please see the FIRST LEGO League Jr. Team Sample Budget for this year for more information. All FIRST teams are welcome and encouraged to seek local sponsors to help cover team costs.

I don't know anything about robots/programming/engineering/etc. Can you find a coach for my team?

One of the first tenants of the FIRST Coaches’ Promise is “The children do the work. This is their opportunity to learn and grow. The children on my team do all of the programming, research, problem solving, and building. Adults can help them find the answers, but cannot give them answers or make decisions.” What does that mean? It means that it doesn’t matter if you don’t understand the code or how the robot works. It’s the coaches’ job to facilitate the team meetings, keep the team on task, and handle the administrative functions of the team. Please download and review the FIRST LEGO League Jr. resource page at https://www.firstinspires.org/resource-library/flljr/mission-moon-challenge-and-resources to learn more about being a coach, and then discuss with the other team parents who among you might want to take on the official coaching roles for the team.

When and where are the Expos?

Expos may be held anytime from December through the end of the school year. For the most part, Expos are held in the Spring, after the conclusion of the FIRST LEGO League season. Please subscribe to our email newsletter (you will be automatically subscribed after registering your team) or check our Facebook Events Calendar (https://www.facebook.com/pg/UIExtensionRobotics/events/?ref=page_internal) to see events posted as they are finalized.

Do we have to attend an Expo?

No. While the FIRST LEGO League Jr. program has been growing exponentially the past couple of years in Idaho, there are some areas in which team density is too low to hold an official Expo. If you are in one of these more remote locations, please contact our office for help in planning your own end-of-season team celebration, complete with a web-based team interview, and end-of-season certificates and season pins for each team member, just like they would have received at the Expo.

Who should I contact if I have additional questions?

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