

FAQ's for FLL and FLLJr

Thank you for your interest in FIRST LEGO League (FLL)! Teams are structured in a variety of different ways; some are clubs or after-school programs that meet year-round, while others are formed by parents, community organizations, or youth groups. For this and other reasons, we do not match individual children with pre-existing teams. Also, for privacy reasons, we are not able to share lists of team contact information.

We encourage parents and teachers to start teams in their areas and then invite other interested students to join, and we provide lots of information to help you with this process. Team registration is now closed until next May when it will open again for next fall's season, so this is the perfect time to begin recruiting and fundraising for next year. Along this line, we invite you to attend a local competition in your area. These events can be found on the FIRST website at www.usfirst.org in the upper right corner where there is a link that says view events/teams in my area. You will be prompted to select the desired program, where you will select FLL and then events. As stated above, the list of teams will not be shown even if you select it. Admission to any FIRST event is always at no charge. Please note that the FLL competition is not just about building robots, there are also three other parts which involve research and other presentation skills, which you can read more about at the links below.

We provide lots of valuable information on our website, but these links are a good place to start:

- The competition season in the North NJ Regions ends in December. The Challenge theme for the next season is announced in early summer. Once released, you can read more about it by going to the FIRST website. You can see the logo and read the challenge for this past year:

<https://www.firstinspires.org/robotics/fll/challenge-and-season-info>

- To learn more about FLL, please visit the FLL "How to Start a Team" section at <https://www.firstinspires.org/robotics/fll/start-a-team>

- We provide some great print-friendly downloadable marketing materials on our online FLL Resource Center at <http://www.firstinspires.org/roboticsprograms/marketing-tools/fll>. You will find fliers, fact sheets, and videos that help to make the FLL experience a little more understandable. These are useful for recruiting both students and sponsors.

- We are willing to help you get started with a team at your child's school. We would ask you to contact them and then get back to us and we can arrange a presentation for interested faculty and parents

Here is some more detailed info about the 2 robotics programs for elementary school students.

FIRST LEGO League (FLL), for 4th through 8th graders and Junior FIRST LEGO League (Jr.FLL), for K through 3rd grade students. You can obtain information about both programs at the following website: www.firstinspires.org . Just follow these links: “FLL” or “F::Jr., and “Start a Team”. It will give you information about the program and the steps to start a team. Most teams are school based, but there are home school, organizational, community and neighborhood teams as well. All types of teams are welcome to join and participate.

FLL

In general:

Registration for this year's FLL program started in early May and goes into September, or until all the registration slots are full. However, I recommend that you register sooner vs. later because once the slots are full you will have to wait until next year. Team registration can be done on the FIRST website listed above. Registration for tournaments starts in October. In New Jersey we have qualifying tournaments the weekend before Thanksgiving in various locations around the state. The Champion's tournament is held as a two day tournament on the weekend of the second Saturday in December at Mt. Olive High School.

Steps to Form a FLL Team:

Identify one or more adults (18 or older) as coaches/mentors. An adult can coach multiple teams. Coaches don't need robot or technical experience, but do need to be good organizers and facilitators to keep the team on track.

Recruit 3-10 kids; 4-8 kids are an optimal number for many teams. Team members must be 14 or under to participate for the upcoming season. FLL suggests kids be at least 8 or 9 years old, but there's no restriction -- a younger child can join a team if you think he or she has the ability and attention span to stay involved. An individual child can be on only one FLL team per season.

Select a meeting place and facilitate regular meetings. FLL teams can meet anywhere; the game mat is 4' x 8' and it's easiest to place it on a plywood table with 2” x 4” sides. Teams typically meet one or two times per week for up to two hours from September - November, often more frequently as they approach a tournament. The team works not only on designing and programming the robot, but also researching a project and prepare a presentation for the tournament.

Approximate costs are:

FLL Team Registration - \$300 (includes Field Setup Kit - \$75)

FLL Robot Kit - \$475 (One-time fee or zero if you already have a Mindstorm robot kit.)

Materials for competition table - ~\$50 (One-time fee.)

NJ FLL Qualifier Fee - \$75

NJ FLL Champion's Event Fee - \$75

Ideas for covering the costs vary from team to team. Some teams are funded by their school or organization, some find community or business sponsors, some charge for each

kid to join, others do local fund-raisers, and some do all of the above. Part of the challenge of FLL is to decide what methods work best for your team.

Jr.FLL

In general:

Junior FIRST LEGO League is for K through 3rd grade students. A team is typically 5 or 6 children maximum. Each year the students research a real world problem, create a poster board presentation and build a LEGO display depicting their project solution. Registration for expos starts in October. The amount of time these children will put into this program is one or two hours a week for 6 to 8 weeks prior to the event.

Approximate costs are:

Jr.FLL Team Registration - \$50

First State Jr.FLL Expo Fee - \$45

Jr.FLL Base Kit - \$125 (optional)

Jr.FLL Construction Kit - \$120 (optional)

These programs are amazing in the way they turn children onto math, science, technology and engineering. The children also learn important life skills like teamwork and communication.

Feel free to contact us if you have any more questions.