BACKGROUND

From Volleyball Canada Competition Guide
The expansion of age categories from 12 months to 16 months is due to the research provided in the LTAD 2.0 document published by the Canadian Sport for Life group. The paper lists the 10 Key Factors influencing Long Term Athlete Development, of which “Developmental Age” is one and provides generic information about Developmental Age and demonstrates some of the flaws of lumping athletes into their birth year for participation in sports.

In short, the large physical discrepancies that can occur between youth within the same birth year create significant disadvantages for late developing male athletes and to a lesser degree, early developing females. While the paper does not specifically raise the example of playing at ones’ skill level versus chronological age, it is Volleyball Canada's position that players should strongly consider playing to their skill level.

With the 16-month age category there are opportunities for late developing players to play at their skill level. However, athletes and parents must also consider ‘playing up’ a category if it can provide the needed challenge for improvement. If there are no significant social/emotional drawbacks in playing up to an older age category, Volleyball Canada considers the benefits of playing up to far outweigh the drawbacks.

From the OVA Competition Guide
Athletes registered in an age category above their Chronological Age Class should compete at that age group only if that category is more appropriate for their skill level.

This recommendation from the OVA is based on the principles of the Canadian Long Term Athlete Development model (LTAD), which clearly states: “Training, competition and recovery programs should be based on the stage of the participant’s capability, rather than chronological age.”

In selecting athletes for their teams, coaches and clubs should look at the skill level of players rather than simply looking at chronological age and place them on teams with athletes of matching skills.
POLICY
We support the governing bodies move to an emphasis on “Developmental Age” and endorse the idea that participant’s capability should be central when applied to player movement.

NBYVC is a small volleyball club and sustainability of the club and the opportunity for other athletes to participate in club volleyball must be highly prioritized criteria when making decisions regarding player movement.

In looking at the player’s requesting to play up the club will consider the following:
• Does the athlete possess the capability to compete at a higher level?
• Is their developmental age appropriate for the higher level?
• Does the player moving, put at risk the younger team no longer being able to operate or be competitive?
• Would the player likely be in the top half of the group at the end of the season?
• Are there social/emotional barriers to a successful season?
• Is there a position specific need that would allow this player additional playing time developmental opportunities on the team an age group up?
• Are there any benefits in training at their own age?

The club will manage each request on a case-by-case basis in an open and transparent manner. Additional information (outside of the previously listed criteria) may also be considered.

Athletes must apply annually to participate on an older age group team.

There is never a guarantee of an athlete being approved to move up an age category, regardless if they participated on an older-aged team the season before.

PROCEDURE
A. A completed NBYVC Player Movement Request is submitted to the Head Coach one-week prior to the start of the first tryout session

B. NBYVC will inform coaches of the two teams affected and any evaluators of the request for player movement. They will attend the upcoming tryout to assess the player in question. This tryout will be with the athletes own age group.

C. The athlete will be evaluated and tested using, but not limited to, the criteria listed in the player movement policy
D. Affected teams’ coaches and evaluators will meet to make a decision, shortly after the tryout session.

E. Within five days of the tryout, a decision will be communicated to parent(s) of the player. Rationale as to the decision will be shared at this point. No discussions regarding other athletes will be had at this time.

F. This is a binding decision and can not be appealed