



Children do not learn in the same way as adults, especially when the learning process involves both intellectual *and* physical activity. Age conditions the way a person perceives and interacts with the world and with others. In any learning process, age is the key component in selecting appropriate content and methodology. Soccer is no different. For this reason we must not train 6 year old players the same way as 13 years old players. Training sessions must be adapted to the age of the players. Taking into consideration the characteristics of human and player development as highlight, we have structured the curriculum into four age groups.

You never get a second chance to make a first impression. Coaches working within this stage are the influential figures that will enhance and create a players love for soccer and ensure the retention of soccer players post little kickers and beyond. The player's world usually revolves around their home and their everyday surrounding. All activities should be fun, challenging and competitive with the added boundaries of no hands, tripping, pushing or hitting others. Steer clear of lines, laps and lectures and keep language clear, simple and understandable. Creativity is needed to engage each player's imagination and concentration throughout practice. Use practice names in everyday to home life i.e. cartoons, movies, games and characters to relate soccer to. At this stage, children are very egocentric and are especially concerned with them. A player at this age hates to share their toys and the same is true of their soccer ball, which they are unwilling to relinquish.

Remember we want every child:

- To be physically active and have fun playing the game of soccer.
- To develop a comfort level with the ball at their feet (maximum touches)
- To be allowed make decisions with minimal instruction during the game segment ("stimulate rather than instruct").
- To learn basic positional sense (covering space).

How to be a GREAT VOLUNTEER COACH?

Be ENERGETIC, have FUN and the girls will have FUN!

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT FOR THE PLAYERS – Coaches can encourage players by saying good job, well done, keep going, awesome play!!

Kindergarten and Grade 1 Saturday Morning Session Layout

Professional Trainers will oversee all sessions for the Juniors Kindergarten and Grade 1 Program. All players are placed on teams and we ask the Volunteer Parent Coaches to arrive a few minutes before the session to locate game field and prep for player arrival. Each field will be numbered and have an allocated Pro Trainer to help start warm-up activities.

Arrival: Pro Trainers set-up fields prior to session. Volunteer Parent Coaches are encouraged to arrive a few mins early to check-in with Pro Trainers and find out about the upcoming session.

Kindergarten Program

The 60-minute program emphasizes fun, touches on the ball and positive encouragement. Players engage in soccer learning activities led by the NGS Professional Coaching Staff during the first half hour, then play small-sided (4v4) scrimmages. Parent Coaches assist Pro Trainers throughout both parts of the session.

Grade 1 Program

75min session broken down as follows:

0-5mins Player Arrival and team's set-up on specific field. (See schedule)

5-15mins FUN warm-up games led by Pro Trainer but involving parent coaches and players

15-45min Skill Related Activities with a different soccer related them each week

45-75min 4v4 scrimmages, Pro Trainer will manage / referee the game to a certain degree. Parent Coaches help with any subs and cheer on teams.

Once games are complete, high 5 lines followed by TEAM SNACK!!!

Kindergarten and Grade 1 Game Rules

- No Goalkeepers
- 4v4 diamond formation
- Size 3 soccer ball
- Kick in's or Dribble in's (no throw in's)
- Scoring team drops to their own half of field after a goal is scored
- No Corner Kick's- ball over the end-line is always re-entered by the defensive team
- No Scores are kept
- No Standings are kept
- Coaches should police (ref) the game to ensure that it is safe, but it is best if they remain 2 to 3 yards from the sideline. No need to run up and down the field with the players
- Encourage the players to set-up in a DIAMOND formation but NO set positions
- Let the Girls have FUN and play the game
- Parents sit on opposite sideline to coaches

Grade 2 Practice Guidelines

Grade 2 Teams will have 1 x practice and 1 x Saturday afternoon game per week.

When designing a training sessions for this age it is important that they do not exceed approximately 60 minutes. Keeping the training sessions shorter will keep the players engaged.

Here is the basic progression for a typical session:

- Warm-Up (Approx. 15 Minutes) - The warm-up should include a lot of movement education and fun activities. You should plan on having 1 - 1 exercises to keep the players focused. The players will have a short attention span so it is key to have different games to keep them interested. Start to introduce partner activities.
- Main Activities (Approx. 25 Minutes) - A mix of individual and partner activities. Add more maze-type games to encourage decision making.
- Final Game (Approx. 20 Minutes) - The final game should be 5v5 to small goals, flags, or cone goals with no goalkeepers. Every session should end with the players having the opportunity to play the game. This is why they are there! If needed, you can play bigger numbers or play with multiple fields so that all the players can participate.

Here are a few things to consider when you are designing a training session:

1. Are the activities fun?
2. Are the activities organized?
3. Are the players involved in the activities?
4. Are creativity and decision making being used?
5. Are the spaces used appropriate?
6. Is the coach's feedback appropriate?
7. Is the coach guiding or controlling the players?
8. Are there implications for the game?

NGS has a coaching curriculum per age group which we encourage coaches to follow. These easy to follow sessions plan will help educate coaches and develop the essential soccer skills needed at Grade 2. Check out the coach education page on the NGS website for more details.

Grade 2 Saturday Game Day Guidelines

Set Up

- Game Schedule and Field # details on NGS website (See schedule --> Juniors 2nd Grade)
- Coaches/players on opposite side of field from parents.
- Fields - Clean up fields after games and practices.

Equipment

- The referees have been instructed that all players **MUST** have shin guards and they must be worn underneath socks.
- No jewelry, including ear studs. No taped ear studs. No hard hair clips. No casts. No EXCEPTIONS.
- Size 3 soccer ball

Game Play

1. Game format 4v4 with **no goalies** and no players staying in front of goal for extended periods of time.
2. Game length 4 x 10minute quarters with a 2min break between quarters 1 and 3 and 5min at the half
3. Kick-Offs, have two players line-up and pass to one another. Remember ball must go forward to start the game. Opposition should retreat and give sufficient space accordingly.
4. Goal-Kicks, opposing team must retreat to halfway line.
5. EQUAL PLAYING TIME FOR ALL PLAYERS, ALWAYS!
6. If the event of lopsided games, try to institute new rules in order to keep score from getting really out of hand, e.g. 3 passes before shooting, score only with weaker foot, etc.

Substitutions

- Coaches must ASK PERMISSION of the referee prior to subbing. This can be accomplished by yelling “Ref, sub please?” or “Subs!” at a stoppage of play.
- Subbing is permitted at any stoppage of play when the ball has left the field. This means a coach can request a substitution before any goal kick, throw in, kickoff or corner kick.
- Upon referee acknowledgement, new players run onto the field from the mid-way line, players come off the field from midfield as well.
- Try to have the players know what position they will be playing prior to entering the game so play is not delayed.

Coaching

- Coaches should refrain from ‘joystick coaching’ and only direct players who are **not** in possession of the ball. **Let the Girls Play!**
- Focus on sportsmanship – cheer for the other team as well.
- Do not focus on the score.
- Coaches are NOT allowed to enter the field unless to attend to an injured player.
- Coaches and team should line up and shake hands after the game and thank the ref.

Referees

- **Zero Tolerance Policy.** Neither coaches nor parents are permitted to speak to the refs during the game. Coaches may ask questions (if any) after the game, however it is preferable to submit questions/comments directly to the referee coordinator.
- Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their team parents. It is important to remind them that they too are subject to the Zero Tolerance policy, should not speak to the refs.