

At Under 7 & Under 8, children play 4 v 4 without goalkeepers.

Developmentally, children at this age are moving outside of self-discovery, and starting to play cooperatively in pairs. They still play 1 v 1, but now will play with a friend. We dedicate most of our lesson plans to individual soccer techniques. Through activities and games, we teach them to dribble with laces, inside, outside, and the bottom surfaces of their feet. We also teach them to shoot and pass with the insides of their feet, and to receive the ball on the ground and in the air.

With so much to teach, we focus on one skill a week to build their abilities through the season. We provide our volunteer coaches with lesson plans, so the players develop their abilities in a curriculum-based atmosphere.

We also incorporate the most fundamental team tactic: passing in pairs. Over the course of the season, (and more quickly in the more developed Under-8 age group), we see children making the decision to pass the ball rather than continue to dribble.

NOTE - the players have to learn to make this decision instinctively and instantly based on what they see at the moment. Please avoid the temptation to shout, "Pass!" as this interrupts that growth process. We prefer that our coaches use a Guided Discovery technique at practice. Then, they can try to play in the game what they learned at practice.

We have some game/team rules such as corner kicks and throw-ins for restarts, but don't teach "plays" as those are too complex.

Children at this age are really little learners suited to a group setting, so our goals and expectations rise to that level. First and foremost, they have a lot to learn, so we want them to learn through play rather than through "lines, laps, and lectures". We want to teach physical education in a fun, relaxed setting rather than a classroom. Letting children explore new skills, and encouraging them to try, fail and try again is an attribute they will need as soccer players at the older ages. We need to start that process at this early age for them to succeed later.

If your child has fun at practices and games, we've succeeded meeting the Number One reason children play games - to have FUN. Over the course of the season, we also see them improve their individual touches and control on the ball, so the games they play are more like soccer and less like kickball.
