

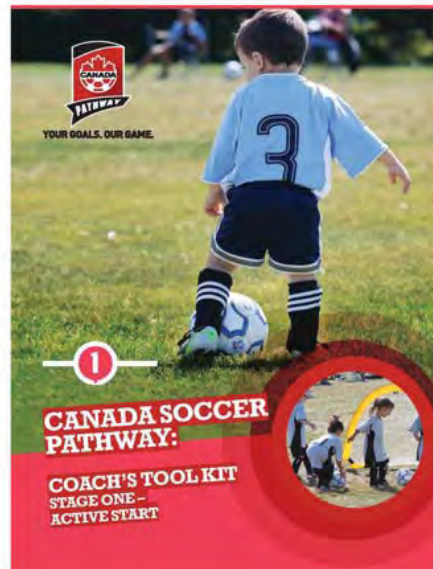


# Brampton Soccer Club

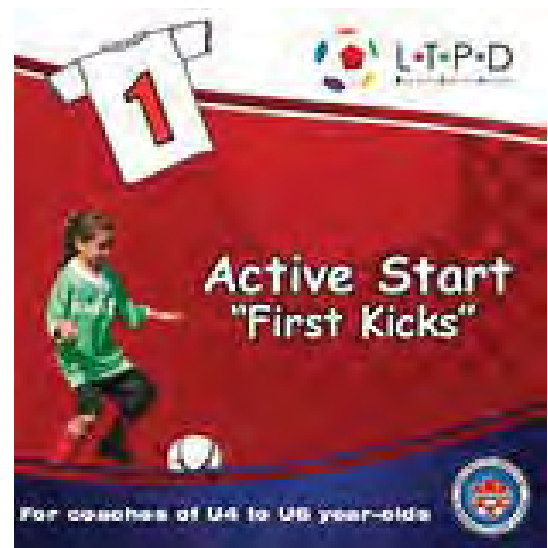
## Coach Handook

### Active Start

### U4 - U6 Ages



May 2017



# Ontario Soccer Introduction

This LTPD resource has been created for Districts, Academies, Clubs and coaches to follow a provincial coaching curriculum that is physical literacy stage-specific for players from u4 to u12.

The information within this document will allow members to create programs and coaching sessions that are appropriate for the development stage of each player. By implementing the curriculum, along with good coaching methodology, players will benefit from and enjoy practice sessions more. All sessions will focus on player development in a low stress, supportive, positive, fun filled and safe environment. By coaches creating this environment the players will be excited to learn and be anxious to return.

In general terms a curriculum consists of everything that promotes technical, personal, social and physical development of the players. In addition to activity examples and sample session plans it includes approaches to teaching and learning. The curriculum helps to remove the 'guess work' in choosing developmentally appropriate content and enables coaches to work on their methodology and coaching style.

## Coaching Philosophy

Coaches of players in the Physical Literacy stream will benefit from a sound, well thought out coaching philosophy. We would strongly recommend that coaches follow a "player centered" coaching philosophy. Player centered coaching allows the player to make decisions within the practice session and/or game. The coach has to be confident enough to empower his/her players to become assured decision-makers during their session. As soccer is a game based on making numerous decisions it's vitally important that the coach allows the young player to practice and develop the decisions that they make. Initially many young players decisions will be unsuccessful but only through support, time and patience, will our young players develop the skill to make better decisions.

**"To apply the future game philosophy we need coaches who can develop environments in which players are encouraged to be creative and expressive without the fear of failure."**

*Sir Trevor Brooking*  
FA Director of Football Development

# Physical Literacy Complimentary Sports

Sports can be classified as early or late specialization, and the seven stages of LTPD are based on this concept. Acrobatic and artistic sports such as figure skating, diving and gymnastics are early specialisation sports while other sports such as basketball and soccer are late specialization sports.

Because soccer is a late specialization sport, LTPD actively discourages early specialization (i.e. prior to the age of 10 years) since premature specialization contributes to imbalanced physical development, overuse injuries, early

burn out and inadequate development of movement and sport skills.

The first three stages of LTPD, Active Start, FUNdamentals and Learn to Train, encourages physical literacy for all players, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. The diagram below shows examples of sports and activities (not exhaustive) that are complimentary and will support physical literacy and soccer. Soccer volume can increase but participation in other sports is important to all round balanced athletic development.

## THE CANADIAN PHYSICAL LITERACY FAB FIVE



*Promoting full physical literacy by learning fundamental movement skills and fundamental sports skills on land, in the air, in water, on ice and on snow.*

## COMPLIMENTARY ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNING TO TRAIN



*Each category has a unique and collective impact on all-around development and it is important that children ages 4-12 sample activities from all three.*

# Four Corner Development Model

The Four Corner LTPD model consists of technical, psychological, physical and social/emotional components. Each corner of the model reflects a wide aspect of a player's development that has to be considered. The gradual progressive development of players is fundamental to the enjoyment, technical competency and retention in the game. The Four Corner approach places the player at the center of the development process with soccer experiences that meet the four key needs of the player.

Although priorities will vary during the player's different ages and phases of maturity, the model provides a basic framework for coaches to work within. In addition to the four main components, there are a number of additional 'contributions' from a wide number of people, such as parents, teachers, schools and local clubs. The model is deliberately interlinked, which means that activity in any one corner will produce a reaction throughout all aspects of the model. For example, a practice technique may impact physical balance and co-ordination while producing

increased confidence and enhanced social standing within the group. The key message to coaches is not to consider any of the programme's aspects in isolation.

As the development pathway for each individual player is unique and diverse, the needs of each player will ebb and flow in all of the 4 corners. And, whilst the need for added support for some players will be minimal, others will require much more applied and specific support.

A player's performance in practice and matches can be influenced by the following factors, nearly all of which need to be considered when forming an opinion of a player's progress and true ability: date of birth, relative to the rest of the group; body types; adolescent growth spurt in all the four corners; physical maturity; psychological maturity; social maturity; previous experience; opposition; position suitability; instructions given to the player; and recent playing activity.



THE FOUR CORNER  
DEVELOPMENT MODEL

*The Four Corner development model is referenced throughout this resource using the colour codes found above in the diagram. Tactical information is shown using white.*

## TECHNICAL/TACTICAL:

Players improve by playing lots of soccer and being active in other complementary sports and activities. That said, without a skilled mix of guidance, challenge, appropriate questioning, demonstration and teaching, it's unlikely that players will reach their true potential.

### TIPS FOR TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT;

- Use the coaching activity to challenge and develop players technically. Encourage players to try new skills.
- Appropriate challenges may be set for the whole group or for individuals within the group. For example in a passing practice some players may be challenged to play one-touch passes whenever they think it's appropriate.
- When appropriate, practice activity should replicate the demands of the game, encouraging players to think and make decisions just as they would in a game. Clever practice design should allow players to repeat and re-visit elements of the game without experiencing boredom.

## PHYSICAL:

To become an effective soccer player there are basic physical movement skills that need to be developed. Agility, balance, coordination, and speed (ABC'S) are all essential qualities for players; between the ages of 4-12 young players have a "window of opportunity" to develop these attributes.

Addressing the state of physical literacy of children is one of the biggest challenges we currently face in society and coaches should help communicate the benefits of physical activity and a healthy lifestyle.

### TIPS FOR PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT;

- Children are not mini adults and shouldn't be subjected to running laps of the field and doing push ups.
- Through well-designed practice all coaching activities can include physical outcomes.
- A shooting practice may include a physical challenge which is realistic to the demands of the game. E.g. a defender and an attacker may have to turn and race onto a through ball before taking a shot at goal. In this way the players are working on turning, acceleration and deceleration as well as the technical elements of the exercise.
- Coaches working with young players should be aware of the key windows for physical development and which aspects of a players development can be improved and when.
- Appropriate movement skills such as tag games and activities which develop agility, balance and coordination should be encouraged through enjoyable games.
- Don't expect too much from young players too soon!



## PSYCHOLOGICAL/MENTAL:

Creating learning environments that challenge players to be imaginative, creative and reflect on their performance—both during and after practice/game—is fundamental to the development of the future player. Coaches should adopt different coaching styles and methods to meet the individual needs of young players, understanding that there is more than one way for players to learn the game.

### TIPS FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT;

- Use different methods to communicate with different types of learners.
- **Visual (seeing):** tactics boards, posters, diagrams, cue and prompt cards as well as arrangements of cones on the pitch are some ways in which coaches can communicate with players visually.
- **Auditory (hearing):** As well as speaking with the players and asking questions, coaches can encourage players to discuss aspects of the game in pairs, small groups and also with the whole group. Through communication with others, players can help solve game-related problems and learn more about the game.
- **Kinaesthetic (doing):** physically 'walking through' positional arrangements and freeze-framing parts of the game can help paint pictures in the mind of the players and contribute to the understanding of the game.
- Help players learn the game and develop their decision-making skills by setting game-related problems for players to solve. For example "in this passing practice try and turn with no-touches whenever possible; try and work out when you will be able to do this and when you won't"

## SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL:

Playing soccer can help children learn many life skills: cooperation, teamwork, communication and friendship are some of the benefits of joining a team and playing the game. To allow these social skills to develop, players should be allowed a safe and supportive environment and given encouragement to learn the game.

### TIPS FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT;

- Coaches should strive to create a positive environment which is welcoming for players both during games and training. How you treat your players is crucial to ensuring this is positive and fulfilling for the young player.
- Players should be praised and recognised for effort and endeavour as well as ability. This will highlight the process of learning and striving to get better rather than just the final outcome.
- As coaches are in a significant position of influence with their players it is important to give consideration to the type of role-model you are. What are your values and beliefs and how is this demonstrated in your behaviour?

*The relationship between the coach and the players is of a significant importance. The ability of a coach to establish a rapport with the players will accelerate the learning process. Coaches should be adaptable and flexible in their coaching methods, changing to the need of the individual player.*

## COACHING METHODS

When planning a coaching session the coach should consider the most appropriate coaching method for the group of players that they are working with and the outcome they wish to achieve.

The “coaching methods” table below outlines a range of approaches that can be used to meet players’ individual needs. The use of coaching methods will vary due to the ever-changing process of coaching. Some of the key factors coaches should consider when planning their coaching methods are;

- The group of players/individual player the coach is working with
- The intended outcome of the practice
- The technical content of the practice

Mastery of the different coaching methods and communication styles is the mark of a gifted coach and will be an essential requirement for a coach.

CONTINUUM					
Coaching Method	Command	Question & Answer	Observation & Feedback	Guided Discovery	Trial & Error
Player/coach interventions	Coach tells and shows required solution	Coach leads with a question to gain a response from players	Coach and players observe	Coach asks a question or issues a challenge	Players &/or coach decide on a challenge
Example	“I want you to pass the ball to Rahim”	“Can you tell me who you could pass to here?”	“Let’s watch and see what happens”	“Can you show me how you could get the ball to Anna?”	“Try it for yourself...”
Description	Coach determines the outcomes in practice	Coach poses question & players offer a verbal solution	Players & coach observe & discuss feedback	Coach prompts and player offers a demonstration of their personal solution	Players are encouraged to find solutions with minimal support

# General Player Characteristics of Age Appropriate Development

Stage	Age	Characteristics
<b>Active Start</b>	<b>U4</b>	Players at this age have a very short attention span, they are very easily distracted. They all want to play with their ball, the toy. There is no sense of sharing toys, especially with strangers.
	<b>U5</b>	There is no ability yet for team play. As sharing is still an alien concept, passing the ball is not yet comfortable for them. They are only able to understand very simple rules.
<b>FUNDamentals</b>	<b>U6</b>	Able to understand very basic coaching info like stay in the area, attack in that direction etc. Learning through trial and error. Biggest challenge is learning to control the moving ball with their feet.
	<b>U7</b>	Players now understand that the game's purpose is to score more goals than their opponents. Still a lot of individual play.
	<b>U8</b>	Players' understanding that acting with the ball purposefully will lead to success is developing. Combining basic motor skills with ball control is now encouraged.
<b>Learn to Train</b>	<b>U9</b>	Now playing on a 7v7 field the understanding of team play, direction and opponent is developing. Optimum age to work on soccer specific techniques and skills
	<b>U10</b>	More and more understanding and feeling for teamwork. Understanding of playing without the ball (running off the ball) develops.
	<b>U11</b>	Perfect mental and physical ability for developing motor skills. Preference for specific positions becomes clearer. Developing an understanding of individual roles in relation to team.
	<b>U12</b>	Likes to compete and compare. Socially aware, critical of own performance and that of ???others. Ideal mental and physical condition in this age group. Imitates idols.

**FOR MORE DETAILED PLAYER CHARACTERISTICS SEE EACH DEVELOPMENT STAGE'S INFORMATION PAGES**



DEVELOPMENT STAGE	ACTIVE START	
PHYSICAL	U4	U5
Running Forward	1	1
Running Backward	1	1
Jumping	1	1
Skipping	1	1
Hopping	1	1
Bounding	2	2
Crawling	2	2
Turning	2	2
Falling/diving	3	2
Twisting	2	2
Rolling	3	3
Other sports	1	1

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	ACTIVE START	
TECHNICAL	U4	U5
Dribbling	1	1
Shooting	1	1
Running with the ball	1	1
Ball control	3	2
Passing	3	3
Receiving	3	2
Heading	4	4
Shielding the ball	4	4
Crossing	4	4
Finishing	4	4
1v1 Defending	4	4
1v1 Attacking	4	4

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	ACTIVE START	
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL	U4	U5
Listening	2	2
Cooperation	3	3
Communication	1	1
Sharing	3	3
Problem-solving	3	3
Decision-making	3	2
Empathy	3	2
Patience	3	2
Respect/Discipline	2	2
Fair play/Honesty	3	2

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	ACTIVE START	
PSYCHOLOGICAL/ MENTAL	U4	U5
Motivation	1	1
Self Confidence	1	1
Competitiveness	4	4
Concentration	4	4
Commitment	4	4
Self-Control	3	3
Determination	3	3

PRIORITY KEY	1 = HIGH	2 = MID	3 = LOW	4 = NOT APPLICABLE
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## ACTIVE START PRACTICE OBJECTIVES

<b>TECHNICAL</b>	Introduce basic individual techniques
<b>PHYSICAL</b>	Develop agility, balance, coordination with/without the ball
<b>TACTICAL</b>	No tactical objectives at this stage
<b>SOCIAL</b>	Feel comfortable and confident with the ball and with others
<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL</b>	Create a safe, positive environment, with lots of praise

## ACTIVE START PRACTICE CONTENT DISTRIBUTION

<b>TECHNICAL</b> 40%	<b>PHYSICAL</b> 40%	<b>TACTICAL</b> 0%	<b>SOCIAL</b> 20%
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*It's important that the players are active and engaged if they are to learn new skills and have fun doing it.*

## ACTIVE START PRACTICE PRIORITIES



*“Creating coaching environments which encourage young players to develop their technique and skill, creativity and game understanding is central to our age appropriate coaching philosophy,*

*The Future Player*

# Active Start Coaching Measures

When the young players are moving from the Active Start development stage and are ready to progress to the Fundamentals stage the coach should have exposed them to and taught them in the following Technical, Physical, Social and Psychological skills.

TECHNICAL		
Dribbling the ball	Right foot and Left foot	Let the players experience and experiment with a variety of surfaces
Shooting the ball	Right foot and Left Foot	Let the players experience and experiment with a variety of surfaces
Running with the ball	Right foot and Left Foot	Let the players experience and experiment with a variety of surfaces
Turning with the ball	Right foot or Left foot	Players are exposed to turning and changing direction with the ball
Receiving the ball	Right foot and Left Foot	Being able to stop a rolling ball on the ground

PHYSICAL		
Running Forward	Straight and with a change of direction	Players can run in a forward direction and make a change of direction, right and left while in control
Running Backward	Straight	Players can run backwards and stay in control of body
Jumping	Jump off the ground and safe landing	Both feet are off the ground and the player is able to land safely
Skiping	Right and Left foot	Expose the players to lead with right and left foot take off, in control of body
Hopping	Right and Left foot	Expose the players to lead with right and left foot take off, in control of body
Bounding	Right and Left	Introduction only
Crawling	Staying close to the ground	Move across the ground using both hands and feet to propel themselves
Turning	To the Right or left	Players are able to turn in directions, right and left.
Twisting	Moving upper body	Lower body is static and stable whilst upper body is moving.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL		
Listening	Listen Quietly	Players are able to listen to brief Information from coach and parents (Coach be brief)
Respect/Discipline	Others	Players are learning to respect other players' equipment and space. Can stay in playing area.
Communication	Verbal Communication	Players are able to verbally communicate with parents and the coach and have started to speak with other players

PSYCHOLOGICAL/MENTAL		
Motivation	Fun, rewarding activities	Players are anxious to participate and eager for the next activity and practice through enjoyment and success
Self Confidence	Safe and positive environment	Players are starting to feel confident in a crowd of unknown players and parents



# FOUR CORNER DEVELOPMENT MODEL

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Although priorities will vary during the player's different ages and phases of maturity, the model provides a basic framework for coaches to work within. In addition to the four main components, there are a number of additional 'contributions' from a wide number of people, such as parents, teachers,

schools and local clubs. The model is deliberately interlinked, which means that activity in any one corner will produce a reaction throughout all aspects of the model. For example, a practice on technique may impact physical balance and co-ordination while producing increased confidence and enhanced social standing within the group. The key message to coaches is not to consider any of the programme's aspects in isolation.

As the development pathway for each individual player is unique and diverse, the needs of each player will ebb and flow in all of the four corners. And, while the need for added support for some players will be minimal, others will require much more applied and specific support.

The Four Corner development model is referenced through out this resource using the colour codes found in the diagram to the left.







# Creating an Inclusive environment for Grassroots players

The very thought of attending a trial puts fear into most of us adults. Think how you feel when you go for a job interview. Can you imagine what a child feels? One of our guiding principles in Grassroots Soccer is that there are opportunities for all. We want all children to be allowed access to programs that they have decided that they want to join. During their Grassroots Soccer years, if a child decides that they want to be a part of a development program and the family can meet the added time, financial, travel and practice commitment, they should be allowed to. If they want to be the best that they can be, then allow them to be that. Don't deny children opportunities to participate in programs." Lets include as many children as possible in our Development programs. They want skills, lets give them skills.

## How?

When clubs are preparing the Grassroots age groups for the new season we should be thinking of how we can develop as many players as possible. In the past clubs have held tryouts where the best players get selected and the weaker players are not given the opportunity. Instead of tryouts clubs should hold "Open development sessions" where players and parents can attend to find out more information about the development program. This gives all parties involved the opportunity to find out what is needed at the development level and then the families can make the best decision for their child, rather than the coach making the decision on a player based on ability, strength or size. Clubs now have the ability to create game day rosters which will allow for more players to be involved.



## What is a "Game day roster?"

At the development level of Grassroots soccer no longer does a club or team have to roster a specific player to a specific team. Players are registered within the clubs development program as a development player. Clubs can fill as many game day rosters as their resources will allow. This would include things such as coaches, facilities etc. Once a player is registered as a development player they can be placed on different game day rosters each week (if the club has multiple game day rosters) which will now allow for appropriate competition on a weekly basis. An example is below.

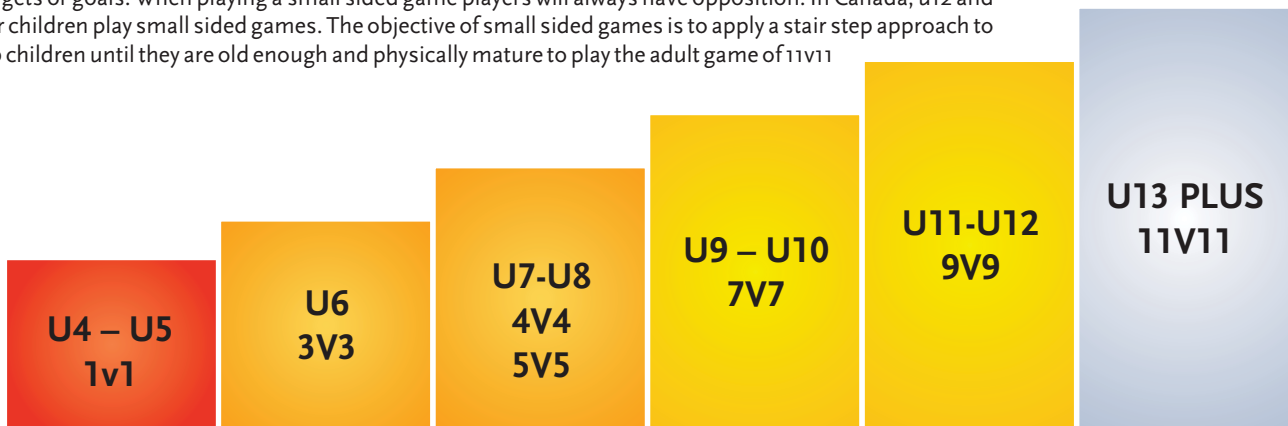






## What is a SSG or Small Sided Game?

A SSG or small sided game is any game that is played with less than 11v11. Any small sided game will always have targets or goals. When playing a small sided game players will always have opposition. In Canada, u12 and younger children play small sided games. The objective of small sided games is to apply a stair step approach to develop children until they are old enough and physically mature to play the adult game of 11v11



## What are the benefits of small sided games?

- ⚽ More touches
- ⚽ More shots on goal
- ⚽ More saves by the goalkeeper
- ⚽ More 1v1 attacking
- ⚽ More 1v1 defending
- ⚽ Ball in play longer
- ⚽ Easy to organise
- ⚽ Spatially appropriate
- ⚽ Physically appropriate
- ⚽ Cognitively appropriate
- ⚽ Experience technical and tactical situations
- ⚽ Constant transition from attack to defence
- ⚽ Most importantly its FUN!!!







## TALENT SELECTION VS TALENT IDENTIFICATION – What's the difference?

Talent selection is when coaches choose players on their current abilities on what they can currently do on the field which will have an impact on events that are taking place in the near future. Talent identification is however not what the child can currently do but is a prediction on what a child can do in the future. Both are totally separate, talent selection will help you get results today, while talent identification will help you build stronger teams for the future once players reach the talented pathway.

In our old system where tryouts have taken place talent selection has been promoted as coaches have had the “must win” attitude. This attitude has come about due to the pressure that has been placed on coaches by clubs and parents to win championships and win promotion. Even in the majority of situations, where coaches are volunteers, they have still been under pressure to win to return the following year as the coach. So when it came to tryouts, players that were selected were the bigger, stronger, faster more athletic players, which will help coaches and teams gain short term success. Players that did not match these criteria were told “sorry you are not good enough and you need to work on the following...” However they were not given the opportunity to work on the following because they were not selected to the program.

In the new grassroots system The OSA is recommending that no tryouts take place and that “open development sessions” are made available to any player who wishes to play at the development level. Now we can build our player pool and become talent identifiers. Players within the pool may not be the elite athletes at the present moment but they do show high levels of commitment, a high level of coachability, sensitivity to training and the motivation and desire to learn and become better. Now using the holistic approach and focusing on the four corners of the child's development, physiological, social, physical and technical, we can strive to develop more athletes, better human beings as well as better soccer players.

Talent identification also takes a long term approach to player development, with the focus on training large numbers of players, instead of cutting all but the elite athlete. This approach now gives all children the opportunity to realise their potential and release that potential when they feel the time is right.





# Table of Contents

## 1. Introduction

## 2. Brampton Soccer Club Coaching Philosophy

## 3. Sample exercises in the four corners model



### Ontario Soccer Player Development Model How it works

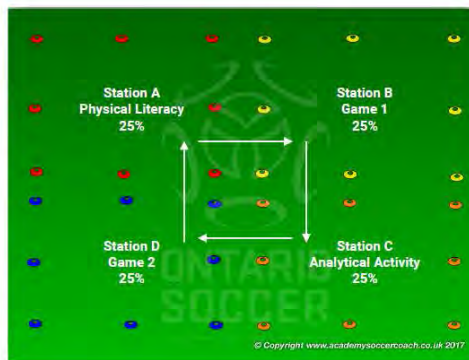


**Introduction**  
During the practice players will spend an allotted time at each station having fun, developing specific skills and qualities before moving onto the next station. By using station work we create an environment where players are continually motivated and challenged.

**Organization**  
If working with a larger group, organize players into groups of 6. Each station has a coach who leads that specific station for the session.  
If working with a smaller group, simply move together through all 4 stations until all are complete.

**Procedure**  
Players rotate every 8 minutes. Provide a 2 minute break in between each station for water and to allow movement to the next station.

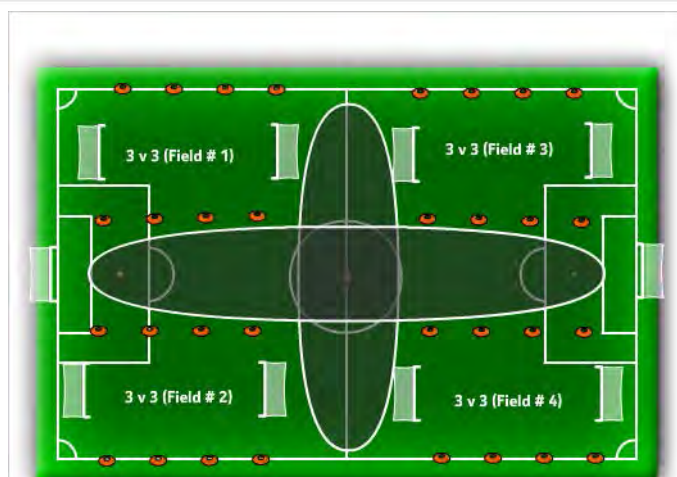
**Emphasis**  
In these examples one station focuses on Physical Literacy, two stations on movements with the ball or small sided games and the 4th station is focused around technique with decision making.



Timing	Area
Total Time: 40 4 x 8 minute Stations	20 x 20 m (x4)

Technical		Physical	
	U4 U5		U4 U5
Dribbling	1 1	Running Forward	1 1
Running with the ball	1 1	Running Backwards	1 1
Shooting	1 1	Jumping	1 1
Ball Control	3 2	Skipping	1 1
Passing	3 3	Hopping	1 1
Receiving	4 4	Bounding	2 2
Heading	4 4	Crawling	2 2
Shielding	4 4	Turning	2 2
Crossing	4 4	Falling / diving	3 2
Finishing	4 4	Twisting	2 2
1v1 Defending	4 4	Rolling	3 3
1v1 Attacking	4 4	Other Sports	1 1
Social		Psychological	
	U4 U5		U4 U5
Listening	2 2	Motivation	1 1
Co-operation	3 3	Self Confidence	1 1
Communication	1 1	Competitiveness	4 4
Sharing	3 3	Concentration	4 4
Problem-solving	3 3	Commitment	4 4
Decision-making	3 2	Self Control	3 3
Empathy	3 2	Priority Key	
Patience	3 2	High	1
Respect / discipline	2 2	Medium	2
Fair play / honesty	3 2	Low	3
		Not Applicable	4

**Top Tip** Encourage the players to make decisions and have fun. When talking to the players, crouch down so you are at eye level with them rather than towering above them. This can be intimidating for young children. Speaking to the players at eye level allows you to better connect with them.



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Micro Set up for small fields (using the 7v7 FCC fields)  
We used to play across the way 5 v 5 way too big a space for the U4's & U5's.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The BSC would like to welcome all coaches to the Club House League Program for U4 – U5 Age Group. These ages represent the **ACTIVE START** Stage in a player's development as per Canada Soccer and Ontario Soccer.... **Long Term Player Development framework (LTPD)**



L-T-P-D  
long term player development



The purpose of this manual is to assist coaches with their preparation for the upcoming House League Season. This document is to be used as a reference guide during the season.

Remember: ***"Its all about the Players"***







## 2. BRAMPTON SOCCER CLUB COACHING PHILOSOPHY

The Brampton Youth Soccer Club are firm believers in the Ontario Soccer's Long Term Player Development (LTPD) framework and as such, our approach to player development at this age represents the beginning of the ***Physical Literacy Stream*** of a child's soccer journey.

The Brampton Youth Soccer Club strives to make every child's soccer experience a positive one. We are here for the children and their development as soccer players – hopefully for life. We strongly recommend that our coaches follow a **Player-Centred** coaching philosophy. Player centered coaching allows the player to make decisions within the practice session and/or game.

We encourage each of you to empower your players to become assured decision-makers during your sessions. As soccer is a game based on making decisions it's important that you as the coach, allow your players to practice and develop the decisions that they make. Initially, many young players decisions will be unsuccessful but only through support, time and patience, will our young players develop the skill to make better decisions.

At these early ages, success as a coach is not based on wins and loses and whether or not you win the game, rather success is measured based on how many players return to enjoy the game the following year and the new skills they acquire. In fact, the Brampton Youth Soccer Club does not keep track of results at this age so if you find your team in a game where it is dominating the other team please rotate your players more often to avoid a lopsided result.

We recommend that this philosophy as well as your own coaching philosophy be communicated to the parents at the start of the season. We suggest that after your first practice, hold a parents meeting and discuss your philosophy with the parents along with any goals you may have for the season.

Remember we stress that as coaches of the U4-U5 age group that you endeavour to make every practice and game – **Fun Based**.







# Typical Practice Plan Sessions

## Stage 1 - Active Start

### U4 - U6 Ages

(Some Sample Sessions Included)

#### Running with the Ball

1 v 1 Attacking

Shooting

Dribbling

Ball Mastery

1 v 1 Attacking

Dribbling

Ball Mastery

#### Small Sided Games

*Practice / game day organization is one of the most important attributes of a successful coach. This aspect can make or break a season in the eyes of the player and parent. A coach's ability to move through a well thought out and fun practice without players standing around is a very important attribute at the U4 and U5 level. It reduces the amount of time young players have to misbehave and lose focus.*

*To alleviate the stress for our Coaches, the BYSC have outlined below the breakdown of how a typical practice should look at this age as well as an overview of the practice objectives.*

*We have incorporated some sample session plans for your consideration for the summer. Finally, helpful questions to ask yourself when planning a practice session*

- 1) Are the activities fun?
- 2) Are the activities organized?
- 3) Are all of the players involved in the activities?
- 4) Are the players having fun?
- 5) Are the spaces being used appropriate?
- 6) Is creativity and decision making being used?
- 7) Is the coach's feedback appropriate?



Brampton Soccer Club  
GRASSROOTS L.T.P.D.  
Stage 1: Active Start  
U4 to U6 Ages  
(Sample Practice Plan)  
Running with the Ball

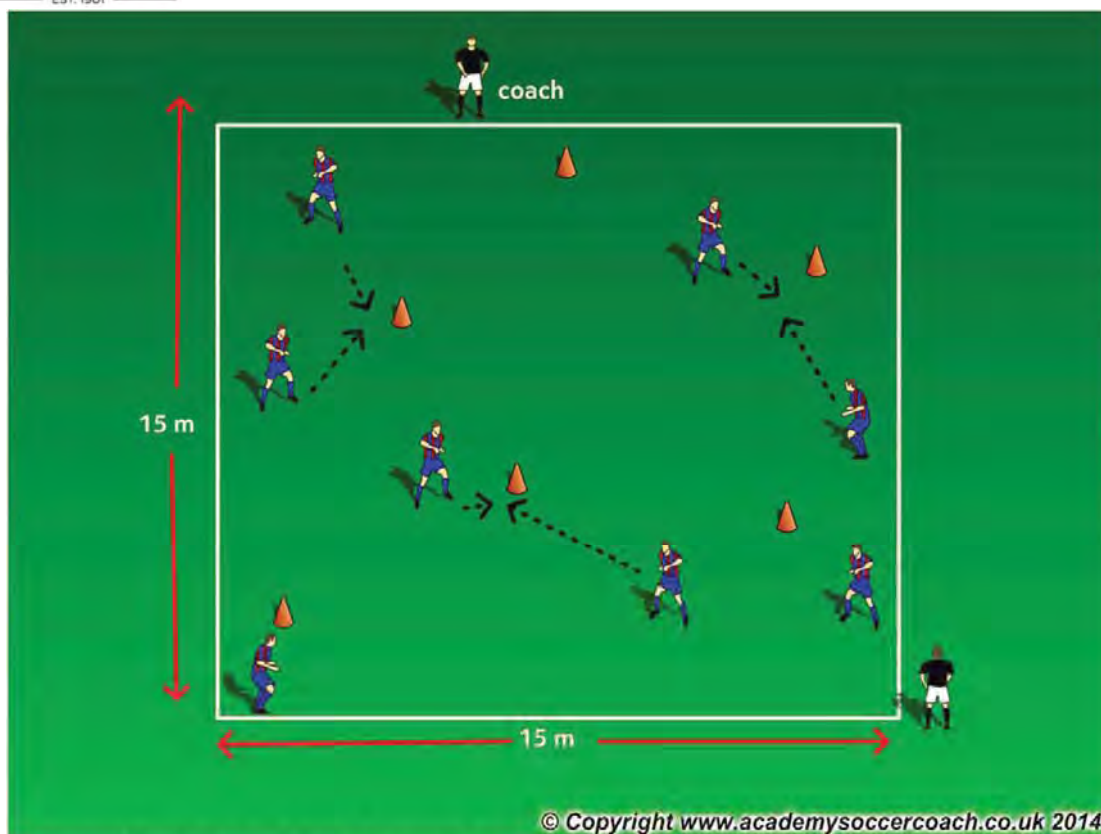
**Active Start practice plan – Week 2**  
**Station A**  
**General Movement - Elves and Wizard**



**Time frame.6- 8 minutes**

**Emphasis:**

Running with/without the ball  
 Changing direction  
 Jumping  
 Awareness  
 Slowing down, speeding up  
 Fun



**Set up:** Mark out a " cone forest" inside a 15mx15m . field.  
 8-10 players.  
**Sequence:** Elves ( players) moving around the forest. Whenever two elves meet in the forest, they jump over the cone ( take turn). Can elves jump over the cones before the wizard ( parent or coach) catch them!  
 This activity could be done with the ball .

**Psychological**

Confidence  
 Being safe  
 Positive feedback

**Technical**

Running with the ball

**Physical**

A,B,C's  
 Change of Direction

**Social**

Peer interaction  
 Communicating  
 Celebrating



## Active Start practice plan – Week 2

### Station B

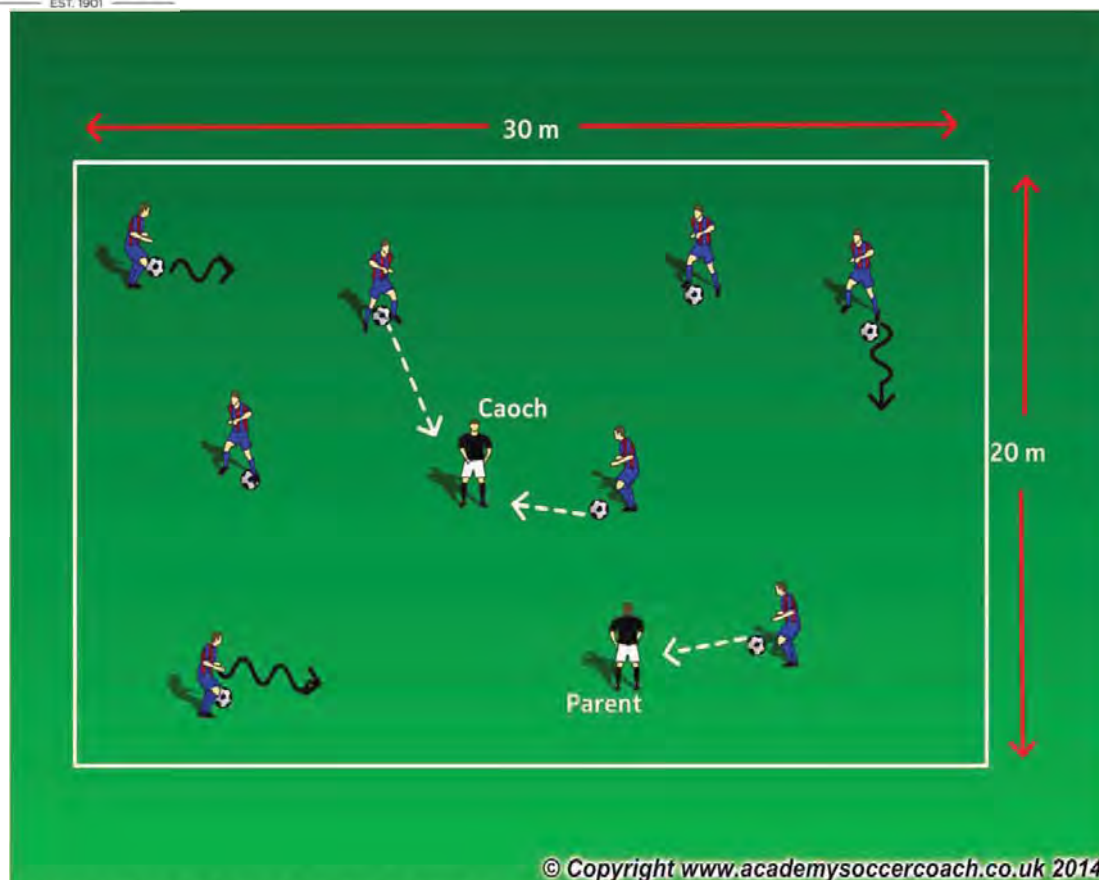
### Coordination - Catch the robber!



Time frame. 6-8 minutes

Emphasis:

Eye – foot coordination  
Lots of touches on the ball  
Different parts of the foot  
**FUN!**



**Organization:** Using cones, mark out a 30 mx20 m. field.

8-10 players, each has a ball.

**Sequence:** Each player ( Officer ) move the ball around, and trying to arrest the Robber ( parent or coach) by shooting the ball at them.

#### Psychological

Positive reinforcement  
Confidence  
Being safe

#### Technical

Running with the ball  
Part of the ball,  
Part of the foot

#### Physical

Eye-hand coordination  
Agility, Balance  
Change of Direction

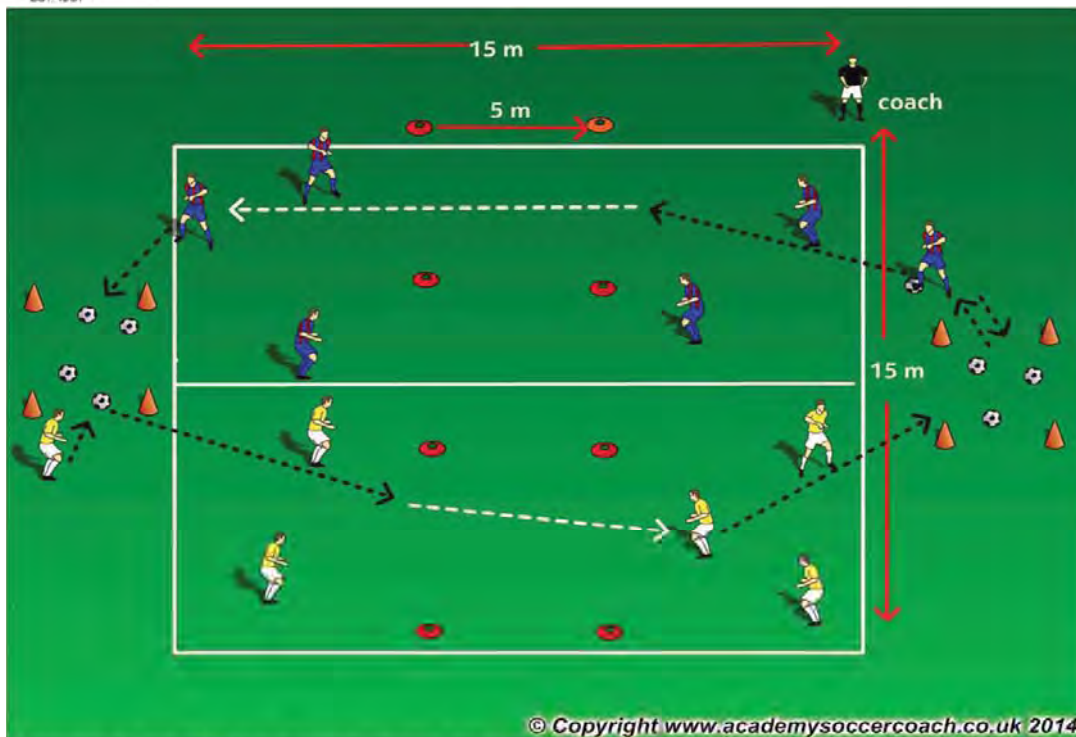
#### Social

Listening  
Communicating  
Celebrating

## Active Start practice plan – Week 2

### Station C

#### Soccer technique - Passing



**Organization:** Using cones, mark out a 15 mx15 m field with a 5 m wide " river" down the middle. Mark out a 2 mx2 m " ball castle" on each side of the field. Have equal balls in each castle.

**Procedure:** Each team stands in its own half, with children evenly divided on both side of the river. Players on the same side as their ball castle get balls from there and running with the ball close to the river, and thn pass the ball across the river to their teammates, who quickly running with the ball to put them in the opposite castle.

Team with fewer balls in their castle wins. ( duration 1 minute)



Time frame.6- 8 minutes

Emphasis:

Lots of touches on the ball  
Using different technique  
Positive feedback  
**FUN!**

#### Psychological

Positive reinforcement  
Confidence  
Being safe

#### Technical

Passing  
Running with the ball

#### Physical

Speed  
A,B,C's  
Change of Direction

#### Social

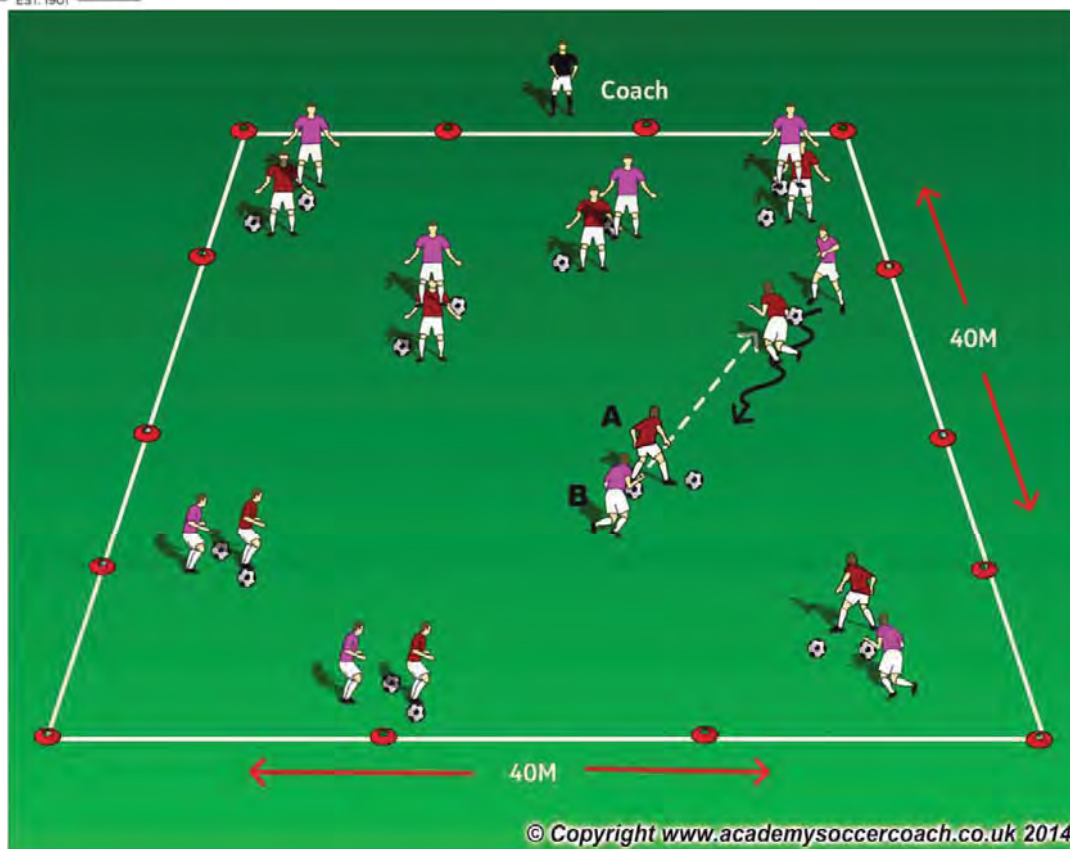
Communicating  
Celebrating  
Fun



## Active Start practice plan – Week 2

### Station D

#### Small sided game – 1v1 to a ball



#### **1v1 to a ball:**

Players play 1v1 to a ball. Player B plays a pass through player A's legs. Once the ball is played the game is live and players compete to hit the target ball with the game ball. Players compete for 2 minutes. Once a goal is scored players switch and restart the game.



### Time frame. 6-8 minutes

#### Emphasis:

Running with the ball

Dribbling

1v1

Changing direction

Change of speed

Agility, Balance, Coordination

Imagination

Passing

Fun

#### Psychological

Fun

Confidence

Being safe

#### Technical

Passing

Dribbling

1v1

Shooting

#### Physical

Speed

A,B,C's

Change of Direction

#### Social

Peer interaction

Celebrating

Fun



Brampton Soccer Club  
GRASSROOTS L.T.P.D.  
Stage 1: Active Start  
U4 to U6 Ages  
(Sample Practice Plan)  
1 v 1 Attacking



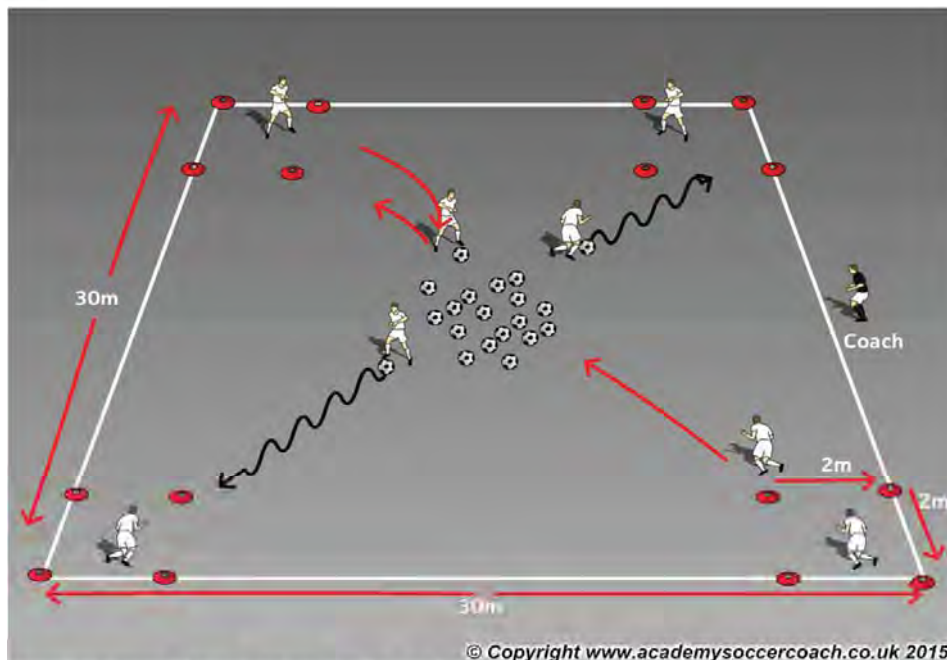
**Active Start practice plan – Week 12**  
**Station A**  
**General Movement – The Golden Egg**



**Time frame.6- 8 minutes**

**Emphasis:**

Running with/without the ball  
 Changing direction  
 Dribbling  
 Awareness  
 Slowing down, speeding up  
 Fun



**Organization:** 30m x 30m area is set up with a 2m x 2m box in each corner. 2 players are placed in each corner, (farm).  
**Procedure:** When the coach calls "Go" 1 player from each corner (farm) runs towards the middle to collect an "egg" (Soccer ball). They dribble the egg back to their farm, give their partner a high five and then the next player goes to collect an egg. Once all eggs have been removed from the middle the farmers can now go to other farms to collect their eggs. When the coach calls freeze the farmers with the most eggs in their farm score 2 points. Game can be repeated.

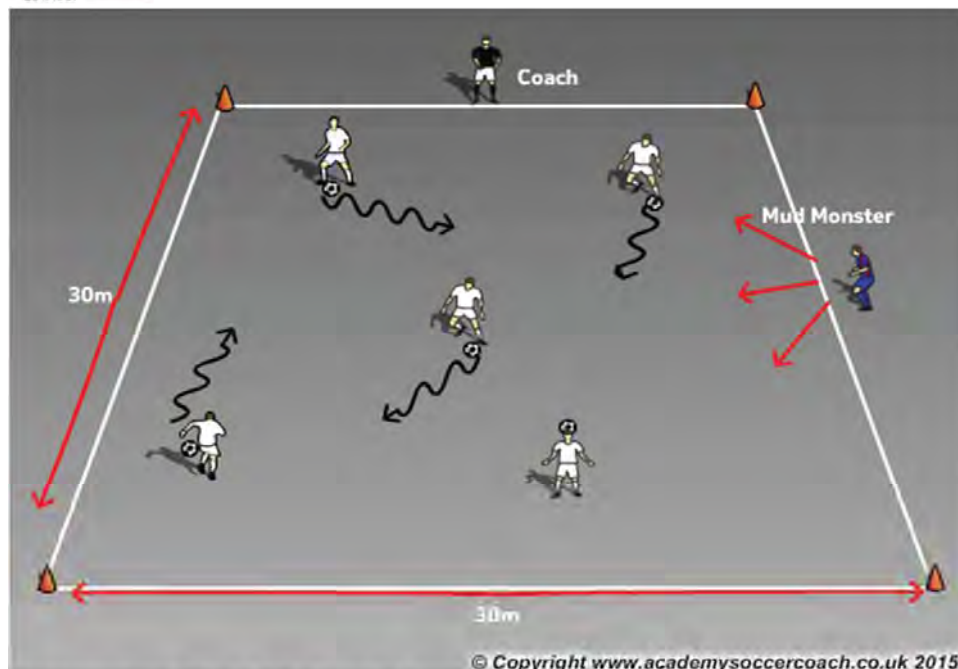
<b><u>Psychological</u></b> Confidence Being safe Positive feedback	<b><u>Technical</u></b> Running with the ball
<b><u>Physical</u></b> A,B,C's Change of Direction	<b><u>Social</u></b> Peer interaction Communicating Celebrating



## Active Start practice plan – Week 12

### Station B

### Coordination – Mud Monsters



Organization: 30m x 30m area set up. Every player has a soccer ball apart from the "Mud monster"

Procedure: All players dribble around inside the area. 1 player at a time is selected to become the "Mud monster". When the coach calls "go" the Mud monster comes in and attempts to tag the players. If a player is tagged they must stand with their legs apart, holding the soccer ball in their head shouting, "help, help I'm stuck in the mud" to be freed a player who is dribbling crawls through the back of their legs. Each player gets to be the mud monster for 1 minute.



Time frame. 6-8 minutes

Emphasis:

Dribbling  
Movement  
Team work  
FUN!

#### Psychological

Positive reinforcement  
Confidence  
Being safe

#### Technical

Running with the ball  
Part of the ball,  
Part of the foot

#### Physical

Agility, Balance  
Change of Direction  
Movement

#### Social

Listening  
Communicating  
Celebrating  
Team work

Ontario Soccer Association Grassroots Development

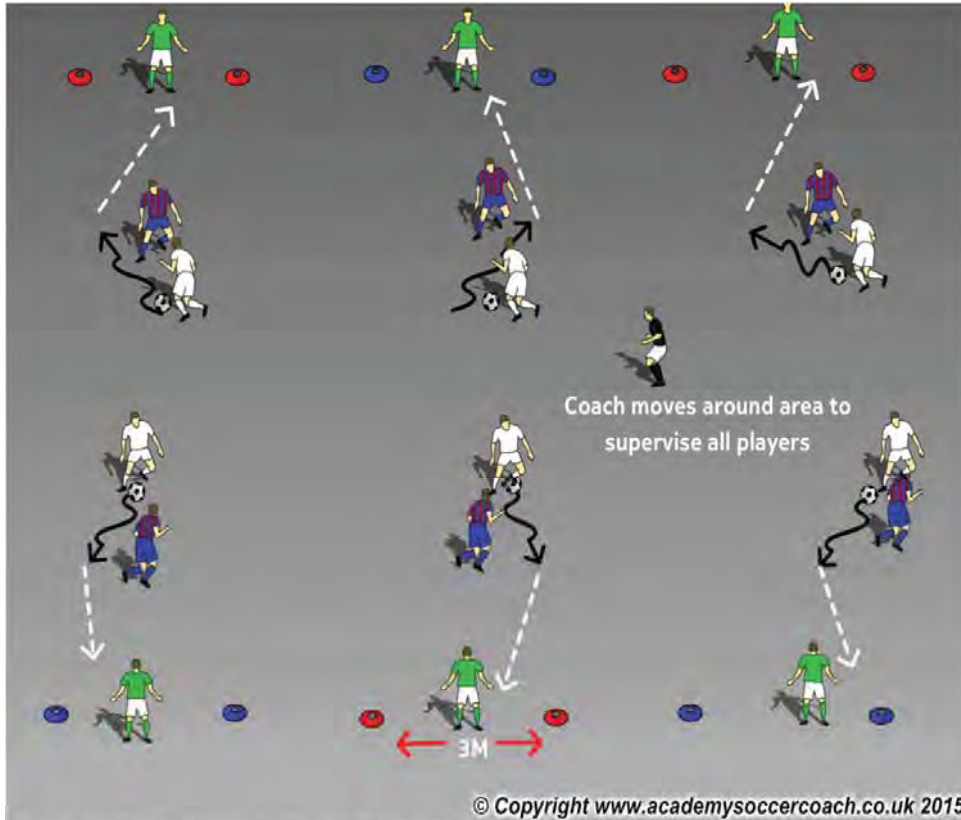




## Active Start practice plan – Week 12

### Station C

### Soccer technique – 1v1 to goal



**Organization:** Player placed into groups of 3. They play 1v1 to goal.  
**Procedure:** Goalkeeper rolls the ball out and the 2 players play 1v1. After a goal is scored they player who scored the goal goes in goal.



Time frame.6- 8 minutes

Emphasis:

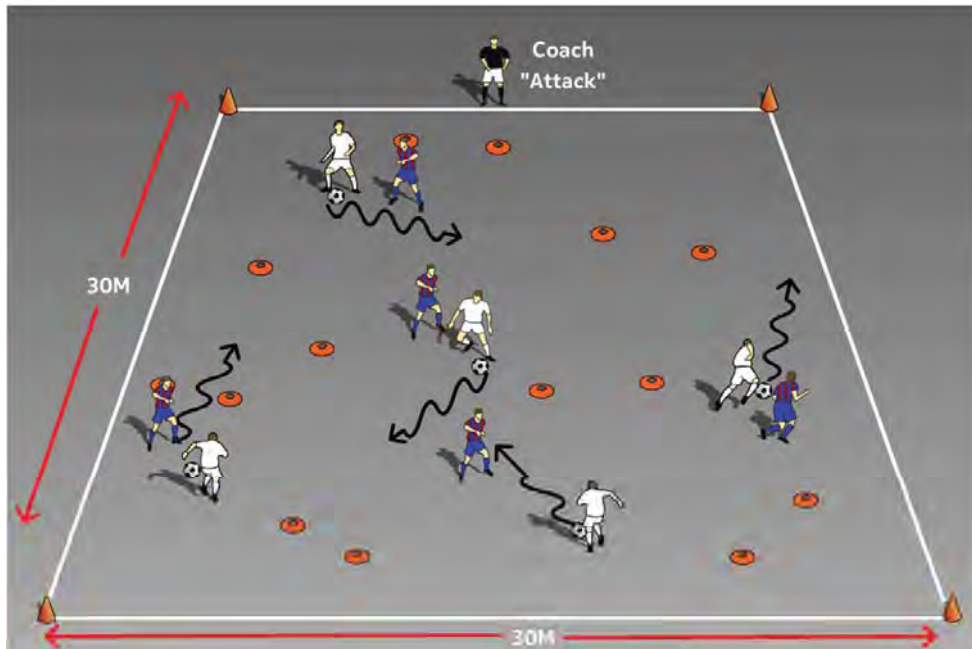
Lots of touches on the ball  
 Scoring/stopping goals  
 Using different technique  
 Positive feedback  
**FUN!**

<p><b><u>Psychological</u></b></p> <p>Positive reinforcement              Confidence              Being safe</p>	<p><b><u>Technical</u></b></p> <p>1v1 attack/defend              Shooting              Goalkeeping</p>
<p><b><u>Physical</u></b></p> <p>Speed              A,B,C's              Change of Direction</p>	<p><b><u>Social</u></b></p> <p>Communicating              Celebrating              Fun</p>

Ontario Soccer Association Grassroots Development



**Active Start practice plan – Week 12**  
**Station D**  
**Small sided game – 1v1 through gates**



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**Organization:** Players are paired inside a 30m x 30m area.  
**Procedure:** When the coach calls "Attack" the player with ball attempts to dribble through the gates. The player without the ball becomes the defender. If the defender wins the ball he/she then becomes the attacker and vice versa. Players play for 1 minute and score a point every time they go through a gate. Player's cannot go straight back through the same gate. After 1 minute players change partners.



**Time frame. 6-8 minutes**

**Emphasis:**

Running with the ball  
 Dribbling  
 1v1  
 Changing direction  
 Change of speed  
 Agility, Balance, Coordination  
 Imagination  
 Passing  
 Fun

**Psychological**

Fun  
 Confidence  
 Being safe

**Technical**

Dribbling  
 1v1  
 Shooting

**Physical**

Speed  
 A,B,C's  
 Change of Direction

**Social**

Peer interaction  
 Celebrating  
 Fun



Brampton Soccer Club  
GRASSROOTS L.T.P.D.  
Stage 1: Active Start  
U4 to U6 Ages  
(Sample Practice Plan)  
Shooting



## Active Start practice plan – Week 16

### Station A

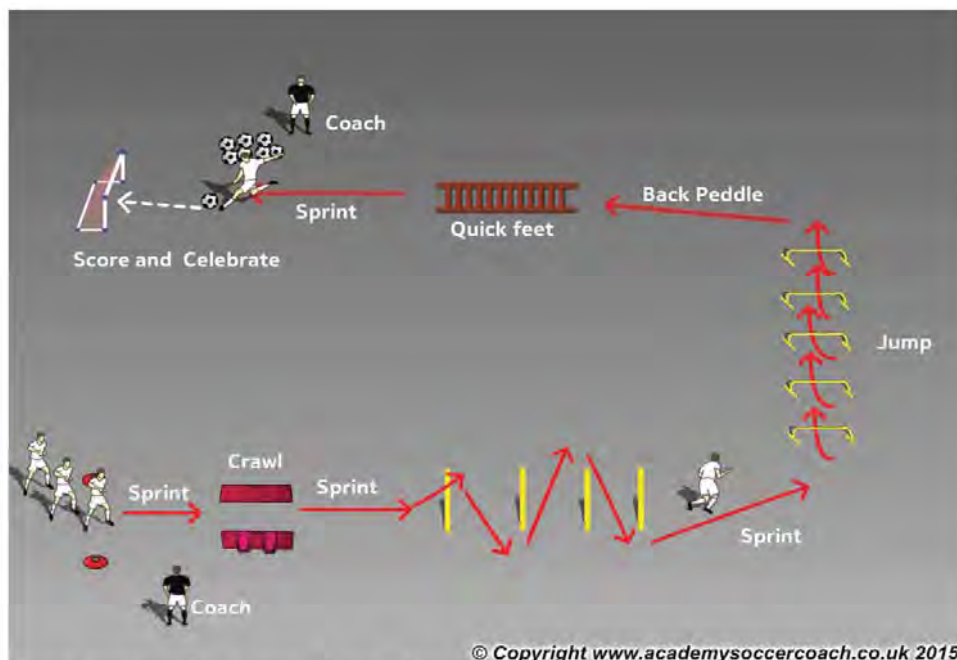
### General movement – Assault course



**Time Frame. 8 minutes**

**Emphasis:**

Listening  
Changing direction  
Agility, Balance, Coordination  
Different movements  
**FUN!**



Organization: As shown above. Players are shown a variety of movements from crawling, Sprinting, Jumping, back peddling, quick feet and shooting. Coaches have the freedom to set up course in any way that can help deliver physical literacy skills to children.

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#### **Psychological**

Confidence  
Being safe  
FUN

#### **Technical**

Shooting

#### **Physical**

A,B,C's  
Change of Speed  
Change of Direction

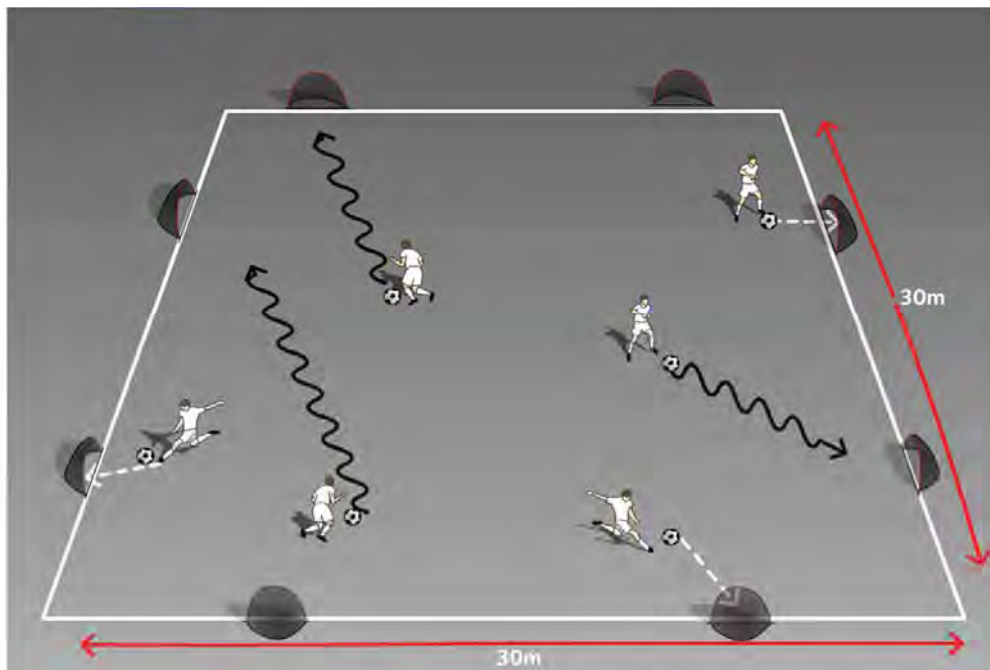
#### **Social**

Listening  
Communicating  
Celebrating

## Active Start practice plan – Week 16

### Station B

## Soccer Technique – How many GOALS can you score?



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**Organization:** Players are placed inside a 30m x 30m area all with a ball. 8 goals are placed on the outside of the area.

**Procedure:** When coach calls "Go" children have 90 seconds to score as many goals as possible. Once they score in one goal they must look to score in a different goal. Play the game several times and encourage the children to use both feet.

### Time Frame. 8 minutes

#### Emphasis:

Dribbling  
Different parts of the foot  
Shooting  
Changing direction  
Competition  
FUN!

#### Psychological

Confidence  
Being safe  
FUN

#### Technical

Dribbling  
Running with the ball  
Shooting

#### Physical

A,B,C's  
Change of Direction  
Change of Speed

#### Social

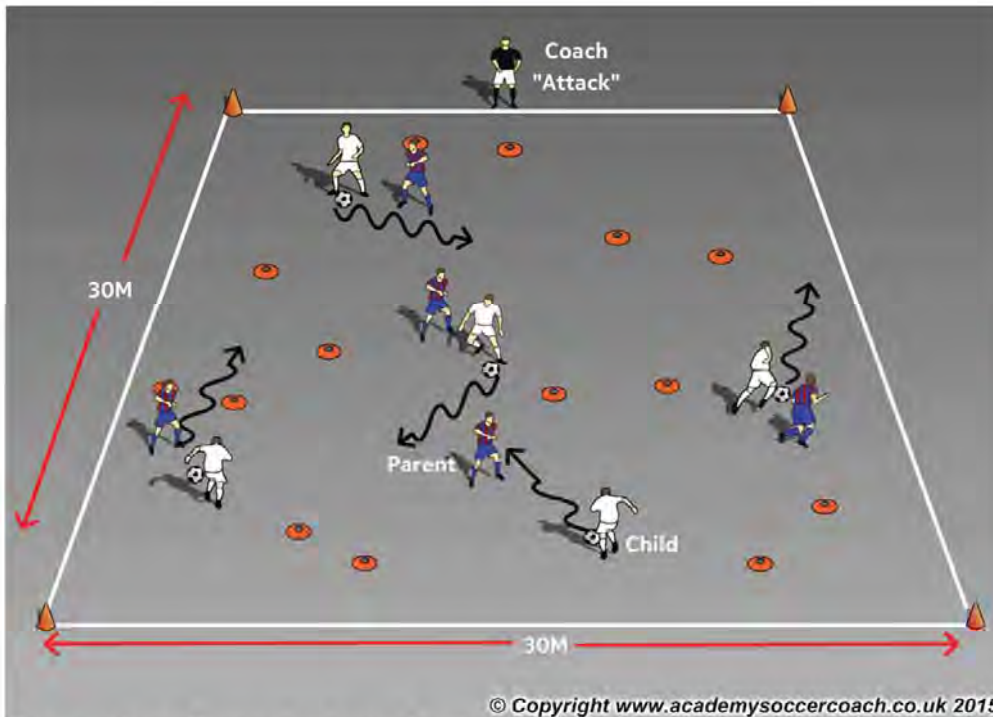
Listening  
Communicating  
Celebrating



## Active Start practice plan – Week 16

### Station C

#### Soccer Technique – 1v1, Child vs Parent



**Organization:** Players are paired with a parent inside a 30m x 30m area.  
**Procedure:** When the coach calls "Attack" the child with ball attempts to dribble through the gates. The parent without the ball becomes the defender. If the defender wins the ball he/she then becomes the attacker and vice versa. Players play for 1 minute and score a point every time they go through a gate. The child should always be the winner in the games.

#### Time Frame. 8 minutes

##### Emphasis:

Running with the ball  
 Dribbling  
 Changing direction  
 Agility, Balance, Coordination  
 Imagination  
 FUN!

##### Psychological

Confidence  
 Being safe  
 FUN with the  
 parents

##### Technical

Dribbling  
 Running with the ball  
 Shooting

##### Physical

A,B,C's  
 Change of Direction

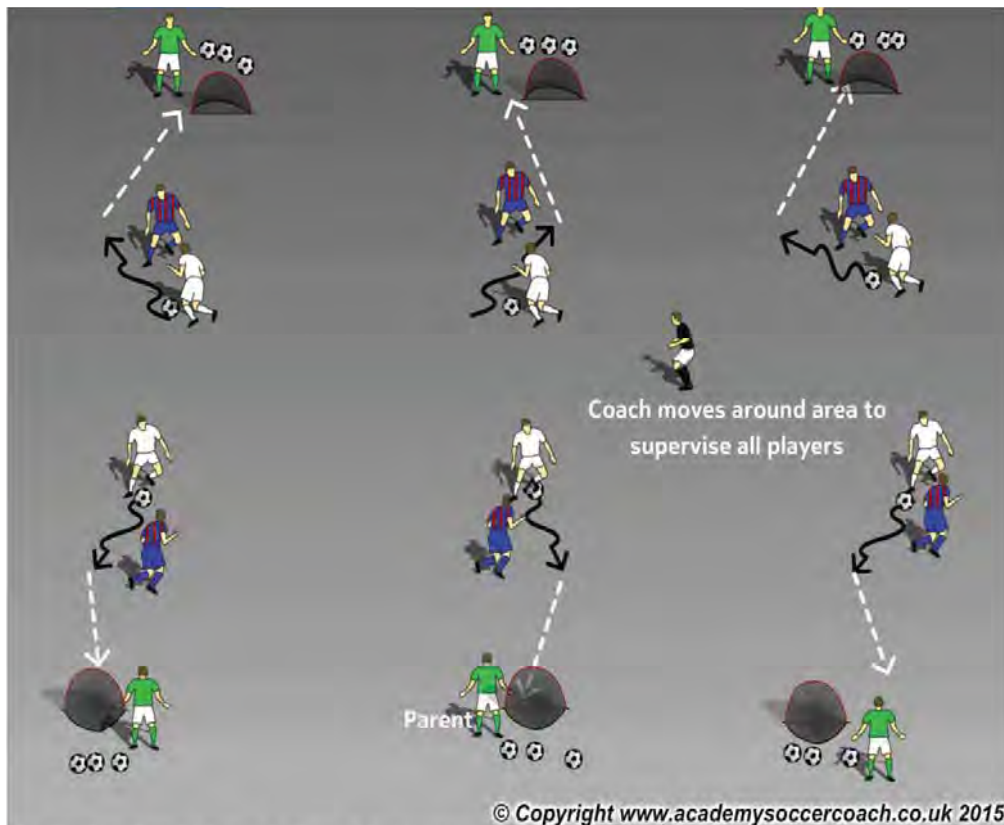
##### Social

Communicating  
 Celebrating

## Active Start practice plan - Week 16

### Station D

#### Small sided game – 1v1 to goal



**Organization:** Player placed into groups of 2. They play 1v1 to goal.  
**Procedure:** Parent rolls the ball out and the 2 players play 1v1. Players look to score in the pug goal. After 90 seconds rotate partners.

### Time Frame. 8 minutes

#### Emphasis:

Listening  
 Running with the ball  
 Dribbling  
 Changing direction  
 Agility, Balance, Coordination  
 Imagination  
 FUN!

#### Psychological

Confidence  
 Being safe  
 FUN

#### Technical

Dribbling  
 Running with the ball  
 Shooting

#### Physical

A,B,C's  
 Change of Direction

#### Social

Listening  
 Communicating  
 Celebrating





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Brampton Soccer Club  
GRASSROOTS L.T.P.D.  
Stage 1: Active Start  
U4 to U6 Ages  
(Sample Practice Plan)  
Dribbling

Ontario Soccer Development



# Active Start

## Station A

### Physical Literacy – Pilot



#### Organisation

Players are placed in the area with a ball each. Cones are scattered randomly across the playing area that look like gates.

#### Procedure

The Pilot steer their plane (ball) in the (playing area)  
 Players do the following. Pilot will do box touches on the ball with the inside of the feet, which means they are on the runway preparing for takeoff. For take off, player will do (10 toe taps) 2 hops and a jump to lift plane and then dribble through gates, which means they are now flying their plane. To land plane- pass the ball forward and crawl to it. Repeat

#### Emphasis

Imagination, safety and FUN!

#### Progression

N/A



Timing	Area
8 Minutes	20 x 20 m

#### Technical

Ball mastery  
 Running with the ball  
 Dribbling

#### Psychological

Confidence  
 Awareness  
 FUN

#### Social

Problem Solving  
 Communicating

#### Physical

Agility  
 Balance  
 Co-ordination  
 Change of Speed  
 Change of Direction

#### Top Tip

Did you know that the key window for learning Physical Literacy is between the ages of 3-6 years old? The focus at the Active Start age groups is centred around the development of Fundamental Movement Skills rather than sports skills.





# Active Start

## Station B

### Small Sided Game – 2v2 & 2 Goals (Parent & Child v Parent & Child)



Organisation
Organize players into 2v2 with 2 goals on each side, (1 player and a parent vs 1 player and a parent/guardian)
Procedure
Child and parent/guardian play a 2v2 game with 2 goals to score on. If the ball goes out of the field, take the closest ball to keep the game moving. Parents / guardian should help the children as much as possible.
Emphasis
Free Play and FUN!
Progression
N/A



Timing	Area
8 Minutes	15 m x 10 m

Technical	Psychological
Dribbling Lots of touches Ball mastery	Confidence Being safe Reactions FUN
Social	Physical
Cooperation Communicating Social	Agility Balance Co-ordination Change of Direction

#### Top Tip

Engage the parents throughout the session. This can help with the organization, but more importantly creates that backyard feeling between parent and child.





# Active Start

## Station C

### Analytical – Indy 500



#### Organisation

Each player has a ball and starts in the garage, which is smaller area where red players are shown. Larger cone grid is 15x15, smaller cone grid 5x5 and garage 10x10

#### Procedure

Players drive their ball around the soccer race track. Coach can ask for a change of speed, direction, stopping. Red light=stop, Yellow light=go slow, Green light= dribble the ball, avoid others=use a horn near others (beep, beep) Reverse=drag ball back (sole of foot on the top of the ball and push backwards), to fill up the gas tank, must go to garage and do box touches with the inside foot 6 times

#### Emphasis

FUN, creativity and celebrating!

#### Progression

N/A



Timing	Area
8 Minutes	15 m x15 m outside grid 5 m x 5 m inside grid Garage 10 m x5 m

#### Technical

Ball mastery  
Running with the ball  
Dribbling  
FUN

#### Psychological

Confidence  
Awareness  
FUN

#### Social

Problem Solving  
Communicating  
FUN

#### Physical

Agility  
Balance  
Co-ordination  
Change of Speed  
Change of Direction  
FUN

#### Top Tip

Active Start players are very egocentric and working with others is an abstract concept. Don't ask them to share the ball, give them a 'toy' each.



# Active Start

## Station D

### Small Sided Game – 1v1 (Child vs Parent)



#### Organisation

1v1 (child vs parent) are placed on to a 30x22 field with 1 goal on each end. Each player starts with a soccer ball. Once a player has scored, give them another ball to avoid being hit while collecting a ball from a goal.

#### Procedure

Each player plays as an individual and can score on the opposite goal. Once a player scores they get another ball and score in the other goal.

#### Emphasis

Fun, creativity and celebrating!

#### Progression

N/A



Timing	Area
8 Minutes	20 m x 15 m

#### Technical

Ball mastery  
Running with the ball  
Dribbling  
FUN

#### Psychological

Confidence  
Awareness  
FUN

#### Social

Problem Solving  
Communicating  
FUN

#### Physical

Agility  
Balance  
Co-ordination  
Change of Speed  
FUN

#### Top Tip

U4-U5 players have a short attention span therefore it's important we tailor our practices accordingly. Shorter activities lasting 6-8 minutes are recommended.





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Stage 1: Active Start  
U4 to U6 Ages  
(Sample Practice Plan)  
Ball Mastery

Ontario Soccer Development



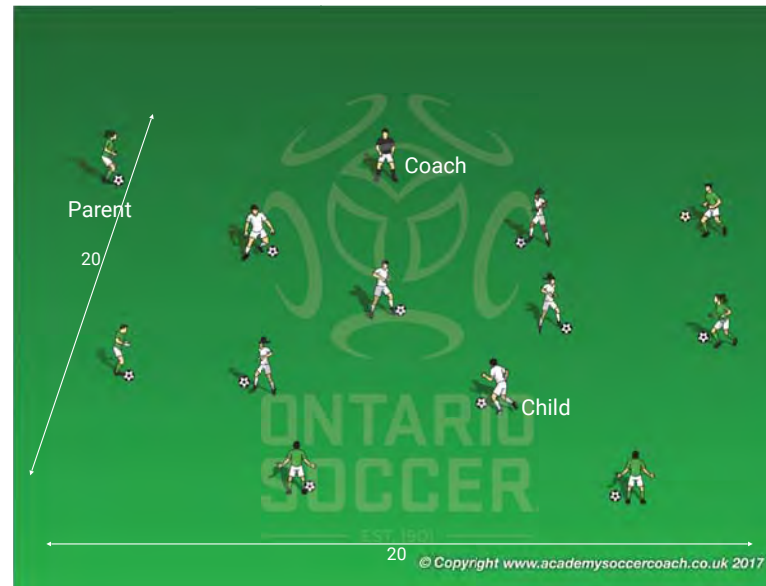
# Active Start

## Activity

Show me you can!



Organization
Every player has a ball. Parents are on the outside of the area with a ball to allow their child to keep playing with a new ball incase the ball rolls away.
Procedure
Coach presents different challenges to the players. e.g. "Show me you can....." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Bounce the ball and catch it</li> <li>* Do a figure 8 with the ball between your legs</li> <li>* Roll the ball through your legs</li> <li>* Throw and catch with two hands</li> <li>* Throw and catch with one hand</li> <li>* Run with the ball using your feet</li> <li>* Do a super hero stance on your ball</li> </ul>
Emphasis
Creating a safe environment, decision making and positive reinforcement
Progression
N/A



Timing	Area
8 Minutes	20m x 20m

Technical	Psychological
Ball mastery Dribbling	Fun Confidence Awareness Creativity
Social	Physical
Problem Solving Listening Communication	Agility Balance Co-ordination Change of Speed Change of Direction

### Top Tip

Active Start players are very egocentric and working with others is an abstract concept. Don't ask them to share the ball, give them a 'toy' each.





# Active Start

## Small Sided Game

### Backyard Soccer



#### Organization

Organize players into 2v2  
(1 player and a parent vs 1 player and a parent/  
guardian)

#### Procedure

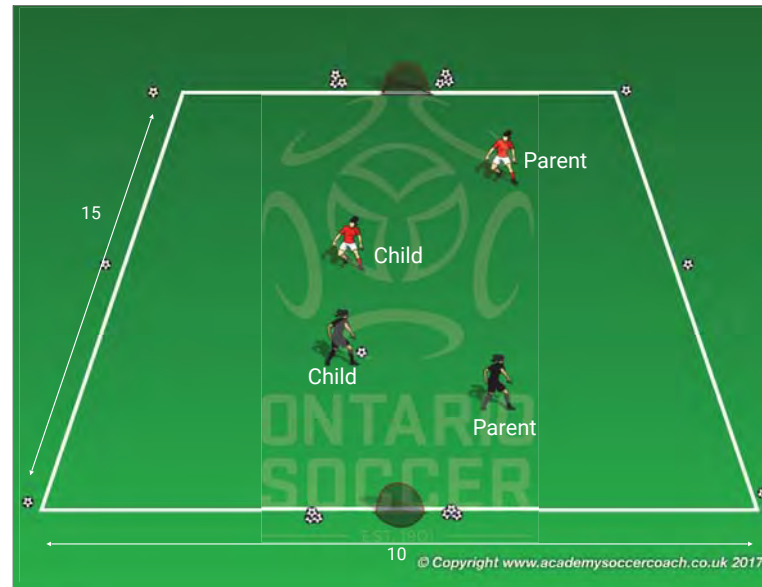
Child and parent/guardian play a 2v2 game. If the  
ball goes out of the field, take the closest ball to keep  
the game moving. Parents / guardian should help the  
children as much as possible.

#### Emphasis

Free Play and FUN!

#### Progression

N/A



#### Timing

8 Minutes

#### Area

15m x 10m

#### Technical

Dribbling  
Ball mastery

#### Psychological

Fun  
Safety  
Confidence  
Creativity

#### Social

Problem Solving  
Celebration

#### Physical

Agility  
Balance  
Co-ordination  
Change of Direction  
Change of Speed

#### Top Tip

Engage the parents throughout the session. This can help with the organization, but more importantly creates that backyard feeling between parent and child.





# Active Start

## Activity

### Finding Nemo & Dory



#### Organization

Players and parent/guardian have a ball each and are placed in the grid with cones spread out randomly across the area.

Tie a knot in an orange or blue bib.

Ask players to name famous fishes. They will most likely come up with Nemo and Dory. Introduce the bibs as Nemo or Dory and ask the players to close their eyes. Hide the bibs under separate cones.

#### Procedure

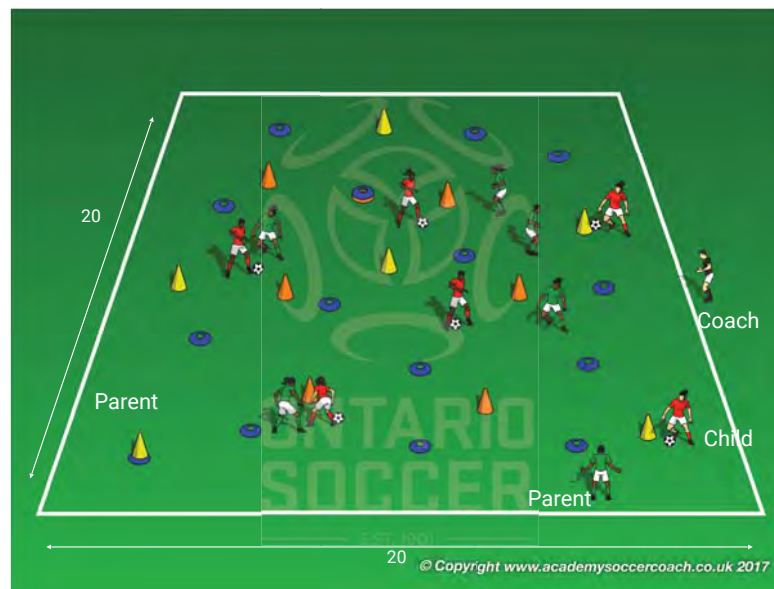
Players must swim round the ocean (dribbling their ball) and shout "Nemo, where are you?" Players look under the rocks (cones) on the sea bed. The first player to find Nemo under the cones wins. Ask players to do a different variation of a physical literacy move, toe taps, hopping etc Repeat with Dory and then search for both at the same time.

#### Emphasis

Imagination, creativity and celebrating!

#### Progression

Introduce a player as a defender called Bruce the Shark who has to chase the fish away.



Timing	Area
8 Minutes	20m x 20m

#### Technical

Ball mastery  
Dribbling

#### Psychological

Fun  
Confidence  
Awareness

#### Social

Problem Solving  
Communication  
Celebrating

#### Physical

Agility  
Balance  
Co-ordination  
Change of Speed  
Change of Direction

#### Top Tip

U4-U5 players have a short attention span therefore it's important we tailor our practices accordingly. Shorter activities lasting 6-8 minutes are recommended.



# Active Start

## Small Sided Game

### Tom & Jerry



#### Organization

Players (in white) have a ball and start in front of the goal they are defending. Parents/guardians start in front of the opposite end without a ball.

#### Procedure

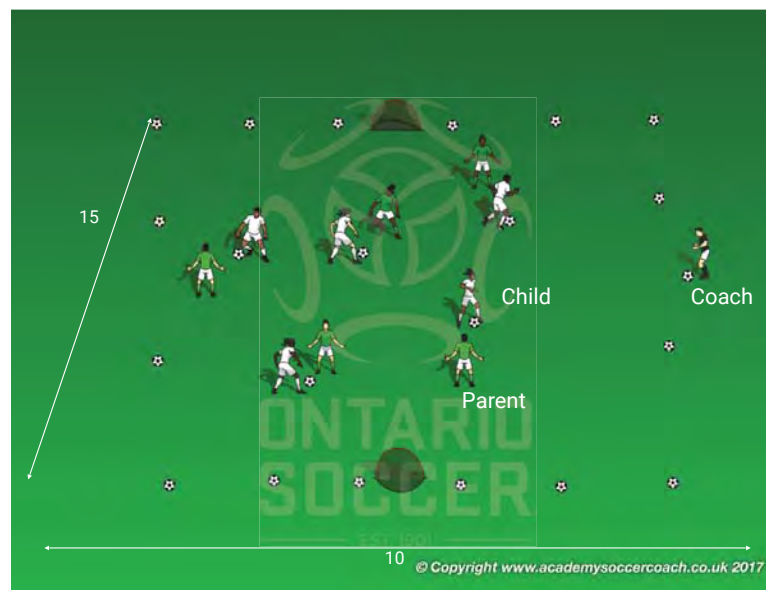
Jerry will get the cheese and put it in the hole (the goal) and Tom (the parent) will try to steal the ball and put it back in Jerry's house. The game is continuous.

#### Emphasis

Creating a safe environment, positive reinforcement allowing the players to be creative and make decisions. Involving the parents and demonstration of the activity.

#### Progression

N/A



#### Timing

8 Minutes

#### Area

15m x 10m

#### Technical

Dribbling  
Ball mastery

#### Psychological

Fun  
Safety  
Confidence  
Creativity

#### Social

Problem Solving  
Celebration

#### Physical

Agility  
Balance  
Co-ordination  
Change of Direction  
Change of Speed

#### Top Tip

Check out the whole Active Start Grassroots Curriculum at: <http://www.ontariosoccer.net/grassroots>



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Stage 1: Active Start  
U4 to U6 Ages  
(Sample Practice Plan)  
1 v 1 Attacking



## Active Start practice plan – Week 29

### Station A

#### General movement – Can you catch me?



**Time Frame. 8 minutes**

#### **Emphasis:**

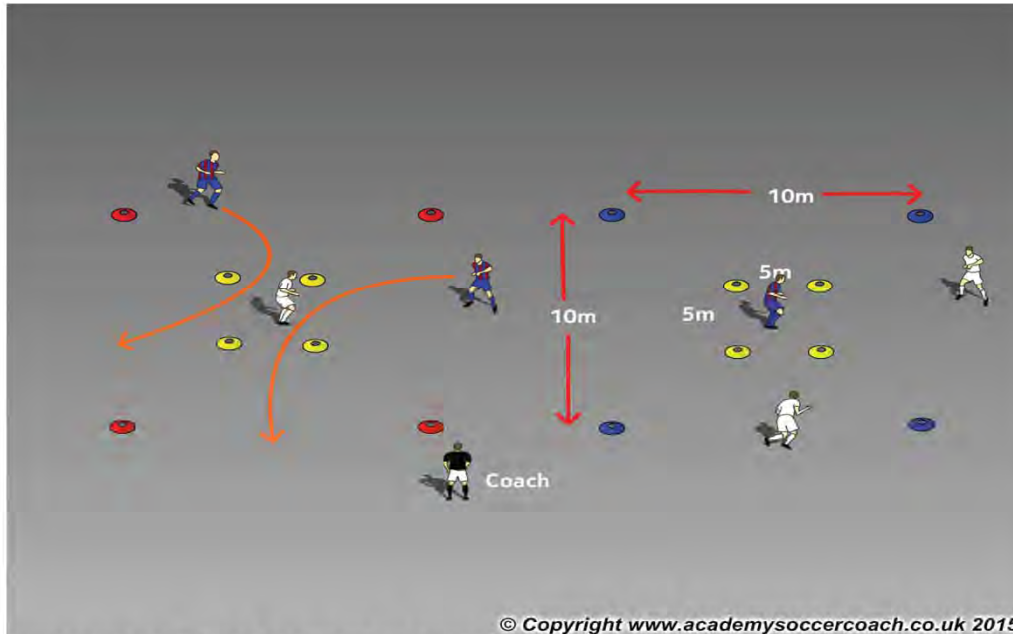
Listening

Changing direction

Agility, Balance, Coordination

Competition

**FUN!**



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**Organization:** Place players in to groups of 3. 1 player has the pinnie and becomes the catcher.

**Procedure:** The catcher must stay inside the centre 5m x 5m square and try to tag the soccer players as they run through the centre square. The outside players try to make it to a different side of the grid each time, but must travel through the centre grid to get to the other side. Each time a player makes it to a new side they score 1 point. If you get tagged you switch instantly. Instead of running try different movement's such as hopping on one leg, skipping, jumping etc.

#### **Psychological**

Confidence  
Being safe  
FUN

#### **Technical**

#### **Physical**

A,B,C's  
Change of Speed  
Change of Direction

#### **Social**

Listening  
Communicating  
Celebrating

## Active Start practice plan – Week 29

### Station B

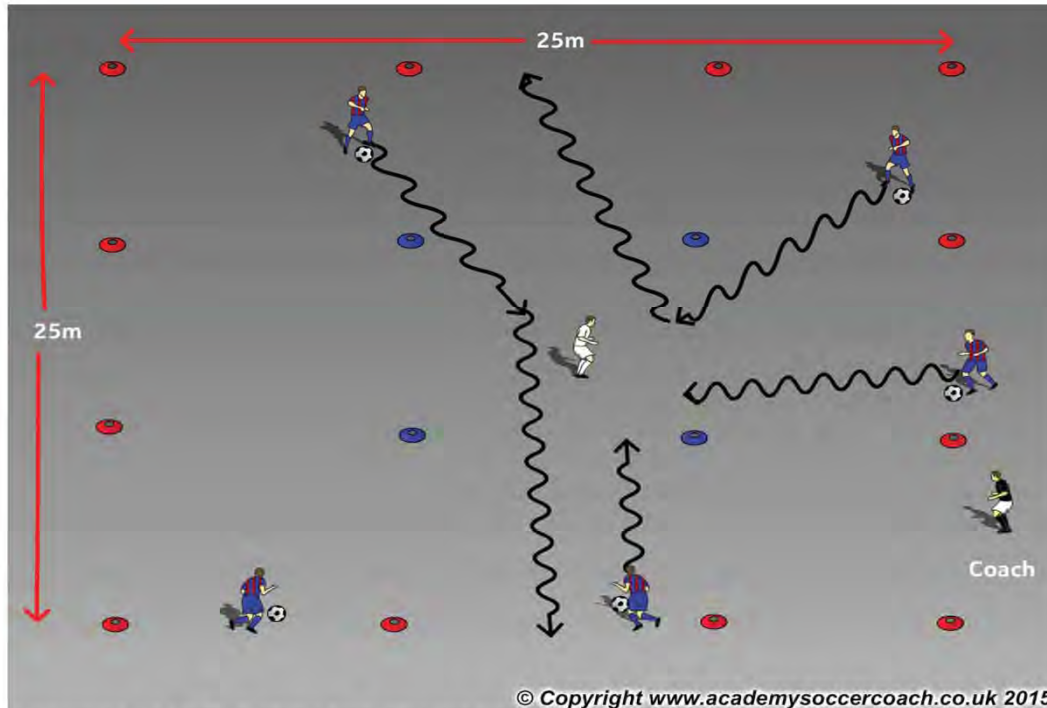
## Soccer Technique – Can you catch me with a ball?



**Time Frame. 8 minutes**

### **Emphasis:**

Dribbling  
Different parts of the foot  
Changing direction  
Competition  
FUN!



**Organization:** The outside square is 25m x 25m with the inside square being approx. 8m x 8m. Start with 5 players on the outside and 1 player in the centre square. (You can increase to 2 if players are having success)

**Procedure:** Outside players attempt to dribble to a different side of the square to score a point, they must dribble through the centre square though and avoid being tagged. If Player is tagged they instantly become the catcher. Each time a player makes it to a new side they score 1 point.

### **Psychological**

Confidence  
Being safe  
FUN

### **Technical**

Dribbling  
Running with the ball  
Beating a player

### **Physical**

A,B,C's  
Change of Direction  
Change of Speed

### **Social**

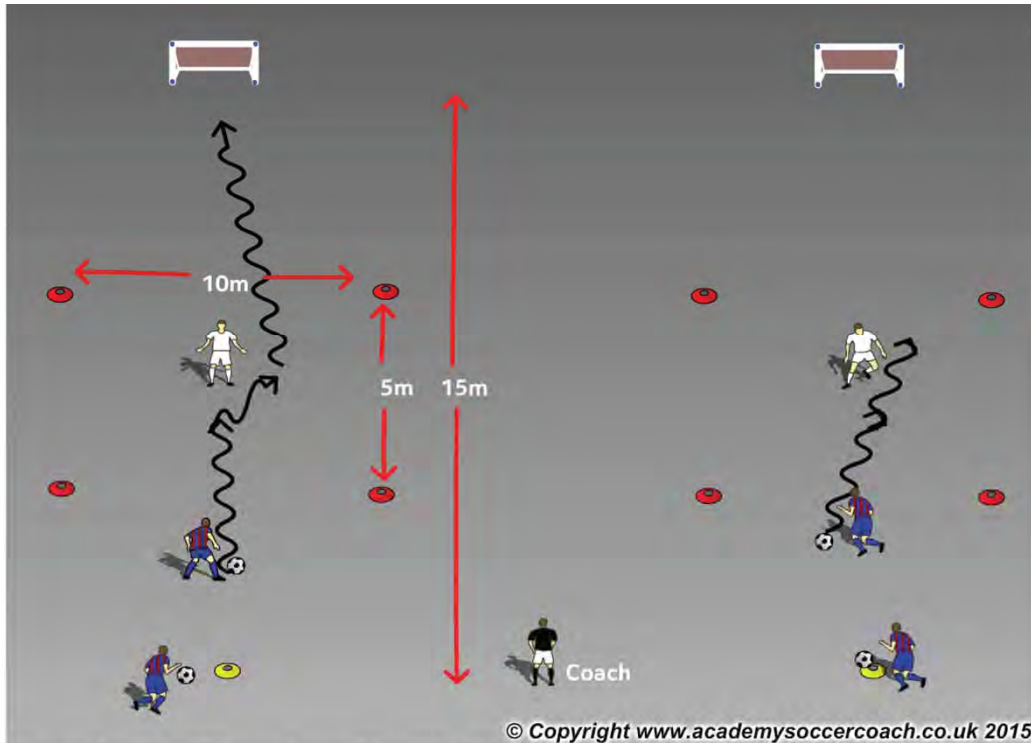
Listening  
Communicating  
Celebrating



## Active Start practice plan – Week 29

### Station C

#### Soccer Technique – 1v1 ally.



**Organization:** Players are placed into groups of 3. 1 defender and 2 attackers. Space is organised as above.

**Procedure:** Attacker dribbles towards the defender to try to beat him/her. The defender cannot come out side of their area as shown above. Once the attacker beats the defender they go and score in the goal. If the defender stops the attacker the players then switch. Players celebrate when they score and keep a track of how many goals they score.

### Time Frame. 8 minutes

#### Emphasis:

Running with the ball  
Dribbling  
Changing direction  
Agility, Balance, Coordination  
Imagination  
**FUN!**

#### Psychological

Confidence  
Being safe

#### Technical

Dribbling  
Running with the ball  
Shooting  
Defending

#### Physical

A,B,C's  
Change of Direction

#### Social

Communicating  
Celebrating



## Active Start practice plan - Week 29

### Station D

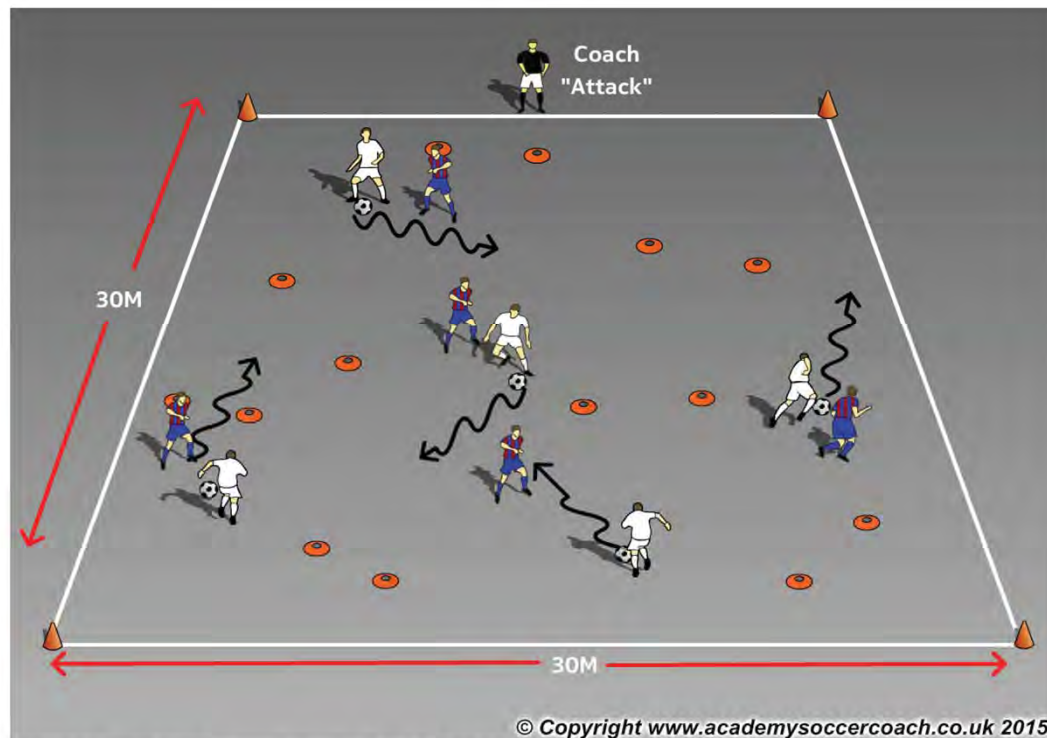
#### Small sided game – 1v1 to gates



### Time Frame. 8 minutes

#### Emphasis:

Listening  
Running with the ball  
Dribbling  
Changing direction  
Agility, Balance, Coordination  
Imagination  
FUN!



**Organization:** Players are paired inside a 30m x 30m area.

**Procedure:** When the coach calls "Attack" the player with ball attempts to dribble through the gates. The player without the ball becomes the defender. If the defender wins the ball he/she then becomes the attacker and vice versa. Players play for 1 minute and score a point every time they go through a gate. Player's cannot go straight back through the same gate. After 1 minute players change partners.

#### Psychological

Confidence  
Being safe  
FUN

#### Technical

Dribbling  
Running with the ball  
defending

#### Physical

A,B,C's  
Change of Direction

#### Social

Listening  
Communicating  
Celebrating



L.T.P.D.  
long term player development



Brampton Soccer Club  
GRASSROOTS L.T.P.D.  
Stage 1: Active Start  
U4 to U6 Ages  
(Sample Practice Plan)  
Dribbling



# Active Start

## Station A

### Physical Literacy - Pirates



#### Organisation

Players are placed in the area with a ball each. Cones are scattered randomly across the playing area. Ask a player what noise a Pirate makes or if they know any famous Pirates (Captain Hook, Long John Silver, Jack Sparrow)

#### Procedure

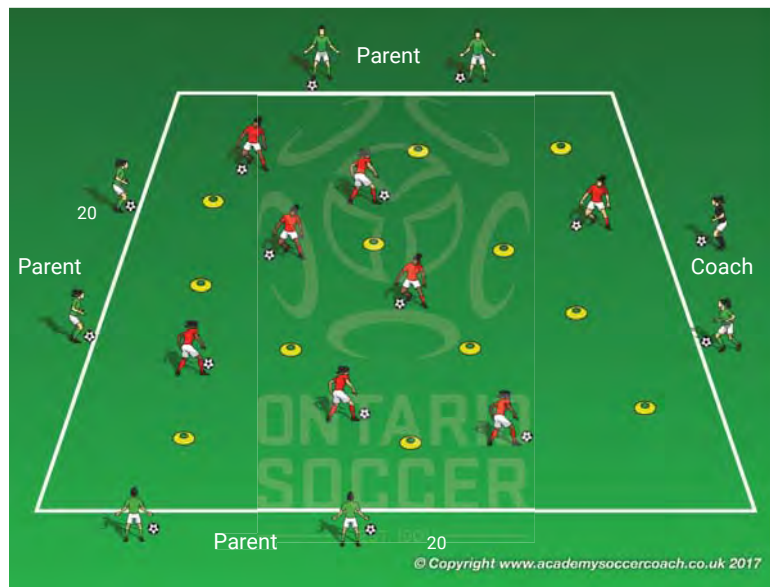
The Pirates steer their ship (ball) around the sea (playing area) Players do the following. Climb the mast (10 toe taps) Strong winds (boxes - touches of the ball with the inside of the feet. Walk the plank, hops and a jump. Reverse, drag back (sole of the foot on the top of the ball and push backwards) Scrub the deck - pass the ball forward and crawl to it.

#### Emphasis

Imagination, safety and FUN!

#### Progression

N/A



Timing	Area
8 Minutes	20 x 20 m

#### Technical

Ball mastery  
Running with the ball  
Dribbling

#### Psychological

Confidence  
Awareness

#### Social

Problem Solving  
Communicating

#### Physical

Agility  
Balance  
Co-ordination  
Change of Speed  
Change of Direction

#### Top Tip

Did you know that the key window for learning Physical Literacy is between the ages of 3-6 years old? The focus at the Active Start age groups is centred around the development of Fundamental Movement Skills rather than sports skills.





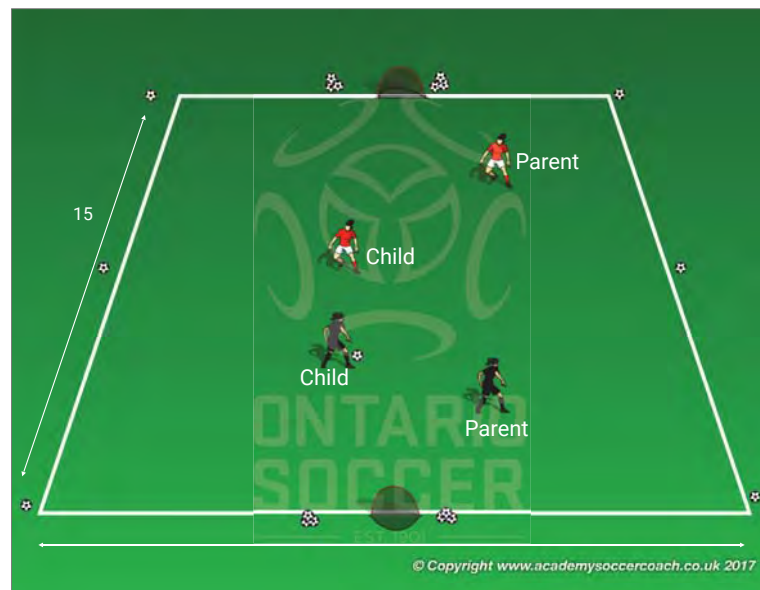
# Active Start

## Station B

### Small Sided Game – 2v2 (Parent & Child v Parent & Child)



Organisation
Organize players into 2v2 (1 player and a parent vs 1 player and a parent/ guardian)
Procedure
Child and parent/guardian play a 2v2 game. If the ball goes out of the field, take the closest ball to keep the game moving. Parents / guardian should help the children as much as possible.
Emphasis
Free Play and FUN!
Progression
N/A



Timing	Area
8 Minutes	20 m x 30 m

Technical	Psychological
Dribbling Lots of touches Ball mastery	Confidence Being safe Reactions
Social	Physical
Cooperation Communicating FUN Social	Agility Balance Co-ordination Change of Direction

#### Top Tip

Engage the parents throughout the session. This can help with the organization, but more importantly creates that backyard feeling between parent and child.





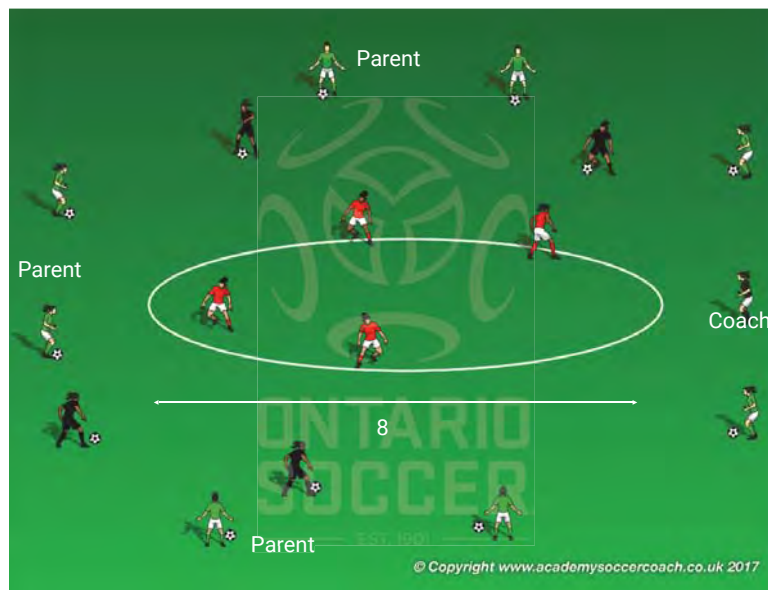
# Active Start

## Station C

### Small Sided Game – Pirates and Lifeguards



Organisation
4 players are placed inside the circle without a ball. 4 players are placed 10 metres away from the circle with ball. Parents are on the outside and have a ball close.
Procedure
The Pirates (Black) must put their treasure (ball) on the beach by dribbling on to it. The lifeguards (Red) have to defend the beach. If a piece of treasure lands on the beach, the life guards must kick it away. Play for two minutes before swapping. Tell the players not to worry if their ball is kicked away, it's part of the game. Ask players and parents to count how many times the deliver/clear.
Emphasis
Imagination, creativity and celebrating!
Progression
N/A



Timing	Area
8 Minutes	8m diameter

Technical	Psychological
Ball mastery Running with the ball Dribbling	Confidence Awareness
Social	Physical
Problem Solving Communicating	Agility Balance Co-ordination Change of Speed Change of Direction

#### Top Tip

Active Start players are very egocentric and working with others is an abstract concept. Don't ask them to share the ball, give them a 'toy' each.





# Active Start

## Station D

### Small Sided Game – 3v3 (As individuals)



#### Organisation

Two teams of 3v3 are placed on to a 30x22 field with 1 or 2 goals at each end. Each player starts with a soccer ball. Spare balls & parents are placed around the outside of the field. Once a player has scored, give them another ball to avoid being hit while collecting a ball from a goal.

#### Procedure

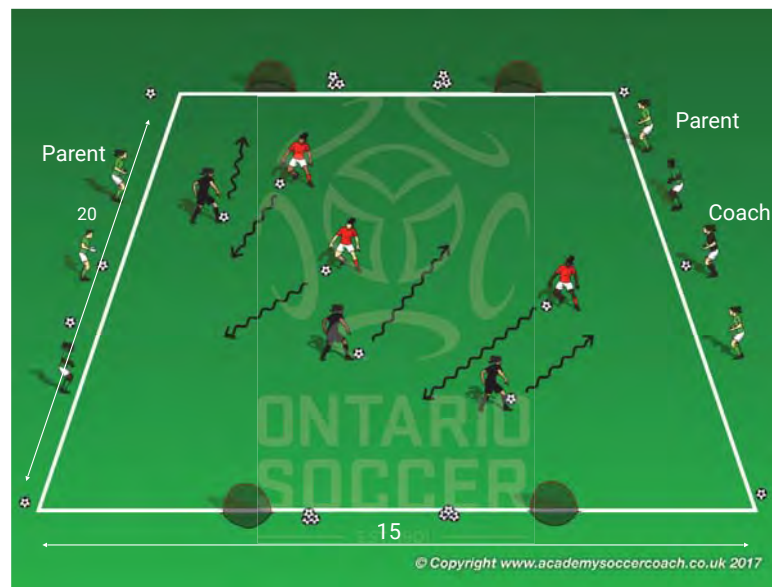
Each player plays as an individual and can score in any goal. Parents count the goals. Once a player scores they get another ball and score in another goal. If a player is dribbling towards the side line, a parent who is close can help them stay within the field.

#### Emphasis

Fun, creativity and celebrating!

#### Progression

N/A



Timing	Area
8 Minutes	15 m x 20 m

#### Technical

Ball mastery  
Running with the ball  
Dribbling

#### Psychological

Confidence  
Awareness

#### Social

Problem Solving  
Communicating

#### Physical

Agility  
Balance  
Co-ordination  
Change of Speed

#### Top Tip

U4-U5 players have a short attention span therefore it's important we tailor our practices accordingly. Shorter activities lasting 6-8 minutes are recommended.





L.T.P.D.  
long term player development



Brampton Soccer Club  
GRASSROOTS L.T.P.D.  
Stage 1: Active Start  
U4 to U6 Ages  
(Sample Practice Plan)  
Ball Mastery

Ontario Soccer Development



# Active Start Activity Pirates Collecting Treasure



## Organization

20 x 20 m. 8 groups of 1 player (pirates). Treasures-10 balls (Golden Balls), 10 orange cones (Bracelets), 10 blue cones (necklace), 10 yellow cones (rings) Parent is in black, player in white.

## Procedure

Each pirate with parent assistance will collect one treasure item from the center and bring back to their own treasure case, then gather another treasure item from the center, however pirate may not collect the same consecutive treasure item. Once all treasure items are cleared off the center, each pirate will count how many Golden balls they collected, Bracelets, Necklace and Rings. Coach will encourage pirates to use different movements towards collecting the treasure e.g. hopping on right foot towards the center and back, run forwards, backwards, skipping etc.

## Emphasis

Imagination, safety and FUN!

## Progression



Timing

8 Minutes

Area

20 x 20 m

Technical

Psychological

Confidence  
Awareness  
Decision Making

Social

Physical

Problem Solving  
Communicating  
FUN

Agility  
Balance  
Co-ordination  
Change of Speed  
Change of Direction

## Top Tip

Provide stimulating activities that promote physical literacy.



# Active Start

## Small Sided Game

### 2v2 (Parent & Child v Parent & Child)



#### Organization

15 x 15 m. Organize players into 2v2 with 2 goals on each side, (1 player and a parent vs 1 player and a parent/guardian)

#### Procedure

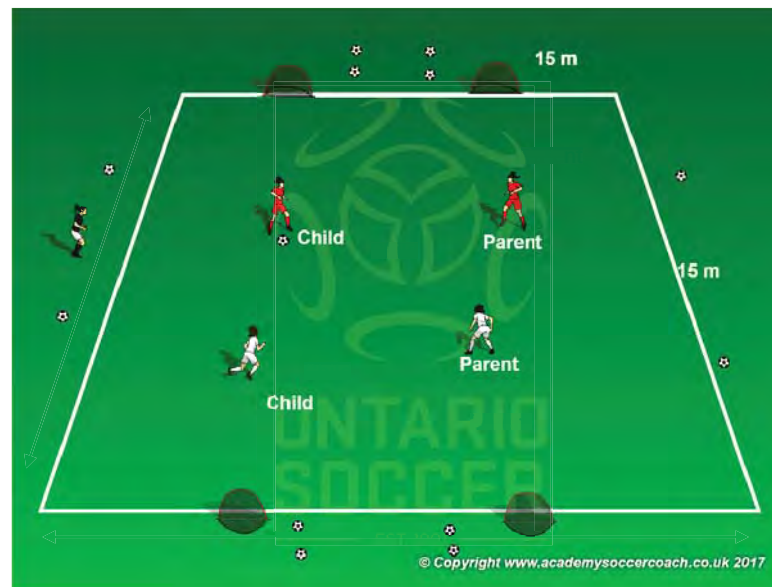
Child and parent/guardian play a 2v2 game with 2 goals to score on. If the ball goes out of the field, use the closest ball to keep the game moving. Parents / guardian should help their children as much as possible.

#### Emphasis

Free Play and FUN!

#### Progression

N/A



#### Timing

8 Minutes

#### Area

15 x 15 m

#### Technical

Dribbling  
Running with the ball  
Lots of touches  
Ball mastery

#### Psychological

Confidence  
Being safe  
Reactions  
Decision Making

#### Social

Cooperation  
Communicating  
Social  
FUN

#### Physical

Agility  
Balance  
Co-ordination  
Change of Direction

#### Top Tip

Remember that children do not mean to make mistakes, we should make mistakes as a necessary part of learning.





# Active Start

## Activity

### Mouse Traps



#### Organization

20 x 20 m. 8 groups of 1 player. 12-15 cones place inside playing field. (1 player in white and 1 parent in red)

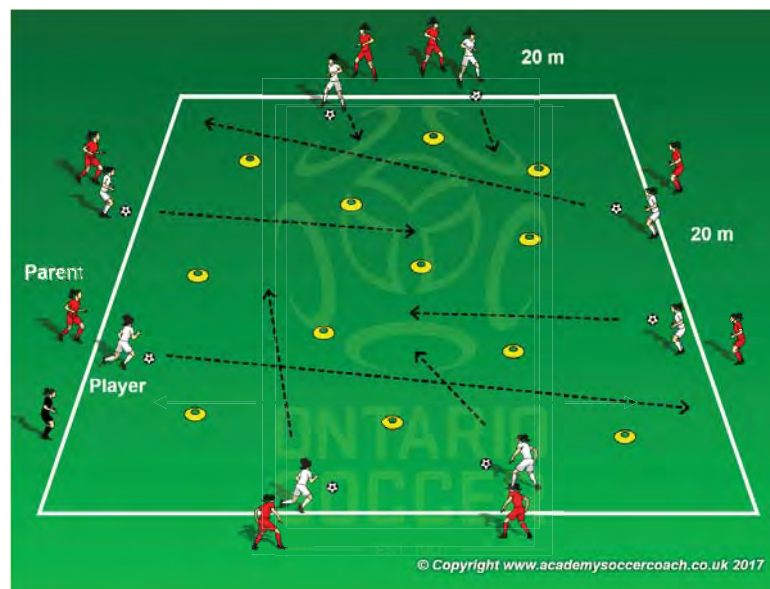
#### Procedure

Player (mouse) will dribble with the ball across the playing field. The cones are mouse traps, so player (mouse) must avoid touching the mouse trap with the ball while also avoiding the other mouse on the field. If mouse hits the cone, then mouse must do 3 jumping jacks on the spot then continue on.

#### Emphasis

FUN, creativity and celebrating!

#### Progression



Timing

8 Minutes

Area

20 x 20 m

Technical

Ball mastery  
Running with the ball  
Dribbling

Psychological

Confidence  
Awareness  
Decision Making

Social

Problem Solving  
Communicating  
FUN

Physical

Agility  
Balance  
Co-ordination  
Change of Speed  
Change of Direction

#### Top Tip

Organize your practice to have all the children active, all the time.



# Active Start

## Small Sided Game

### Backyard Soccer



#### Organization

20 x 20 m. 1v1 (child vs parent) are placed on to a field with 1 goal on each end. Can adjust dimensions based on players available. Can have 5 players and 5 parents in 20 x 20 m

#### Procedure

Each player starts with a soccer ball. Once a player has scored, give player another ball to avoid being hit while collecting a ball from a goal. Each player plays as an individual.

#### Emphasis

Fun, creativity and celebrating!

#### Progression

N/A



#### Timing

8 Minutes

#### Area

20 m x 20 m

#### Technical

Ball mastery  
Running with the ball  
Dribbling

#### Psychological

Confidence  
Awareness  
Decision Making

#### Social

Problem Solving  
Communicating  
FUN

#### Physical

Agility  
Balance  
Co-ordination  
Change of Speed

#### Top Tip

A parent or guardian should join in to supervise and play with their child



Active Start  
practice plan  
Station A  
General Movement



Time frame. 8 minutes  
Emphasis:



Ontario Soccer Development

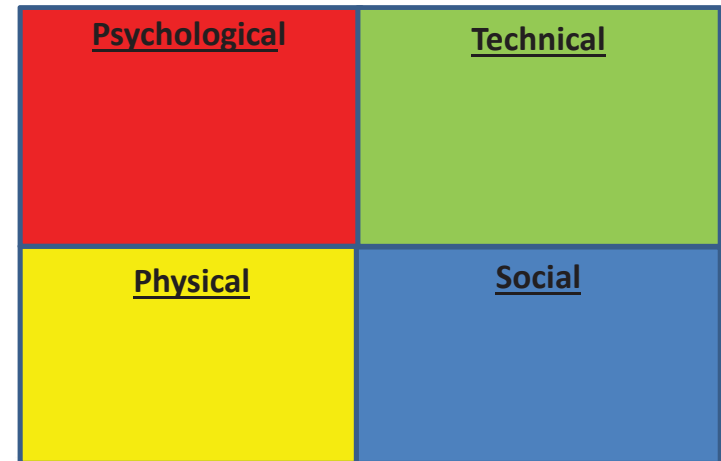




Active Start  
practice plan  
Station B  
General Movement



Time frame. 8 minutes  
Emphasis:



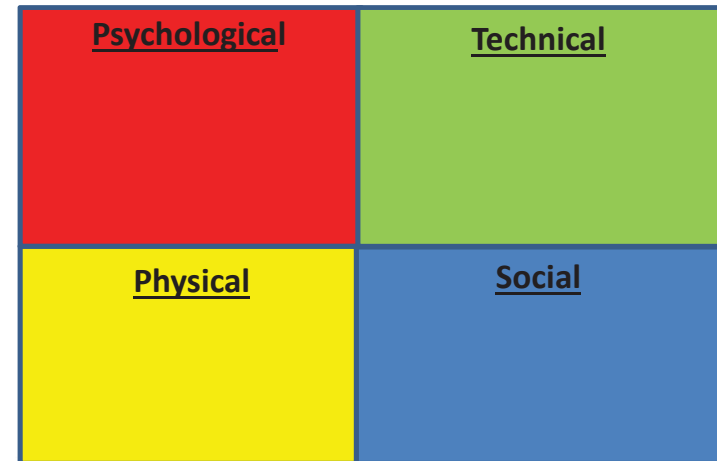
Ontario Soccer Player Development



Active Start  
practice plan  
Station C  
General Movement



Time frame. 8 minutes  
Emphasis:



Ontario Soccer Player Development



Active Start  
practice plan  
Station D  
General Movement



Time frame. 8 minutes  
Emphasis:



Ontario Soccer Player Development





# **CANADA SOCCER BELIEVES EVERY PLAYER DESERVES THE BEST POSSIBLE SOCCER EXPERIENCE.**

Whether they dream of playing for Canada's National Teams or simply want to have fun with their friends, taking the right approach to the game when children are young sets the stage for a lifetime of enjoyment.

The Canada Soccer Pathway provides a roadmap for players of all ages and aspirations who want to play soccer at the recreational, competitive or high performance EXCEL levels, with the aim of encouraging lifelong participation. The Pathway is built around the principles of Long-Term Player Development (LTPD).

For players under the age of 12, many of whom are lacing up cleats for the first time, the goal of this approach is simple:

## **GET KIDS TO FALL IN LOVE WITH THE GAME.**

1

STAGE ONE:

### **ACTIVE START**

(U-4/U-6 M/F)

Gives the youngest players the opportunity to develop basic movement skills like running, jumping, landing, kicking, throwing, and catching in a fun setting built around informal play and positive reinforcement.



# THE ROLE OF THE COACH

**Teacher. Mentor. Role model.  
Cheerleader. Parent.  
Occasional disciplinarian.**

Soccer coaches wear many different hats, particularly when they're training young players, many of whom are lacing up their cleats for the first time. You might find yourself leading a fun activity one minute and reining in a distracted player the next.

You must be flexible, because a session or drill that was meant to last 10 minutes might need to be switched up after half that time to keep the players engaged.

Above all, make sure everyone is enjoying the session—including you.

Being a coach is demanding, but it's also incredibly rewarding. There's nothing quite like witnessing the thrill a young player gets when they score their first goal, or make a fantastic pass. And the lessons a child learns from a good coach can last a lifetime.

The objective isn't just to develop better soccer players—it's to develop well-rounded people who are disciplined, persistent and able to work well with others.

Shaping the lives of young people is a tremendous responsibility. As a coach, you must do everything you can to foster a player's love for the game, and to help them achieve their potential.

Good coaches seek out new ways to develop their knowledge of the game and how players learn. This toolkit is designed to get you started.

But it's not just about what you teach. It's about how you teach.

Ultimately, it's your personality and enthusiasm that will have the biggest impact on your players.





# CANADA SOCCER PATHWAY: COACHING TIPS

**Every soccer player is unique and it's important to understand and appreciate the differences between players at various age levels.**

When you're planning a training session, consider the group of players you're

working with and the outcomes you want to achieve, and choose your coaching method accordingly.

In no particular order, here are five coaching techniques that will give you some options to help meet the needs of individual players:

**1****COMMAND:**

The coach tells the player what to do and demonstrates it ("I want you to pass the ball to your partner.").

**2****QUESTION & ANSWER:**

The coach leads with a question and requests an answer from players ("Which one of your teammates could you pass the ball to?").

**3****OBSERVATION & FEEDBACK:**

The coach and players observe an activity and discuss the outcome ("Let's watch and see what happens.").

**4****GUIDED DISCOVERY:**

The coach asks a question and issues a challenge ("Can you show me how you would get the ball past the defender?"). The player then demonstrates how he/she would do it.

**5****TRIAL & ERROR:**

The players and/or coach decide on a challenge, and the players are encouraged to find their own solutions with minimal support from the coach.

Remember, a method that works well with one player may not be effective with another. So it's important to be flexible, to set realistic goals, and to give positive feedback as often as possible. It's also important to remember that, no matter

how wonderful a coach you are, it's very difficult to force a player to be interested in your training session when he or she really doesn't want to be there. Make the experience lots of fun and all your players will want to come back the next time.



# CANADA SOCCER PATHWAY: OUR PREFERRED TRAINING MODEL

Canada Soccer recommends a “station” approach to training. Players move from one skill-building activity to the next at regular intervals. The time spent on each activity varies based on the age of the player (see “Training Template”).

This method is not only more fun for young players—who tend to have short attention spans—but also allows training sessions to be tailored to a team’s individual needs, depending on the number of players, the number of parents

and coaches present, and the available facilities.

Each training session is built around four activity stations, one focusing on General Movement skills, one on Coordination, one on Soccer Technique and another on Small-Sided Games. Addressing all four of these training “pillars” at each practice session will help develop well-rounded young players with a foundation in physical literacy, solid soccer skills and, ideally, an enduring love of the game.

## TRAINING TEMPLATE

**FOR PLAYERS AT THE ACTIVE START STAGE, TRAINING SESSIONS  
SHOULD BE 45-60 MINUTES LONG AND COMPRISED OF:**



**This toolkit will give you ideas for specific activities under each of the four training pillars. How you set up your training sessions is entirely up to you. For example:**

One coach or parent working with a single group of players on a half field can simply switch up the “pillar” activities throughout the session.

If you have a full field, two or more coaches/parent volunteers and 12 or more players, you may choose to divide the players into two or more groups and have them rotate through stations being run simultaneously.

# 1

## STAGE 1—ACTIVE START U-4/U-6



# SOCCER TECHNIQUE

A player's soccer technique—which revolves around core skills such as passing, receiving and controlling the ball—will improve through:

- Getting lots of touches on the ball.
- Fun competitions that motivate players to use different techniques.
- Plenty of positive feedback.

At the Active Start stage (U-4/U-6), technique drills should make up about 25% of practice time (i.e., 15 minutes of a 1-hour training session). The following activities focus on dribbling, control, passing, and shooting.

### TIP

These activities are intended to teach the basics of soccer, but don't get too hung up on replicating exactly what you see in this Tool Kit. With the youngest players, less structure is often better. Sometimes it's enough to let the kids just have fun with the ball. So go with the flow and use your enthusiasm and energy to keep them engaged.

# 1

## STAGE 1—ACTIVE START U-4/U-6



# GENERAL MOVEMENT

General movement activities include:

- Agility – running, changing direction, speeding up / slowing down, and stopping.
- Balance – hopping, jumping and landing.
- Coordination – combining different movements, moving with the ball, falling and getting up safely.

General movement activities should make up about 25% of practice time at the U-4/U-6 level (i.e., 15 minutes of a 1-hour training session). At this age, the emphasis is on being able to run with the ball under control, or “making friends with the ball.”

### TIP

It's important to keep young players active and engaged. In this Tool Kit, you'll find options for each activity that will allow you to switch it up. Every few minutes, challenge your players with something different that goes beyond the basic drill: keep the rules simple, but use time restrictions or have them compete with each other to get them excited and keep them interested.



# 1

## STAGE 1—ACTIVE START U-4/U-6



# COORDINATION

A player's coordination will improve by:

- Getting lots of touches on the ball.
- Using different parts of the foot.
- Using the inside of the foot when passing and receiving the ball.

At the U-4/U-6 level, coordination drills should make up about 25% of practice time (i.e., 15 minutes of a 1-hour training session). The following activities focus on dribbling, controlling the ball and passing to improve coordination.

### TIP

At this stage of development, physical literacy (running, jumping, skipping, etc.) is key. Don't worry if players aren't mastering technique with the ball just yet – work on their coordination using both sides of the body and help them get comfortable moving forwards and backwards. Above all, let the kids have fun!

# 1

## STAGE 1—ACTIVE START U-4/U-6



# SMALL-SIDED GAMES

- Are FUN!
- Will motivate your players more than any other activity.
- Should involve small groups playing in small areas.
- Provide players with the best chance to practice individual skills.

At the U-4/U-6 level, small-sided games should make up about 25% of practice time (i.e., 15 minutes of a 1 hour training session). The following games are designed to work on dribbling, passing and shooting skills.

### TIP

Many of the activities in this Tool Kit revolve around individual or group competitions. If pinnies aren't available to distinguish competing players from one another, old t-shirts in colours that differ from the team's uniform work too!



## CANADA SOCCER PATHWAY

CANADA SOCCER PATHWAY IS A ROADMAP FOR PLAYERS OF ALL AGES WHO WANT TO PLAY SOCCER AT THE RECREATIONAL, COMPETITIVE OR EXCEL LEVELS. IT IS BUILT AROUND THE PRINCIPLES OF LONG-TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT AND ENCOURAGES LIFELONG PARTICIPATION.



### LONG-TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT STAGES

#### LEVEL OF PLAY

EXCEL
COMPETITIVE
RECREATIONAL

#### PHYSICAL LITERACY

- 1 Active Start AGE 4-6
- 2 FUNDamentals AGE 6-8 AGE 8-9
- 3 Learning to Train AGE 9-11 AGE 9-12

- 4 Training to Train AGE 11-15 AGE 12-16
- 5 Training to Compete AGE 15-19 AGE 19-20
- 6 Training to Win AGE 18+ AGE 19+
- 7 Active for Life ALL AGES



YOUR GOALS. OUR GAME.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CANADA SOCCER PATHWAY AND LONG-TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT, PLEASE VISIT [CANADASOCCER.COM/PATHWAY](http://CANADASOCCER.COM/PATHWAY)**