

CFSC Micro Player Development Curriculum suggested practice: 1 day, 30-45min.

What follows is a curriculum of what should be taught to players at this age based on U.S. Soccer's "Best Practices for Coaching Soccer" Guide, the USSF "D" license course manual and other local soccer clubs.

Technical Training – the teaching of the techniques of soccer (ball mastery). These physical skills should always be taught with one ball per player or one per pair. They should be taught with little pressure at first (pressure refers to time and space dictated by defense) and then a gradual building of pressure as mastery improves. The idea is if they cannot perform the skill without pressure they certainly will not be able to perform when pressure exists in the games. So take it slow and make sure there is great repetition and most important that it is fun! Demonstrations for all of the following can be found on the websites listed on the back.

Dribbling – running with the ball into open space

- Players at this age should begin to feel comfortable with the ball at their feet/between their feet
- Coaching points:
 - Changing speed and direction: encourage players to turn the ball and/or stop the ball in any way
 - Encourage dribbling with any part of the foot (the toe is NOT ideal, and other methods should be shown [see below], but do not discourage any dribbling techniques. Let them go!
 - Popular at this age is the "duck walk" where the ball is placed between the player's feet and touched side to side slightly in front of them as they move toward a goal
 - Encourage creativity: players at this age cannot imagine consequences (i.e., if you do this, what will happen?), so let them learn through their own experiences.
 - Be careful not to restrict their space with boundaries – instead focus them on the direction to goal
 - Do not encourage players to share the ball – just let them go to goal!

Passing – playing the ball to a teammate

- Players at this age should TRY passing the ball with both feet using proper techniques
- Inside of foot "push pass" – plant foot is close and pointed in the direction kicking; passing foot should make contact on the top half of the ball w/ankle locked to ensure it does not become elevated

Receiving – the ability to control a ball that is played to you

- Receiving ground balls with the inside of both feet and with the sole by making a wedge shape with the toes in the air and the heel closer to the ground
- Players have to learn not to be afraid of the ball so start small and slow and allow players to gain confidence – trying using Nerf balls or beach balls at first

Shooting – the act of striking the ball into the goal

- Proper striking techniques using the inside of foot (see passing above)
- Please allow the use of toeing the ball as a shooting technique but encourage the inside of the foot

Tactical Training – the teaching of the tactics (decision making) within the game. There are three types of tactics to be taught: Individual, Small group and Team. At this age only individual tactics are taught for the most part and practice should be 95% technical and only 5% tactical training.

Individual Tactics – the decision making when playing 1v1; a portion of each practice should include 1v1 play

- Players should learn that if they keep the ball and head in the right direction they will score; so keep it simple and reward them with lots of fun goal scoring games

Team Tactics – the decision making when playing 3v3 games should NOT be a priority; instead focus on the individual tactics

- Positions should NOT be introduced
- The basic team tactic that players should learn is that they are on a team and should not try and take the ball from their own teammates
- Limit game stoppage for balls going out of bounds. Games should only be stopped if the ball has been dribbled or kicked well beyond the goals or immediately behind the goals

Best Practices for a Micro Coach: *No lines. No laps. No lectures.*

- There should be a lot of playing with the ball in small numbers for short periods of time (1v1, 3v3)
- Build confidence and success into the drills or they won't want to come back (i.e. give them 6 goals to score on instead of 2) and keep them short as their attention span is not very long
- Players should have plenty of opportunity to experience the ball at their own pace (without pressure)
- Players should be encouraged not to fear the ball by dealing with balls on the ground and bouncing
- Come prepared with what you want to teach at practice, be able to model it
- Modify drills to fit the lesson being taught by: changing the size or shape of the field, the numbers involved, the number of touches, how score is kept, or by keeping players in zones
- All training sessions should end with a period of unrestricted free play where players can try to apply what they have learned *without* input from the coach

Best Qualities for a Micro Coach:

- Understand the capabilities and limitation of this age and learn by watching the players play
- Be able to demonstrate proper technique or bring someone who can
- Be patient, laugh and see the world through a child's eyes
- Emphasize fun at all times and foster a sense of love for the sport – you want them playing soccer when they are NOT at practice! The soccer ball should be one of their favorite toys!

Best places for designing and planning your practices or training sessions:

<http://www.youtube.com> just type in soccer drills or be as specific as you want “how to push pass”

<http://www.expertvillage.com>

<http://www.soccerxpert.com/>

<http://www.soccerclub.com/training/drills/default.asp>

http://www.finesoccer.com/finesoccer_drills_archive.htm

http://www.insidesoccer.com/learn_it/coaches/drills_practices

<http://www.strongsoccer.com/Kingdrills/clipspractice.htm>