**U5/U6 Guidelines**

2021

**The main objectives at this age are:**

* **Lots of movement (physical literacy)**
* **Lots of ball touches**
* **Introducing the basics of the game**
* **Having fun**

Remember: it doesn’t have to look like “real” soccer for kids to be gaining soccer skills.

Team size: approximately 10-12 children. Every coach should have several small pylons & 2 pop-up nets

First half of session: drills & skills, water break, then second half of session is small-sided games

Drills & Skills:

* Physical literacy means running, jumping, turning, balancing, changing direction. Balls do not have to always be used. Games such as obstacle courses, red light/green light, different types of tag, Mr. Wolf, relay races.
* Drills should mostly have one ball per child, lots of running with the ball, controlling direction of ball (turning/stopping) & kicking towards a target
* Introduce passing (inside of foot, both feet) but do not spend too much time on it yet
* Change activities frequently, be flexible & creative, LOTS of encouragement
* Introduce goalie skills to everyone; catching/throwing/diving
* Introduce the idea of attacking and defending with 1 v 1 mini games
* Allow player’s family to help when needed to encourage a reluctant player (older sibling/parent can participate)
* Go to **www.ontariosoccer.net/grassroots-practices** for sample drills appropriate for this age group (U5 is “Active Start”, U6 is “Fundamentals”)

Small-sided Game:

* 4 v 4; could be 5 v 5 or 3 v 3. If playing with less, make the fields smaller. You should not have lots of children sitting and waiting to “sub”. Don’t stress if it is 4 v 5 –it doesn’t really matter! The point of small fields with small numbers of children is that they have more opportunities to touch the ball. Children will eventually play full field & full size (11 v 11) but not until they are 12 years old.
* No goalies (use small pop-up nets). Children LOVE to score; there is no point in having someone standing in the net at this age. If scoring is too easy you could add pylons to make the goal smaller.
* Divide teams into 2 groups, of approximately 5 or 6 children. Half the children play a game against the other colour team, with one of the coaches as ref, while the other 2 groups play with the other coach.
* Keep the ball moving as much as possible; if it is heading “out”, kick it back into play. No “throw-ins” at this age. After someone scores, you may want to head back to centre field so everyone can re-group and make sure they know which net is theirs!
* It may work best to group the children by skill set (ie. Group beginners together, group experienced children together). The point of this is so that the more experienced children do not dominate the play. Have the two “more experienced” groups play each other.
* Do not keep score
* Although you should begin to introduce the idea of attacking & defending, do not worry about positions too much. You want the children to be moving & paying attention to where the ball is and not worrying about where they “should be”.
* At the end of the game; teams should clap or cheer for each other to practice their sportsmanship

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING TO COACH!