



U11  
U12



**“IT MAKES ME WANT TO TRY AND MAKE THEM MORE PROUD IF MY PARENTS SAY SOMETHING GOOD”**

U12, London

## WHY DO CHILDREN PLAY?

Our role as adults is to facilitate a learning environment that enables children to play football and fall in love with the game. However, when you listen to young children about why they play football the reasons they provide are often different from those that adults assume.

The Football Association has conducted research with groups of children across the whole country and the top six reasons why children play football are highlighted below:

- Trying my hardest is more important to me than winning
- I love playing football because it's fun
- It helps keep me fit and healthy
- I like meeting new friends through football
- It's a really good game and I love it
- I like playing with my friends.

Adult values and children's values are quite different about what they want from their football experience.

Research from children also indicates that through the primary school age group and up to 11/12 they are not focused on winning the league and they state that trophies and medals are not that important to them.

These six factors are much more important to them in the scheme of the reasons why young people play football.

If trophies and medals aren't that important for children it might be worth thinking about your end of season plans.

Children are getting trophies now for doing something they would have done anyway – turn up and play football!

How equitable is the 'Top Goalscorer' award anyway?

The most important trophy for children is 'Player's Player', voted for by their team mates.

The challenge for spectators and coaches is to ensure the learning environment created for children when they come to football is one that matches their expectations, not the adults' version.

If we get this right it can be a fun, exciting and social experience for all involved!

## WHY NOT:

- Hire a sports photographer to take action shots as a memento of their season
- Ensure they all have a football each for training
- Buy them a club emblem pencil case they can use at school
- Give them a branded bootbag they can use for each game
- Present them all with a certificate for their efforts during the year
- Ask the players what they think would be a suitable reward.

# WHAT CAN CHILDREN EXPECT FROM ADULTS?

Remember that children are often easily led, anxious to please and prone to over-enthusiasm, and so plenty of praise and positive reinforcement is needed – especially for beginners.

Children find it hard to understand negative instructions and easier to understand positive reinforcement and this can frequently mean playing down the result and playing up the performance.

This reduces the child's anxiety and decreases their worry about failing.

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

## ROLE MODELS

As coaches, referees and club officials you become role models to the players you work with.

Over time as your rapport builds with them and their confidence in you grows you are likely to see the improvements both to their game and their enjoyment of it.

It's possible that for some children you might become the most stable and positive influence in their lives at any one time.

Football has much to offer. It's possible too that a young player may choose to tell you when things are not going

well for them, or even possibly when someone is behaving inappropriately towards them.

Remember you have the support of your Club Welfare Officer and if a child tells you something that raises a concern about their welfare it's not your role to decide if this is happening but it is your responsibility to refer the concern on to the Club Welfare Officer.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and no action is not an option. If you would like more information go to [www.TheFA.com/safeguarding](http://www.TheFA.com/safeguarding) or speak with your CFA Welfare Officer.

## "IT MAKES ME FEEL MAD IF I GET SHOUTED AT FOR MAKING A MISTAKE"

U11, North West

### BUILD CONFIDENCE:

- Positive encouragement – providing this really helps the kids!
- Learning from mistakes – no mistake is done deliberately so see them as an opportunity to learn
- Reward effort rather than ability – this helps build confidence and self-esteem
- Model appropriate behaviour – children will often copy the way the coach behaves
- Constructive feedback – try and put these comments between some positive feedback.

### RESPECT THE GAME:

- Play by the Laws
- Respect opponents, officials and all others involved in the game
- Work together as a team and cooperate.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS:

- Success through effort
- New skill development
- Making and learning from mistakes
- Set players individual targets.



# WORKING WITH PARENTS

The most influential people in terms of a child's psychological and sociological development are his or her parents. A child's beliefs, values, perceptions, attitudes and goals are shaped by their home influences and have a profound effect in later life.

Evidence suggests that interest and support from the home are vital in a child's overall development. With this evidence, engaging parents in the learning experience of their children, if guided and educated correctly can lead to positive effects in reinforcing messages of support you offer to the players during the sliver of time you have with them.

Working with parents should be seen as a three-way process, between you, the player and the parent.

Just as you will involve them in creating a clear and robust philosophy, by creating a learning environment for the child and parent it will provide them both a much greater understanding of what the common goal is.

Longer term the parents will begin to hopefully become powerful reinforcers and ultimately see the time the child is with you as more than just football, but as a vital learning experience. A good way to reinforce this is by referring them to the 'FA Four Corner' model.

## WHY NOT:

- Organise a pre-season meeting for players and parents
- Talk to the parents before/after coaching and explain what you are doing and why you are doing it; explain the benefits
- Use a questionnaire to get the views from the parents, what else can be improved
- Hold a Parents' Evening – hold evenings when parents can come along with their child and discuss how they are getting on
- Set them basic tasks – this could be asking for support around setting out equipment or keeping a record of playing time for you
- Direct them towards FA online courses to help develop their knowledge too!

One big piece of evidence from the research from children was that they don't like being embarrassed by adults.

So you know that moan you often have, the flailing arms and negative body language when they make a mistake – they see that!

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

With player development in mind, if 'we' would like children to develop an understanding of the game as well as an ability to problem solve, then 'we' have a duty to let them think for themselves from time to time.

Less input from the sidelines = more thinking time for the players.

## SOME QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK YOUR PARENTS:

Do your actions on game day...

- demonstrate trust in the coach?
- centre around the players' needs?
- help or confuse the player(s)?



# RESPECT AND MANAGING THE MATCH DAY ENVIRONMENT

Football is a passionate game and all of us can get swept up in the moment. However it is possible for leagues and clubs to manage the match day environment in such a way as to clearly signpost which behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable.

## A TEAM/CLUB PHILOSOPHY

Establishing a team/club philosophy is a good way to agree with the players, coaches and parents how you are going to work together to ensure that there is harmony within.

You can relate back to what was agreed before the start of the season and use this philosophy to remind people of the club's way of operating or to mediate if a dispute arises.

Depending upon age, maturity and local considerations your philosophy may differ from that of another team/clubs, however, the key should be putting the child at the centre of the philosophy.

You may wish to consider the following:

- Communication channels
- Time keeping
- Playing time
- Substitutions and who starts the game
- Sharing responsibilities
- Winning at all costs v development of the players
- Agreeing a philosophy against The FA's Four Corner LTPD model
- The Respect Programme codes of conduct.

**“I FELT UNWANTED WHEN I GOT TAKEN OFF AND SHOUTED AT FOR MAKING A MISTAKE”**

U11, North West



Why not stage parents' meetings where you can provide guidance on the practicalities of playing for the club but also agree a meaningful and shared code of conduct? Your local County FA will have resources to support you to hold a parents' meeting. It's a great opportunity to also introduce the clubs officials such as the Welfare Officer.

- Display the Club's Code of Conduct for everyone attending to see
- Pass a laminated version down the line of spectators for all to read
- Put up a Respect sign on the clubhouse so people can see this is what you believe in
- Designate an area for the spectators to stand and watch the game
- This should be three yards from the touchline on both sides of the pitch and run the full length of the pitch
- No spectators should be allowed behind the goal – it puts off the goalkeeper
- Put the coaches' technical areas on the opposite side to the spectators
- Mark out a technical area for the coach to stand within three yards either side of the halfway line – there is no need for coaches to run up and down the touchline too!
- Let the subs play a little 2v2 match if there is some spare grass next to the pitch.

To help implement the Designated Spectators' Area, The FA has endorsed a Respect Barrier Kit which is available from [www.Touchlinelogos.com](http://www.Touchlinelogos.com)

## DEALING WITH DIFFICULT SPECTATORS

Clubs should consider the use of a touchline manager - someone known to club members designated to help maintain a supportive playing environment.

Some clubs have equipped touchline managers with a Respect bib which has increased their visibility and assisted them when required to intervene. They are there to deal with small scale incidents and to reduce and diffuse problems.

It is not the role of the touchline manager to replace the referee or the normal league sanctions and they should never place themselves or others in danger.

Remember: your role as a manager or coach is to set a good example to all others involved in the game.

Whilst the referee, sometimes a younger referee learning the game too, will make mistakes and there may be decisions that you disagree with, try not to lose sight of the whole experience and ethos.

Talk to your players/parents about referees and explain that:

- They are learning the game and will make unintentional mistakes
- Playing to the whistle is part of the game
- Not shouting at the referee helps make it more enjoyable for everyone
- Being polite when talking to the referee is important
- Shaking hands after the game, regardless of the score, is the right thing to do.

**“I FEEL EMBARRASSED WHEN PARENTS SHOUT NEGATIVE THINGS AT ME”**

U11, South West



# MATCH DAY TIPS FOR COACHES

Most importantly, ensure that you don't overload your players with lots of information.

Before the game you may just want to set a couple of basic targets for the players to achieve.

Just before the kick off remind the players what they were again and possibly ask the substitutes to watch the game and see if they are achieving them.

The focus at half time can now be on whether the players have completed the tasks.

Get the substitutes to help feed this back.

It will almost certainly be a more powerful message coming from them rather than you.

After the game, think of the different ways that you can use to debrief the players.

Once again refer back to the targets you set the players and link these into what actually happened during the game.

You may want to arrange the players into small groups and ask them to debrief amongst themselves then feedback to other small groups.

Things to consider when talking to players:

- Use age appropriate language
- Get the attention of your players before speaking
- Keep it simple
- Be positive at all times
- Focus on the most important aspects
- Give clear instructions to your players
- Always finish with a positive
- Don't forget they are just children, not professional footballers!

## TECHNICAL

Play players in different positions during different periods of the game if they are happy to do so.

Allow players to learn as much of the game for themselves as they can but be prepared to support their learning needs when necessary.

Play different formations and sometimes allow the children to help picking these.

## PHYSICAL

Incorporate generic movements (agility, balance and coordination) into your warm up.

Allow players to play on different sides of the pitch, sometimes on the left and sometimes on the right.

Use tag and chase games, handball and 3v3/4v4 games as part of your warm up.

Avoid having the children standing in lines or waiting, try and get them active as much as possible.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL

Allow the players to learn from their mistakes and their successes.

Let the players experiment, practice and compete while making their own decisions.

Ensure that you cater for different learning styles during your team talk – try using a white board or get players to stand in the formation.

## SOCIAL

Allow the players to be involved in decision making processes.

Give the players ownership, trust and responsibility.

If the players do something well, praise them. If they make a mistake, they didn't do it on purpose, so offer some words of encouragement or help.





## DEVELOPING TALENTED PLAYERS

As coaches and parents, we would all love our child to become the next top England player, to have a career as a professional footballer and no doubt when they start playing, most children have that same dream!

Sometimes adults build the pressure on young players much too soon without understanding the environment that is needed to foster talent.

The following factors are the research, principles and tools upon which high quality talent development is built.

### BEING 'PLAYER CENTRED'

A coach that is totally focused on talent development puts the player first; their needs are paramount. Too many competition structures, training programmes, coaching methods and practice schedules have

been set to suit those who administer and run them rather than those who participate.

For talent to be truly nurtured these systems require review, players needs assessed and changes made to ensure that every player has the best network of people supporting them as they attempt to achieve their potential.

## USING 'THE 'C' SYSTEM' TO DEVELOP THE WHOLE CHILD

Developing talent should be about developing the whole player not just their skills and techniques.

Using the 'C' system can help coaches, parents and organisers to keep their eyes on the progress of all aspects of their development.

**Core aspects of the 'C' system include:**

**COMPETENCE**  
Developing the players' abilities in all aspects of their sport.

**CONFIDENCE**  
Sport develops confidence if delivered well. A confident player performs better so this is an area that should always be referred to when developing young players.

**CREATIVITY**  
The players should be in charge of their own development and should be allowed to come up with their own solutions. Children have been shown to be more creative than adults but often their creativity is stifled through well meaning adults wanting to show them the 'proper' way.

**CONNECTION AND CARING**  
Players should be encouraged to be competitive but they should also be taught to look after each other. Getting players to be in touch with one another needs helps to develop teamwork and leadership skills.

**CHARACTER**  
Sport can develop a player's character and teach them valuable life lessons that will be important to their future development.



## 'DELIBERATE PLAY' AND 'TEACHING GAMES FOR UNDERSTANDING (TGfU)'

There has been research which suggests that 'Deliberate Play' and 'Teaching Games for Understanding' (TGfU) should be a big part of a child's sporting experience.

Both Deliberate Play and TGfU involves fun semi-competitive games and challenges that stretch the child's skills and require them to make rapid adaptations to succeed at the activity.

Both approaches require the players to make decisions and develop skills in a game-like context which has been shown to develop their skills more effectively than the traditional 'drill based' approach alone.

The Football Association has adopted game forms with reduced numbers at younger ages to encourage youngsters to get a lot of touches of the ball and develop their skills more effectively in line with these approaches.

## 'SPECIALISATION' – VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE

Specialisation is the point at which a player is encouraged to focus attention on a specific sport and begin the process of developing the skills of that sport over others.

Often children are encouraged by competition organisers, parents, coaches, talent scouts and others to specialise in a specific sporting domain too early. Sport is particularly prone to this phenomenon. Young children who display ability at a young age are encouraged to play and practice to the exclusion of other activities.

Specialising too early in sports has been shown to contribute to:

- Athletic deficiencies
- Overuse injuries
- Early burnout and dropout
- Unhappy children

Adults need to be patient with children and recognise they all grow and learn at different rates. Don't forget, little children today won't always be little and some may appear 'excellent' today because of a short-term physical advantage. Can you spot and foster the development potential?

## 'PHYSICAL LITERACY' – NOT TRYING TO RUN BEFORE WE CAN WALK!

Physical Literacy is best described as 'the building blocks of movement'. By this we mean a series of fundamental movements and skills that underpin all sporting activity in one way or another. Examples of these movements include:

### OBJECT CONTROL SKILLS

**Sending**  
Kicking, rolling a ball, striking an object, throwing

**Receiving**  
Catching, stopping, trapping

**Travelling with**  
Dribbling with either feet, hands or stick

**Receiving and sending**  
Striking a moving ball with bat or stick, volleying

### TRAVELLING SKILLS

Climbing, hopping, jumping, running, skipping

### BODY MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Balancing/centering, dodging, stopping, stretching, twisting and turning

Without these basic movement skills, a young person's capacity to fully develop their skills may be affected. Many elite performance programmes are working hard to try and rectify physical or technical problems in players which could have been solved earlier in the player's athletic life by the development of sound physical literacy.

(Talent development information courtesy of Stuart Armstrong, Lead Development Officer for Talent at Sportscoach UK)





# THE FA LAWS FOR 9V9 FOOTBALL

This guide provides the Laws for Under 11 and Under 12 versions of the game, with children playing a maximum of 9v9. These Laws are also appropriate for other age groups playing 9v9 football.

**Please remember:**  
From season 2015/16 Under 11s are not permitted to play in leagues where results are collected or published or winner trophies are presented. This is deemed to be detrimental to the development of the player and the game and will not be sanctioned.

Under 11s can play in a maximum of three trophy events during the season, lasting a maximum of six weeks each.

These are short-term experiences helping children learn about winning and losing in an appropriate environment. The winners of these events can be published and trophies can be presented.

Except where other provision in these Laws are made, the Laws of Association Football apply. Each Law is numbered to correspond with the appropriate Law of the Game. These Laws are mandatory unless special permission is granted by The FA.

**THESE ARE SHORT-TERM EXPERIENCES HELPING CHILDREN LEARN ABOUT WINNING AND LOSING IN AN APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENT**



## LAW 6 ASSISTANT REFEREE

Two assistant referees may be appointed whose duties, subject to the decision of the referee, are to indicate:

- When the whole of the ball leaves the field of play
- Which team is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in
- When a player may be penalised for being in an offside position
- When a substitution is requested
- When misconduct or any other incident occurs out of the view of the referee
- When offences have been committed whenever the assistant referees have a better view than the referee (this includes, in certain circumstances, offences committed in the penalty area)
- Whether, at penalty kicks, the goalkeeper moves off the goal line before the ball is kicked and if the ball crosses the line.

## LAW 7 DURATION OF THE GAME

In any one day, no player shall play more than 100 minutes. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer or organisation to ensure the child does not exceed this. Each league/competition will determine its own playing time within the maximum time permitted however the maximum duration will be two halves of 30 minutes.

It is permitted during development matches that the periods of play can be split into equal quarters.

The half time interval must not exceed 15 minutes.

**Please refer to the Standard Code of Rules for Mid Wilts competitions**

## LAW 8 START AND RESTART OF PLAY

### Procedure

A kick-off is taken at the centre of the playing area to start the game and after a goal has been scored.

Opponents must be nine yards away from the ball and in their own half of the field. The ball must be played forward.

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of Association Football.

## LAW 9 BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of Association Football.

## LAW 10 METHOD OF SCORING

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of Association Football.

## LAW 11 OFFSIDE

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of Association Football.

## LAW 12 FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of Association Football.

## LAW 13 FREE KICKS

For all free kicks opponents must be ten yards from the ball.

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of Association Football.

## LAW 14 PENALTY KICKS

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of Association Football.

### Position of the Ball and the Players

All players except the defending goalkeeper and kicker must be outside the penalty area and at least nine yards from the penalty mark.

## LAW 15 THROW IN

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of Association Football.

## LAW 16 GOAL KICK

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of Association Football.

## LAW 17 CORNER KICKS

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of Association Football.

**“WHY DO I HAVE TO DEFEND THE SAME  
SIZE GOAL IS PETR CZECH?”**

U11, Yorkshire



# Heading



## Heading Guidance

### HEADLINES

**NO HEADING IN TRAINING IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE**

**GRADUATED APPROACH TO HEADING FOR CHILDREN IN THE DEVELOPMENT PHASE U12-U16**

AGE GROUP	HEADING FREQUENCY
U7, U8, U9, U10, U11	Heading should not be introduced in training sessions at this age
U12	Heading remains a low priority <b>1 session per month &amp; max 5 headers</b>
U13	Heading remains a low priority <b>1 session per week &amp; max 5 headers</b>
U14, U15, U16, U18	Heading remains a low priority <b>1 session per week &amp; max 10 headers</b>

The FA has been granted approval from the International Football Association Board [IFAB] to introduce a new trial to remove deliberate heading in football matches across U12 level and below in England from the start of the 2022-23 season (Full article detailed in this link:

<https://www.thefa.com/news/2022/jul/18/statement-heading-trial-u12-games-20221807>

PLEASE NOTE: The Mid Wilts Youth & Minor Football League are **NOT** taking part in this trial.



## Mid Wilts Youth & Minor Football League - Cup Rules

Matches are played following the Laws of the Game, but with the addition of penalty shoot outs to decide a drawn tie.

### **NO EXTRA TIME**

If the score at the end of the match (or aggregate score at end of two-legged match) is tied, then there will be five penalties taken by each team.

If the scores are still tied (after the five penalties each), then sudden death penalties will decide the outcome.

**Please remember - Only the players, on the pitch at the end of the match, can take penalties.** (i.e. Substitutes should wear bibs and cannot take any of the penalties)

Note: Unlike development fixtures, cup competition is mandatory and any non-fulfilment (for non-acceptable reasons) will result in the tie being awarded to the non-defaulting team.