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| Who we areSYAA Soccer is a volunteer run, non-profit, player focused organization that provides a fun, safe, and structured learning environment for developing soccer players aged 3 to 18. SYAA Soccer develops players who respect themselves, their teammates, their opponents, the officials, and the game. SYAA Soccer provides opportunities at the Recreational, Advance, & Select/Travel soccer levels.Contact Us432 Kings Fork RdSuffolk, VA 23434Phone: 757-651-7367Email: syaasuffolkfc@gmail.comWeb: [www.suffolkyouthsoccerleague.org](http://www.suffolkyouthsoccerleague.org)Mailing address: P.O. Box 3081, Suffolk, VA 23439 |
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|  | Suffolk Youth Athletic Association432 Kings Fork RdSuffolk, VA 23434 |

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| *Things parents should know*U8 Recreation League“they should be having so much fun that when they go home, the soccer ball becomes one of their favorite toys” |
| Suffolk Youth Athletic Association |

*Encourage Creativity**and Ball Skills Before Tactics!* |

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| Table of ContentsAbout U8 Soccer 1Basic Ideas 1Game Application 1General Thoughts 1Getting Started 2What coaches & parents should consider 2Duration of practice; ratio of ball to child 2Helpful Tips 3Before the Game 3During the Game 3After the Game 3Things to remember 4Things to avoid 4Things to check out 4Final Thoughts 5 |  |  | Final Thoughts*“Up until about third grade, almost all kids play in recreational leagues, where teams are made up of members of the same community or youth soccer organization and play each other. After that age, most clubs are divided into recreational and so-called ‘travel’ teams.* *“If you and your child like the competitive side of the sport and entertain visions of soccer stardom, travel may be for you. If they make the team and play, they'll get all the competition they need to improve their skills. And you'll get to spend lots of time and money traveling around to games.*“But if what they really need is playing time, a recreational league may be a better choice.”*“Rec soccer leagues and intramural leagues focus on individual skill development, no matter the skill level of the player. Most of these leagues encourage coaches to give kids equal playing time and the opportunity to play different positions, which is critically important, because we don't know at that age who's going to blossom into the perfect striker.**“If your kid plays recreational soccer, parents and coaches should treat it as such. Understand going in that your little superstars will be sitting the bench just as often as the kid who has never played the game before. In rec leagues, that's how it should be. Remember, it's supposed to be fun. Thus, the name.”* |
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| Things to remember

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| Patience, good humor, and a willingness to see the world through a child’s eyes are key. Also, the ability to speak their language and accept that the children’s play will not look at all like soccer. |

Things to avoid

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| Don't continually shout instructions - they often reach the players too late (the action has moved to a new situation), and may be distracting.Don't instruct from the opposite touchline or behind the goal line to "cover the field." The instructions coming from opposite sides of the field often differ, and it is irritating and disrespectful to the other team if they are located there. |

Things to check out:

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| 1. [US Youth Soccer Player Development Model](http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/assets/1/3/US_Youth_Soccer_Player_Development_Model.pdf)
2. [Best Practices for Coaching Soccer in the U.S.](http://www.vysa.com/docs/coaches/Best_Practices.pdf)
3. [MathenyManifesto.pdf](http://mikematheny.com/sites/default/files/docs/MathenyManifesto.pdf)
4. [a-parents-guide-to-soccer](http://www.parenting.com/article/a-parents-guide-to-soccer)
5. <http://www.vysa.com/coaches/430249.html>
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 |  |  | About U8 Soccer

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| Soccer is still all about having fun with the ball and encouraging the children to want to have the ball at their feet.  |
| These children are still young. By the end of this phase, (around eight- years-old) children are beginning to be able to apply past experience to the present situation. For example, at a simple level, they can remember what they were shown or what they tried with the ball from last practice. At the same time, this ability is not present on a consistent basis. They are still not able to imagine consequences (i.e., if you do this, what will happen?). Let them learn through experience.this does not mean these players are ready for the mental demands of tactical team soccerSix, 7 and 8 year olds are starting to understand what it means to play a game. They are beginning to cooperate more with their teammates. In fact, they will now recognize that they even have teammates because they will occasionally pass the ball to a teammate purposefully. Some U-8 players will have played for more than a season; however, this does not mean these players are ready for the mental demands of tactical team soccer. True, they do have an idea of the game with regard to scoring or preventing goals, but the emphasis still needs to be placed on the individual’s ability to control the ball and because some of the players may be new to soccer, **it is imperative that activities are** **geared toward individual success and participation**. |

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| The U8 GameMe, the ball and my friendSYAA strives to ignite a passion for the game and stresses that this must be the number one objective for coaches of this age group. The aims of the SYAA coach is to keep their soccer experience fun and enjoyable and to foster a desire to play.The objective of the fundamental stage is to learn all basic movement skills by building overall motor skills.Game Application

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| **Game Form:** 5 v 5 to keep time on the ball and begin passing**GK Status:** No goalkeepers to minimize risk of injury**Field Size:** 45 yards x 25 yards**Ball Size:** 3When ball goes out of bounds, the game is restarted with a throw-in. Coaches stay on the sidelines beginning at U6. |

Duration of practice; ratio of ball to child

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| Practices should last 45 to 60 minutes. For most of the practice, each player should be actively involved with a ball. Games of 1 v 1 or games up to 3 v 3 with multiple balls involved (2:1 ratio of player to ball) and games to goals are also enjoyable and effective for this age. |

 |  |  | Helpful Tips**The influence of soccer parents in developing a child’s game cannot be understated**. *The enthusiastic and encouraging parent who plays soccer with their child, supports them in the youth leagues and offers advice off the field can only aid their development.*Before the Game* Tell your children you are proud of them regardless of how well they play.
* Tell them to play hard and have fun and remind them that “nervous is normal.”
* Commit to Honoring the Game no matter what others do.

During the Game* Let the coaches coach. Avoid instructing your child (or other players).
* Fill your child’s (and teammates’) Emotional Tanks.
* Cheer good plays and good efforts by both teams.

The coach’s long term goal is to prepare the player to successfully recognize and solve the challenges of the game on his or her own.After the Game* Thank the officials for doing a difficult job.
* Thank the coaches for their effort.
* Remind your child that you are proud of him or her – especially if the game didn’t go well!
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