



# National Soccer Coaches Association of Canada

## The Skill Acquisition Phase

The Golden Age of Learning

# U10

## Player Development Guidelines

A **player-centred approach** to coaching, where the child comes first. One of the major objective of this stage is to develop **physical literacy**, speed agility, balance, co-ordination and basic soccer skills.

A **game-centred approach**, for optimal, holistic learning.

All aspects of the game: technical, physical, tactical and game intelligence are developed through **5v5 Street Soccer** and similar small-sided games that allow the

opportunity to express enjoyment and develop skills through games.

A **Guided-Discovery approach** to learning, where the coach stimulates the players' game

intelligence through effective questioning.



Scientific research (Daniel Coyle, 'The Talent Code'; et al.) shows that in football the most educationally effective way is to develop technical skills (execution) and perception skills (decision-making) simultaneously.

The primary role of the Coach is that of a 'skills teacher' focused on individual technical development as opposed to being a 'team coach'. Your mission is to 'automate' the core skills through lots of repetition, but at the same time avoid 'drill' practices, where there may be repetition but no decision-making.

In this Phase the coach must focus exclusively on providing a solid foundation of technical skill. If the player does not gain this skill foundation during this phase it will be very difficult to make it up later. No amount of fitness or competitive spirit will ever compensate for deficiencies in functional game skills

The focus during this period is on the development of the 'functional game skills'. These are the technical skills you need to perform effectively during a game. The word 'functional' emphasizes the difference to 'un-functional' tricks, which may be fun to see and do but useless during the game.

### The characteristics of children this age are:

- They are highly motivated and enthusiastic
- They are competitive, like challenges and want to show they're the best
- They are well balanced and coordinated
- They are very adaptive to learning motor skills
- Although still self-centered, they start to learn how to work together
- They are sensitive to criticism and failure (praise is very important)
- They are physically and mentally ready for a more structured approach to training





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## U10 Training Guidelines

### Technical - Tactical

Continue to develop ball mastery in a larger environment with more teammates and opponents.

Develop dribbling 1v1 using different fakes, shielding, and changes of direction.

Develop ability to control the ball and look.

Introduce decision making for the next play and apply proper technique .



Develop the ability to run with the ball towards goal and away from goal to gain space and use width.

Introduce combination plays with two and three players.

Teach players the use of back passes to keep possession.

Develop shooting skills at longer distances.

Develop a shooting ATTITUDE (confidence).

Introduce simple defending skills:  
1 v 1 jockeying

### Develop Awareness and Vision through small sided games and **Street Soccer**.

In addition to developing specific technical skills with the ball, every soccer player must develop a thorough cognitive understanding of the larger tactical and strategic aspects of the game.

This includes movements where the player is defending or attacking as an individual, as well as larger movements where the player is part of a collective team effort to defend or attack. Vision, game awareness, and good decision-making are all fundamental qualities of effective players, combined with their technical mastery of the ball.

Accordingly, technical skills and tactical knowledge should be progressively integrated through drills and game-like training settings that develop each player's ability to execute technical skills in the context of tactical decision making.

**Small-Sided Games** are soccer games with fewer players competing on a smaller sized field. 1v1 - 2v1 - 3v2 - 4v4 are all fun games that involve the players more because one ball is being shared by fewer players.

### Physical Literacy

Appropriate and correct running, jumping and throwing techniques are taught using the ABC's of athletics (Agility, Balance, Co-ordination, Speed).

The development of these fundamental movement skills will contribute significantly to the athletic development and future achievements.

Participation in other sports is encouraged , however, players must also participate in the soccer program in order to develop their soccer related skills and technique.

### 1 v 1 Coaching Tips

#### DEFENDER

Show the attacker one way / force them away from goal

Bend your knees and stand on your toes so you are able to change direction quickly

The best moment to commit is when the attacker takes a heavy touch or slows down

#### ATTACKER

Go at defender with speed

Use a feint to put the defender off balance

Threaten to go one side and then suddenly attack the other side.

