

Dear U6 Academy of Excellence Parents,

Thank you for entrusting your child to us. We will do all that we can to make sure that you and your child are comfortable with us. In this letter, we would like to inform you about our priorities in children's soccer. To begin with the most important one: Learning soccer-specific techniques is not a top priority for this age level, and neither is learning tactics. However, that doesn't mean we don't teach kids to play soccer!

Shooting the ball in a given direction, dribbling the ball while running, stopping it without using your hands, shooting goals and blocking shots: These are the basic elements of soccer we introduce to our players, with the help of a variety of exercises and above all by playing the game.

However, it's equally important to us that our young players learn:

- to get along with their peers in a group,
- to pursue a common goal as part of a team,
- to deal appropriately with winning and losing,
- to respect their opponents, and
- to accept and obey rules, both on and off the field.

Your child will also:

- develop individual approaches to using sports equipment;
- gain basic experience in a variety of game situations;
- improve aspects of coordination such as mobility, agility, and reaction; and
- experience the fun and excitement of playing on a soccer team.

So don't be surprised if sometimes you come to practice and see your child playing games that seemingly have nothing to do with soccer. Climbing, balancing, jumping, hopping, throwing, etc. are fundamental skills that need to be improved; in the long run, they will contribute to the development of soccer skills. But of course, practice sessions still revolve around the game of soccer.

Naturally, we also play games against other teams! Our objective, however, is not to win as many games as possible. Instead, we want to make sure that every player is active and enjoying the game. Kids this age are not ready to play specific positions or roles on the field-their urge to move is much too strong for that. Just as it's too early for you to say what your child is going to be when he or she grows up, we make a conscious effort **not** to assign players to positions just yet.

Kids learn best when they have the chance to experience all the different positions. Therefore, we have them trade positions from one game to the next, or even during the course of a single game. It also goes without saying that every child has to be taken out of the game sometimes so that others can play. In the interest of all children, we cannot make substitutions dependent on whether a player has performed well or less well. As a general rule, players this age should not be personally evaluated on their performance.

Don't get us wrong: We like to win! But we don't believe in winning at the cost of taking weaker players out of the game, for example, or keeping certain players from playing at all, or assigning them to out-of-the-way positions where they won't have any fun.

Because this information is so important to us, we decided to put it in writing. We welcome you to attend practice on a regular basis. The coach is grateful for all suggestions and open-minded comments.

Sincerely yours,

TSC Directors and Staff Coaches

