



Soccer Game



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Attacking the Goal

Activity

Players will learn that they have to attack a goal (cone) to score in soccer. Each team attacks a different goal (cone).

Activity Description

1 v 1—Each player tries to hit a cone using only his or her feet, not hands. (No need for any other rules right now!)

Questions

Coach: Which way do you go when you get the ball?

Players: Toward the cone.

Variations

Try to have enough balls and cones so that all players get plenty of touches and chances to score. This is the point of the warm-up and the 1 v 1 game. If the number of balls and cones available is limited, have players pair off and pass the ball to each other before hitting a cone.



Soccer Game



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Attacking the Goal
Team Play

Activity

Players will learn that they can play with others on the same team and try to score (cone or goal).

Activity Description

2 v 2—Each pair tries to score by hitting a cone or by kicking into a small goal.

Questions

Coach: Who is on your team?

Players: (Name of teammate)

Coach: Which goal are you trying to score in?

Players: That one. (Have them point.)

Coach: Where do you kick the ball to score?

Players: In the goal. (If they say “in there,” have them show you.)



Soccer Game



Time: 20 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Field Boundaries

Start/Restart

Attacking the Goal

Activity

Players will learn appropriate ways of restarting the game when the ball goes out of play.

Activity Description

3 v 3—Each team of three tries to score into a small goal. For each pair of teams, mark a playing area no larger than 50 by 30 feet.

Questions

Coach: How do we start the game?

Players: With a kickoff at the center. The other team must go back into its own half.

Coach: What happens when the ball goes out-of- bounds?

Players: The other team gets to kick it in. (Don't allow throw-ins yet.)

Coach: What happens after you score a goal?

Players: A kickoff at the center. The team that scored must go back into its own half.



Soccer Game



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Dribbling
Start/Restart
Attacking the Goal

Activity

To play a 3 v 3 game, focusing on controlling the ball (as opposed to kicking it anywhere).

Activity Description

The objective is for players to be able to move with the ball (dribble) during the 3 v 3 game.

Questions

Coach: How can you get the ball up the field?

Players: Run with it.

Coach: What do we call this in soccer?

Players: Dribbling.

Coach: When you dribble the ball, should it be close to you or far away?

Players: Close to you.

Coach: What part of the foot should you use to dribble—the inside, the outside, or the toe?

Players: The inside or outside.

Variations

To use as a Game 2: Teams are 3 v 1 or 3 v 2. Choose based on the skill proficiency of your players.

Players will learn to avoid opponents when they have the ball during game play.



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 5 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Dribbling

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to control the ball while dribbling.
2. Practice controlling the ball while dribbling.

Activity Description

Individual—Each player dribbles in space and changes directions when you call “turn.”

Young children are unpredictable. When you ask them questions, you may not get the answers you are hoping for. You may need to probe. Ask “What else?” Or give them choices: “Do you think it is this or that?”

Tips

- “Keep the ball close.”
- “Use the inside and outside of both feet.”
- “Push the ball gently.”



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 5 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Dribbling

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to control the ball with the inside or the outside of the foot while dribbling.
2. Practice controlling the ball while dribbling with the inside or outside of the foot.

Activity Description

Individual—First demonstrate dribbling with the inside and outside of the foot. Then have the players dribble individually while you call “turn” and “inside” or “outside” of foot.

Tips

- “Keep the ball close.”
- “Use the inside and outside of both feet.”
- “Push the ball gently.”
- “Turn inside” or “Turn outside.”

Variations

Play follow-the-leader, having the players follow you and dribble as you move about the playing area at slow speed, dribbling with both feet.



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Dribbling
Avoiding an Opponent

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to move the ball to avoid an opponent.
2. Practice moving the ball to avoid an opponent.

Activity Description

Individual—Each player dribbles with control to avoid an opponent, which is you. The players move freely with the ball, but must avoid you when they see you.

Tips

- “Move the ball away from me.”
- “Keep the ball close.”
- “Use the inside and outside of both feet.”
- “Push the ball gently.”



Soccer Game



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Attacking the Goal
Passing

Activity

Players will work with a teammate to score.

Activity Description

2 v 2—Players kick to cones or small goals.

Questions

Coach: How can you help each other and work together to score? (You might have to prompt the answer by showing them an example. Put two players on the field, one close to the goal and the other farther back with the ball. Then ask “What is the quickest way for you two to get the ball into the goal?”)

Players: Pass the ball forward toward the goal.



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Passing

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to pass accurately to a partner.
2. Practice passing accurately to a partner.

Activity Description

Pairs—First demonstrate the proper passing technique. Then have partners practice passing, both when stationary and when moving the ball.

Tips

- “Get close to the ball.”
- “Face your partner.”
- “Turn your foot out” (so they use the inside of the foot).
- “Follow through toward your partner.”

Variations

More advanced players will pick up the skill quickly. Have these players also use the outside of the foot (by turning the foot inward rather than outward).



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Passing
Creating Passing Lanes

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to move to support a teammate with the ball.
2. Practice moving to support a teammate with the ball.

Activity Description

Pairs—Tell partners to practice getting the ball from one end of the field to the other without running with the ball. Ask “How do you do it?” They should answer “Pass and move forward.” After they practice passing the ball and score at the other end, they come back.

Tips

“Pass and move ahead of your partner.”

Variations

Notice that some players need more attention than others. Observe which pairs are struggling and provide them with a little extra help.



Soccer Game



Time: 15 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Passing
Creating Passing Lanes

Activity

Players will learn to pass and move ahead during the game.

Activity Description

3 v 1, 3 v 2, or 3 v 3 (choose based on the skill proficiency of your players)—Each team of three tries to pass often during the game. Rotate players accordingly so they all have a chance to play offense and defense.

Tips

“Pass and move ahead.”



Soccer Game



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Passing
Receiving
Triangle Formation

Activity

Players will remember to move the ball downfield by passing and receiving.

Activity Description

3 v 3—Each team of three tries to pass often during the game. Emphasize and encourage passing in the game. Freeze the game when you see it happen, and point out good passing, receiving, and dribbling under control.

Questions

Coach: What do you need to do when the ball comes to you?

Players: Stop it.

Coach: How do you stop it?

Players: (Various answers, to which you could respond, “Yes, you can.”)

Variations

To use as a Game 2: Teams are 3 v 1 or 3 v 2. Choose based on the skill proficiency of your players.



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Receiving
Triangle Formation

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to receive a pass and control the ball.
2. Practice receiving passes and controlling the ball.

Activity Description

Groups of three—Each group passes in a triangle formation, focusing on receiving the ball.

Tips

- “Get behind the ball.”
- “Use the inside or outside of the foot.”
- “Push the ball gently toward the player you will pass to next.”
- “Make the next pass.”

Variations

Have better players move the triangle over the field as they pass.



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Receiving
Dribbling
Triangle Formation

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to receive a pass and move with the ball under control.
2. Practice receiving passes and moving with the ball under control.

Activity Description

Groups of three—In a triangle formation, each person receives the ball and dribbles a little before passing.

Tips

- “Push the ball into space.”
- “Dribble keeping the ball close.”
- “Find a teammate and pass.”

Variations

Have better players move the triangle over the field as they pass.



Soccer Game



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Spacing
Passing
Receiving

Activity

To keep possession of the ball by supporting teammates who have it.

Activity Description

3 v 3—Each team tries to have teammates help each other during the game. The objective is for players to be able to move to a good position to receive a pass when a teammate has the ball during a game.

Explain that a regulation game has 11 v 11 and that all players spread over the field so they can help or support each other.

Freeze the game occasionally to show players where good supporting positions are. Watch that players don't try to support by getting too close to teammates who have the ball. This only makes the game more crowded, so encourage them to stay in space to receive a pass.

Questions

Coach: Where can you go to help a teammate who has the ball? (You may have to show them an example. Put a defender in front of the player with the ball so that the player who wants to receive the ball has to move away into space. Then ask, "If Katie has the ball here, where can Matthew go so that Katie can pass to him?")

Players: To space.

Variations

To use as a Game 2: Teams are 3 v 1 or 3 v 2. Choose based on the skill proficiency of your players.



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Spacing
Passing
Receiving

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to stay in space to receive passes.
2. Practice staying in space to receive passes.

Activity Description

Teams of three, unopposed—Each team tries to make four passes as it moves to the end of the field.

Tips

- “Pass and move forward into space.”
- “Receive and pass to a teammate.”



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Spacing
Passing
Receiving

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to create a passing lane away from the defender.
2. Practice moving to create a passing lane away from the defender.

Activity Description

Teams of three—You oppose each group for one or two passes, then move to the next group when it begins.

Tips

- “Move away from me so he (or she) can pass to you.”
- “Pass the ball by me.”

Variations

Make better players work harder to get the ball around you.



Soccer Game



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Passing
Passing Lanes
Triangle Formation

Activity

Players keep possession of the ball by passing well, receiving the ball effectively, and supporting teammates who have the ball.

Activity Description

3 v 3—Each team tries to pass three times before scoring a goal. If they do, give them an extra point for that goal.

Questions

Coach: How can you keep the ball as a team?

Players: Pass.

Coach: What do you need to do as well as passing?

Players: Receive and control.

Coach: If a player with the ball wants to pass, what does he or she need? (Again, you may need to set this up in a demonstration.)

Players: Someone to pass to.

Variations

To use as a Game 2: Teams are 3 v 1 or 3 v 2. Choose based on the skill proficiency of your players.

Another variation: Players play 2 v 1 in an area 20 feet by 10 feet with a small goal.



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Passing
Creating Passing Lanes
Triangle Formation

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to create a passing lane around a defender.
2. Practice moving to create a passing lane around a defender.

Activity Description

Groups of three—Each team tries to pass in a triangle formation, with you opposing.

Tips

- “Move to help your teammate.”
- “Pass and control the ball.”

Variations

Apply more pressure to better players. This will challenge their control.



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Passing
Creating Passing Lanes

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to support a teammate under pressure.
2. Practice supporting a teammate under pressure.

Activity Description

2 v 1—Players practice in an area 20 feet by 10 feet with a small goal. The two attackers must pass three times before scoring in the goal while defended by the third player.

Remember to have the players rotate playing the defender in skill practice 2. If necessary, guide players to the right answers as you ask questions by setting up scenarios (e.g., if Katie wants to pass to Michael or Kolicia, where do they have to be?).

Tips

“Pass and move quickly.”



Soccer Game



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Shooting

Activity

Players shoot a stationary or moving ball accurately at the goal.

Activity Description

3 v 3—Players try to score as many goals as they can.

Questions

Coach: What do you have to do to score?

Players: Shoot.

Coach: When you shoot, where should you aim the ball?

Players: At the goal.

Variations

To use as a Game 2: Teams are 3 v 1 or 3 v 2. Choose based on the skill proficiency of your players.

Have teams count the number of goals they score in Game 1 and see if they can score more in Game 2. This way they see the value of practice.



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Shooting

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to accurately shoot a stationary ball into the goal.
2. Practice accurately shooting a stationary ball into the goal without pressure.

Activity Description

Groups of three—Have one retriever and two shooters. Each shooter shoots a stationary ball into the goal he or she is attacking.

Tips

- “Get close to the ball.” (Use a long stride to plant the non-striking foot beside the ball.)
- “Use the laces to kick the ball.”
- “Keep the toe down as you shoot.”

Variations

Have better players shoot from farther away.



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Shooting

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to accurately shoot a moving ball into the goal.
2. Practice accurately shooting a moving ball into the goal.

Activity Description

Groups of three—You or one of the teammates rolls the ball forward so the shooters can move in and shoot the moving ball.

Tips

- “Catch up to the ball.”
- “Shoot before the ball stops rolling.”
- “Get close to the ball, use laces, toe down.”

Variations

Have better players shoot from farther away.



Soccer Game



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Shooting

Activity

Players will learn to attempt more shots and shoot accurately under pressure during game play.

Activity Description

3 v 3, shooting to goals. Players shoot under pressure from a defender during game play.

Questions

Coach: Do you always have a lot of time to shoot in a game?

Players: No, sometimes you have to hurry.

Coach: When do you have to hurry?

Players: When an opponent is close to you.

Variations

Keep the feeds simple for weaker players. A low, rolling ball is easy to control and shoot.

Vary the feeds for better players so the ball bounces a little, making control before the shot more challenging.

To use as a Game 2: Teams are 3 v 1 or 3 v 2. Choose based on the skill proficiency of your players.



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 15 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Shooting

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to shoot accurately under pressure.
2. Practice shooting accurately under pressure from a defender.

Activity Description

Pairs of players—You feed the ball between two players who chase it toward the goal. The first player to reach the ball must shoot as quickly as possible. This teaches shooting under pressure.

For the skill practice, the best place to start feeding the ball is from the middle of the field. When one of the first pair has scored, the pair returns to the starting point by coming back down the sides of the field while you feed the next pair. As it takes players some time to return to the starting point, this practice might involve several pairs.

Tips

- “Chase hard.”
- “Shoot quickly.”



Soccer Game



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Marking

Activity

Players learn to defend space, focusing on marking opponents when on defense in the game.

Activity Description

3 v 3, shooting to goals. The objective is for players to be able to defend space in a game by marking opposing players.

Questions

Coach: How can you stop players on the other team from getting the ball?

Players: Stand close to them.

Coach: If I want to pass to Katie, where can Matthew go to make it hard for Katie and me?

Players: Next to Katie.

Variations

Freeze the game occasionally to check on whether players know who they should be marking.



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 5 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Marking

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to follow an opponent.
2. Practice following an opponent.

Activity Description

Pairs—When you call “go,” one player tries to get away from the other. When you call “stop,” the players switch roles, then repeat.

Tips

- “Watch your opponent.”
- “Stay close to him or her.”

Variations

Use a ball. Player A can try to get away from player B while dribbling a ball.



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 15 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Marking

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to mark an opponent who is trying to receive a pass.
2. Practice marking an opponent who is trying to get free to receive a pass.

Activity Description

Groups of three—One player feeds the ball to the attacker. The attacker tries to get free from the defender. Play stops when the attacker or the defender has the ball in space; they then do it again. In skill practice 2, you may need to take over as feeder, depending on the ability of the third player to feed accurately. Rotate the third player into the practice every two or three trials.

Tips

- “Mark your opponent.”



Soccer Game



Time: 10 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Marking

Activity

To defend their own space in a game, focusing on marking tightly and pressuring opponents who have the ball.

Activity Description

3 v 3—Each team tries to stop the other team from scoring.

Questions

Coach: If the opponent you are marking gets the ball, where should you move?

Players: Closer to him or her.

Coach: As the opponent you are marking gets closer to your goal, where should you move?

Players: Closer to him or her.

Coach: How should you move (quickly or slowly)?

Players: Quickly.

Variations

Freeze the game from time to time to show good marking and to check that players are marking appropriately.



Soccer

Skill Drill



Time: 15 minutes



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Ages: 3 to 5

Topic(s)

Marking

Activity

1. Introduce, demonstrate, and explain how to pressure an opponent in possession of the ball.
2. Practice pressuring an opponent who is in possession of the ball.

Activity Description

Groups of three—Set the cones about 10 yards apart. Players 1 and 2 each have a cone, and each stands by the cone to start. A feeder feeds the ball to player 1. Player 2 closes the gap as quickly as possible, trying to prevent player 1 from dribbling to player 2's cone. Rotate the feeder into the practice every two trials.

Tips

- "Go to the player with the ball."
- "Move quickly."

Variations

Vary the distance apart that players start. High-ability players can start farther apart, giving the defender more distance to cover to close down the space.