

My Kid Wants to Play Soccer!!

What can I do, as a parent, to give my child the best possible opportunity to maximize their ability to go as far as possible in the game of soccer? First off, congratulations on choosing “the beautiful game”. We hope the following list of suggestions will help your youth player learn to love the game.

1. Individual Practice: Ensure your child is practicing at home. You need to work with your child, even if all you do is return balls for them. Do this as much as you can at home. Practicing at home allows players to figure the game out at a faster rate. It also helps make the techniques learned at team practice, camps and private lessons second nature.
2. Team Practice: Any skills based practice would help players develop. Players need to practice with their teams and interact with other players to experiment, learn new techniques, learn from teammates, and learn to play as a team.
3. Games: The game is the best teacher. Players should really approach games as a time to enjoy the sport while challenging them to get better each game.
4. Private Lessons: Private lessons can be very helpful. Choose a coach that can really challenge your child to improve. Not all private lessons are the same. I recommend choosing a coach strong in the areas of foot skills, coordination, and ball mastery. Private lessons can be a great place to really polish your skills and learn new ones quickly. Private lessons do cost extra, so it may not be available to all players. However, if 1, 2 and 3 are being done, private lessons may not be needed. WSA has a list of coaches available for private instruction.
5. Camps: Camps are a great way for players to have fun and learn at the same time. They are less expensive than private lessons, but players will usually get out of camps equal results to the effort they put in. A skills based camp that emphasizes multiple touches on the ball is best. WSA offers many camps throughout the year. There are also several local universities that offer camps for even more advanced training.
6. Watch the game live and on TV. Older and professional players went through the same growth process youth players are going through currently. Youth players can watch the pros and see how they resolve problems on the field and the techniques they use to help them succeed. They can also find a player to emulate as well. Check out the local club or high school schedule, collegiate team schedule, or catch some MLS or EPL games on TV. Many of the high school or college teams will offer games at a discount if you wear your “team jersey”. YouTube is also a great source for watching individual players.
7. Dream. Dream. Dream. Dreams and desires go a LONG way in motivating your youth player to do their best.
8. Psychological Preparation: Players must eventually learn how to approach everything they do with the mindset of getting the most out of every activity they are involved in. If this is done, players will understand competition and put themselves in a position to compete at a high level.