

Toddler Soccer Practice



Warm Ups

1. **Little to Big** (Repeat 3-5 times)

- First, Little ⇒ squat and scrunch entire body close to the ground
- Next, Big ⇒ stand up and stretch arms and legs away from the body, making a large X-shape with arms and legs

2. **Little Step, Big Step** (Repeat 1-2 times Forward and Backward)

- First, Little Step ⇒ take a small step toward the cone in the center (with the non-dominant foot if known)
- Next, Big Step ⇒ take a large step toward the center cone (with the dominant foot if known)
- Repeat until everyone reaches the center cone
- Repeat process going backward ⇒ one small step back and then one large step back until everyone reaches original starting spot

3. **Soccer Hokey Pokey** (Repeat 1-2 times for Each Foot)

Note: This is twist on the hokey pokey activity ⇒ The song: “put your left foot in, put your left foot out, put your left foot in, and then you shake it all about. You do the hokey pokey and you turn yourselves around. That’s what it’s all about.”

- First, Left Foot ON ⇒ place left foot ON the ball
- Next, Left Foot DOWN ⇒ place left foot on the ground or UNDER the ball
- Next, Repeat Left Foot ON and Move the Ball AROUND ⇒ Use the left foot to move the ball around while maintaining balance
- Soccer Hokey Pokey Song: put your left foot ON, put your left foot DOWN, put your left foot ON, and then you MOVE the ball around. You do the hokey pokey and you run around the ball. That’s what it’s all about. ⇒ repeat with right foot and then repeat whole sequence 1-2 times

Games (not in any particular order)

1. **Tunnel** (Each parent/caregiver acts as a goal for their child)

Preperation

You will need a marked out area as shown in the diagram by the white lines. The kids will need a soccer ball each and you will need to get as many parents to help you as possible. The more mum's and dad's that participate the better the drill will work for their kids (tell them this!)



Explanation

The parents will be standing inside the area, spread apart from one another with their legs together.

The kids will be next to you and on your command will dribble (kick) their soccer ball in and out of where their parents are standing still. This is a good time to get some coaching points in.

When you shout "tunnel ball" the parents will open their legs wide and the young players have to kick (pass - inside of foot) the ball through the legs of the adults. The kids should then retrieve their ball and continue to dribble.

2. **BIG Tunnel** (3 parents/caregivers act as tunnels at one end of the field)
 - a. First, Get Ready \Rightarrow 3 parents/caregivers line up on one side of the field and act as goals (tunnels)
 - i. For this, there will be one center goal and 2 parents will act as goals on either side of the main goal
 - b. Next, Line Up \Rightarrow Everyone (all kids) line up on the other side of the field.
 - c. Then, Kick! \Rightarrow Everyone kicks until they kick the ball through the tunnel
 - d. Last, GOAL! \Rightarrow Parents/caregivers yell GOOOAAALLLLL! (think Univision football match: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f91hAtDQg3I>)
 - e. Repeat 3-4 times (or until everyone gets bored)
3. **Animal Hunt** (4-6 parents act as "animals," making animal noises)

Preparation

You will need a marked out area not too large to keep the kids close to you. The kids will need a soccer ball each and you will need to explain to them that they are in the jungle looking for wild animals!



Explanation

So the kids have a soccer ball at their feet and you have told them that they must dribble the soccer ball toward the animal noise they hear. The animals will be four willing parents. Ask four parents to each stand on a separate corner of the marked out area. Tell each parent what animal noise they will need to make. For example, you could have a monkey, lion, bear and an elephant.

As a soccer coach you will talk to the young kids and say "now it is time to go find the elephant". The parent will then make an elephant noise (and hopefully make a trunk with their arm) and the kids will dribble their soccer ball toward them.

4. **Red Light, Yellow, Light Green Light, Purple light** (Parents/caregivers stand at one end of the field)
 - a. First, Get Ready \Rightarrow Everyone (all kids) lines up in a line near the goal
 - b. Then, Green Light \Rightarrow Everyone kicks the ball away from the goal, toward their parents/caregivers
 - c. Next, Red Light \Rightarrow Everyone stops where their ball is
 - d. Next, Yellow Light \Rightarrow Everyone kicks Slowly
 - e. Purple light \Rightarrow Dance Party!
 - f. Then, repeat Green Light and Red Light until everyone reaches their parent at the other end of the field
 - g. Repeat the whole game 1-2 times

5. **Foxes and Chickens / Baby Sharks and Minnows** (Each parent/caregiver acts as the "chicken" or "minnow" and their child (fox or baby shark) chases them)

Preparation

Depending on the number of kids playing you will need to set-up a grid that the young players will not try and leave. You will need some pinneys, enough soccer balls for one-each and some helpful parents!



Explanation

The aim for this soccer drill is for the young players to get the tail (pinney) from the parents. The parents act as the chickens and the kids are the foxes. The parents will need to put a pinney half tucked into the back of their pants/shorts. The kids have to chase after them and remove the pinney (acting as a tail). Once the kids have all of the pinneys the game

Skill Building Activities

NOTE: These activities don't involve the ball, but they build fundamental skills like jumping (for heading) and weaving (for dribbling).

1. **Cone Jumping** ⇒ Set up 6-8 cones in a circle. The kids line up, and one-by-one, they jump over the cones in the circle. (Some younger toddlers may need a hand from a parent/caregiver.) One full circle is complete when the kid returns to the coach or starting point. For variation, the kids can jump like their favorite animals (kangaroos, lions, tigers, etc). Everyone makes 2-3 full circles.
2. **Catch and Tickle the Baby Shark** ⇒ Set up 3-4 cones in a line in front of the goal. A parent is waiting in the goal ready to be eaten (or tickled) by the baby shark. The kids line up. Then, each kid makes a baby shark fin with their hands. One-by-one, they weave through the cones until they reach the goal. Then, they catch (or tickle) the parent waiting at the goal.
3. **Kick the Cone** ⇒ Set up a cone about 2-4 feet away from each kid and have them kick the cone over. Once the cone is knocked over, then the parent places the cone a little farther away (5-10 inches) the next time. Repeat until the kid cannot kick over the cone. Pretend the cone is a volcano and make explosion sounds when the volcano is hit.
4. **Train** ⇒ set up the cones in a line. Be the train leader and ask the kids to run after you in a single file line to be the train cars. Zig zag between the cones.

Ball Control Activities

1. **One Step Back** ⇒ Once the kids get used to passing, then they'll start passing with either a parent/giver or each other. Everyone will start very close to each other, and then after 10-15 seconds, each person takes a step back. This repeats until each pair stands at least 10 feet/3 meters away.
2. **Circle Kick** ⇒ Once the kids get used to kicking, they'll stand in a circle and start kicking the ball to the each other. Each kicker calls out the name of the person

they will kick to, and then kicks the ball to that person. This repeats until each person has kicked the ball to at least 1 one person. Then, the entire activity repeats, speeding up each time.

3. **Coach Chase** ⇒ coach dribbles with the ball and all team members run after the coach and try to catch the ball

Cool Downs

1. **Feet, Tummy, Head, Sky** ⇒ Everyone sits down with their legs extended and holds the ball. Then, they tap their ball on their toes, tummy, head and then high in the sky. Repeat 3 times.
2. **Soccer "Fist Bump"** ⇒ Everyone sits down close to each other and holds the ball in front of them. Then, one person turns to the left and the other turns to the right and they bump their soccer balls together. (This is also a COVID friendly way to say goodbye to friends).



Day 1 Example Practice:

5 Mins - Welcome:

Welcome the kids and Caregivers and cover the following key items:

- Ask parents to use Sports Engine to communicate, RSVP, and look for practice cancellations.
- For those Coaches who are going to be missing practice at some point, and do not have an assistant for coverage, please tell your parents you are looking for someone to volunteer on those dates.
- Tell caregivers to make sure to bring water for the kids

- Tell caregivers their participation is welcome and expected (especially for those with younger kids) and if kids need to leave the playing area at any time, and sit out, that is OK. This is all about having fun for the kids.

5 Mins: Warm up:

- Ask all kids and parents to stand in a circle. Introduce yourself as Coach “Fill in your name”. Go around the circle asking each child’s name and favorite animal. For each child, repeat back their name and lead the children to doing a stretch that is representative of that child’s favorite animal while making sounds of that animal
- Do a couple of stretches for example:

Little to Big (Repeat 3-5 times)

- First, Little ⇒ squat and scrunch entire body close to the ground
- Next, Big ⇒ stand up and stretch arms and legs away from the body, making a large X-shape with arms and legs

Little Step, Big Step (Repeat 1-2 times Forward and Backward)

- First, Little Step ⇒ take a small step toward the cone in the center (with the non-dominant foot if known)
- Next, Big Step ⇒ take a large step toward the center cone (with the dominant foot if known)
- Repeat until everyone reaches the center cone
- Repeat process going backward ⇒ one small step back and then one large step back until everyone reaches original starting spot
- Introduce the soccer ball - Let the kids know that the soccer ball is for kicking and not throwing.
- Toe Taps on the soccer ball: Put the soccer ball on the ground. Kids gently put their foot on top of the soccer ball, switch feet. Practicing balance and light touches. Kids may need help from their caregiver.
- Show the kids the right part of your foot to kick the soccer ball (inside of foot, no toe) - This is the one key skill we would like to teach kids at this age, “no toe”

5 Mins: Kick the ball with the Caregiver:

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- Have the Kids and Caregivers get used to the soccer ball and kick it back and forth.

2 Mins: Water Break

5 Mins - Red Light, Yellow, Light Green Light, Purple light (Parents/caregivers stand at one end of the field)

- a. First, Get Ready ⇒ Everyone (all kids) lines up in a line near the goal
- b. Then, Green Light ⇒ Everyone kicks the ball away from the goal, toward their parents/caregivers
- c. Next, Red Light ⇒ Everyone stops where their ball is
- d. Next, Yellow Light ⇒ Everyone kicks Slowly
- e. Purple light ⇒ Dance Party!
- f. Then, repeat Green Light and Red Light until everyone reaches their parent at the other end of the field
- g. Repeat

5 Mins: Activities

- **Cone Jumping** ⇒ Set up 6-8 cones in a circle. The kids line up, and one-by-one, they jump over the cones in the circle. (Some younger toddlers may need a hand from a parent/caregiver.) One full circle is complete when the kid returns to the coach or starting point. For variation, the kids can jump like their favorite animals (kangaroos, lions, tigers, etc). Everyone makes 2-3 full circles.
- **Kick the Cone** ⇒ Set up the cones throughout the field. Tell the kids to kick the cones over with their balls. Ask the parents to stand the cones up after it has been knocked over. Pretend the cone is a volcano and make explosion sounds when the volcano is hit.

2 Mins: Water break

5 Mins: Foxes and Chickens / Baby Sharks and Minnows - Each parent/caregiver acts as the “chicken” or “minnow” and their child (fox or baby shark) chases them and tries to take the ball from the parent.

5 Mins: Goal Kicking

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- Set up the goals - Line the kids up in a line. Have the kids take turns kicking their ball into the net.

2 Mins: Water break

5 Mins: Cool down and Team Cheer

- **Feet, Tummy, Head, Sky** ⇒ Everyone sits down with their legs extended and holds the ball. Then, they tap their ball on their toes, tummy, head and then high in the sky. Repeat 3 times.
- **Soccer "Fist Bump"** ⇒ Everyone sits down close to each other and holds the ball in front of them. Then, one person turns to the left and the other turns to the right and they bump their soccer balls together. (This is also a COVID friendly way to say goodbye to friends).
- **End with a team Team Cheer** ⇒ one...two...three...go "name of team" or anything you would like to finish with!