

Example Soccer Coaching practice plan for children aged 3 to 8

from ussoccerplayer.com

Duration 45 - 60 minutes

Equipment required: one ball for every child

Warm-up

Every player has a ball. Use the center circle or penalty area, or place cones in a 20 x 30 yard area.

Body Part Dribbling (3-5 min): Place the players in random formations within the space and have them dribble without touching other players. When you call out a body part (left foot, right foot, thigh, head, etc.) the players must stop the ball with that body part.

Ball Stretching (2-3 min): Have players stand with legs apart and roll their balls with their hands in a figure eight in and out of their legs. Then, have them place one foot in front of the other and roll the ball around the front foot ten times, then switch. Have them sit down, legs extended in front, and roll the ball towards and around their feet and return along the other side of the leg. Have them sit in a V and move the ball in an outline around their bodies, including their backs. This activity makes the players stretch without realizing it; players at this age tend to just "count" when being led through stretching exercises, they don't realize what a stretch feels like. Activities like this warm up their muscles and keep them occupied.

I Can Do Something With the Ball, Can You? (3-5 min): Lead this game first, saying, "I can do something with the ball (dribble with your left foot, kick as far as you can, etc.) can you?" and then the players have to mimic you. Then call the players up one at a time to the center to lead the activity.

Water Break (3 mins)

Main Activities

Individual Ball Retrieving (5-7 min): Have the players hand you their balls one at a time. Toss each ball away, and the players must retrieve their balls as quickly as possible and bring them back any way they want (carry in one hand, both hands, hold on top of head, etc.) Let them come up with their own ideas. A variation is to call out a number while the players run away and they must touch the ball that many times on their way back to you.

The Glob (5-7 min): Select one player to be 'the glob' with you. Have the players line up on one side of the goal box and the glob stays at the other side. The players should start running to the other side and try to avoid being tagged by the glob. If tagged, the players should practice dribbling behind the goal until the glob has tagged everyone. Select a new 'glob' partner and start over. Variations are to have the players dribble past you.

Water Break (3 mins)

Off to the Zoo (3-5 min): This drill starts without a ball. Have the players gather randomly in an area, then call out an animal, and they must walk around mimicking that animal. After the players get the hang of it, add balls, and they must dribble while being an animal.

Attacking and Defending Gates (5-7 min): Create 6-8 'gates' or small goals with cones in an area of the field. Place one child in each gate—this is team A. Another child lines up facing the gate on either side with the ball (Team B) and tries to play the ball through the gate. If the Team B player wins, the players switch roles.

Water Break (5 min)

Game Time (10-12 min)

Play a small-sided game or two at a time, no more than 4 v. 4 with no goalkeepers. Have balls available out of bounds to kick in if the ball goes out (kick to players not as active in the game).

Cool-down (3-5 min)

Toes (2-3 min): Have the players sit on the ground legs extended and grab their feet with each hand. Through all of the following instructions, their hands cannot let go of their feet (this is another creative way to make the kids stretch a bit).

Can you make one leg longer than the other? Now the other leg?

How wide can you stretch your legs?

How small can you make yourself?

How large can you make yourself?

Can you get your feet higher than your head?

Can you get your feet behind your head?

Can you stand and walk without letting go of your toes?