

Thunder Soccer Club

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U-8 Expectations

Young children often come into organized soccer at the suggestion of their parents; ironically, adult pressure is one of their main reasons for quitting! We, at Thunder Soccer Club, want our players to enjoy a positive sports experience, and we strive to create the best environment to cultivate life long soccer players. Soccer not only offers young children a great opportunity to compete, but also the chance to learn great life lessons. We cannot set upon this journey alone and appreciate your support. **For our part, we have appointed coaches that have either played or coached at the highest levels - most of them at the collegiate or professional level, some at the national level.** These coaches KNOW what skills are needed and how to best develop the players. Here is our position on the development of these young athletes:

- **FUN...** Since this is the first contact with club ball, EVERYONE must work hard to create an environment where the players WANT to be there. Let them play, learn, make friends and HAVE FUN. At this age, who knows if soccer is going to be your child's favorite sport, so let your child develop at their own pace. Yelling at players will not be tolerated... screaming at these mini superstars will only detract from the child's experience and will lead to burnout and loss of love for the game...
- **BE A SPORT...** Coaches and adults have to set an example. Show respect for the opponent, the referee AND your child's teammates. Encouraging or teaching players to cheat or foul is wrong.
- **CHEERING vs COACHING...** Parents should cheer for all the players but must respect the difference between 'cheering' and the strained, impassioned urging that is almost coaching. Aside from possibly contradicting the coach, the player can be confused and distracted about whom to listen to.
- **TRAINING...** Emphasis will be on technical ball skills, 1v1 attacking moves, 3v3 games, and running and coordination skills such as dodging, feinting and tumbling, etc.
- **ATTENDANCE...** When you accept a position on a travel team, you must understand that there has to be a proper commitment. Attendance at two practices per week is mandatory. Players should expect a commitment that includes fall and spring seasons, and winter indoor soccer. Each team has their own expectations, which should be read very carefully!
- **LATENESS...** Players are expected to arrive 5 minutes before the start of the scheduled practice... and minimally 30 minutes before a game.
- **PLAYING TIME AND FIELD POSITIONS...** The goal is for ALL players to play at least 50% of each game... Coaches decide what player will play in what position, but they are encouraged to give players the chance to play different positions.
- **RESULTS...** We try to win, but having fun, learning, practicing and using skills are the top priorities.
- **MULTIPLE SPORTS** are OK as there is a lot to be gained and learned from competing in other sports... but in-season (August 15 thru November 15, and March 1 thru June 15) soccer has to be the TOP PRIORITY over other sports.