



4/5U CURRICULUM

About N.E.S.T

N.E.S.T stands for **Nurturing, Engaging, Sensory, and Teaching**. While developing the N.E.S.T program values, goals, and curriculum, CBSC has placed these four core words at root of every plan, consideration, and conversation. We believe through these core words that CBSC has developed a youth soccer program that will truly help each child gain the confidence and skills to become a better soccer player while **ENJOYING** playing the game of soccer. The program has also been designed keeping close consideration of the physical and cognitive ability/development of a four, five, and six-year-old.

Nurturing

We believe that the N.E.S.T program is designed to care for and encourage the growth and development of each individual player. We have created a model that will focus on the individual player's growth and passion for the game. We realize that at this young age, we need to be nurturing and not demanding.

Engaging

We strive to make every training session and game as engaging as possible for each child out on the field. If a child is not engaged while at soccer practice or a game, their love for the game will not spark and if they do not develop a love for the game, their skills will not progress. We attempt to make every moment engaging and notice when it is not, and adapt to re-engage.

Sensory

Soccer is a unique sport for a four, five, and six-year-old because it eliminates the use of hands. N.E.S.T provides a great foundation for players to understand the relationship between them and the ball using only their feet.

Teaching

Teaching is a bundled word when it comes to the N.E.S.T program. We first think of the child and all the think we want to teach them, over 'coaching' them. We want to teach each child to love the game of soccer. We want to teach each child how to have fun with the soccer ball on their feet. We want to teach them the skills necessary to become a great soccer player in the future. BUT we also want to teach parent/coaches. We want to teach the fundamentals of coaching soccer and we want to project N.E.S. T's values to each player/parent/coach. We recognize the stresses of youth soccer and want N.E.S.T to provide support for all to become the best they can be.



“Who” We Are Coaching

A very important key to success in coaching youth soccer is remembering “who” we are coaching. In this case, we are coaching very young children, who for some, this might be the first time they have touched a ball, or played an organized sport.

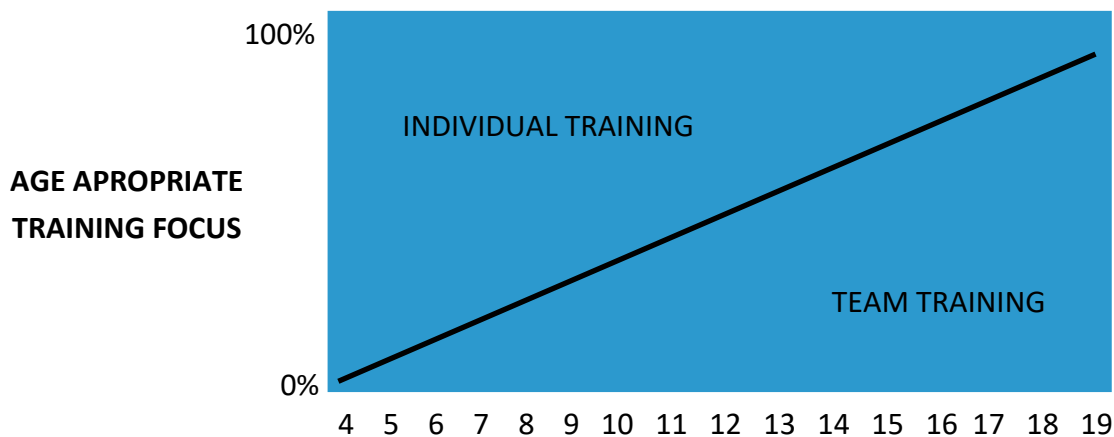
Why is it important to keep this in mind?

We cannot expect more from them than they are physically and mentally capable of. We need to keep in mind their physical and cognitive developmental levels. We cannot expect them to pay attention to 5 minute lectures, drills that do not have game components, etc. We also cannot expect them to be able to implement the skill you have just taught them. This will take practice and time. **Patience is key.**

Individual Focus vs. Team Focus

Something different about the N.E.S.T program vs. many other youth programs in the area is the focus on the individual rather than the team. Many other programs focus on the short-term wins versus long term development of the players. Winning is important yes, but is it more important than getting better at the game?

We want the players to be focusing on their own skills because at their age, that is all they care about. They do not understand the game of soccer yet, they want the ball and they want to score. We can preach passing and spreading out at this age until we are blue in the face, but the child wants the ball. So, we have decided to turn this into a positive. Let’s develop their individual skills. Let’s help them beat 3 defenders and score a goal.



“Who we coach reflects why we do this program”





U4/5 Curriculum—Week One

Objective: Dribbling- familiarization with different parts of foot (*inside/outside/laces*)

Coaching Points

Learning different parts of the foot and using them to dribble (emphasize “no big toe”)

Keeping the ball close while dribbling (little dribbles)

Don't let the kids put their hands on the soccer ball

Awareness- no running into other players

Ask them if they have ever played before and talk about the game of soccer by asking questions: Do you score points by throwing the ball into the goal? Do you use your hands? Do we use our feet? Emphasize Soccer is played with the **FEET** and explain different parts of the foot (show examples of dribbling with each different part & allow them to quickly try)

Activity #1 “Fetch”

How: Players gather around the coach. Coach asks them their name and then takes ball and plays it away from the group and ask them to dribble it back using different parts of the foot each time

Get to know your players names

Ask them personal questions before you throw it out to them (favorite food, favorite color, siblings, etc.)

To get more players involved- try 2 balls at once

Activity #2 “Body Parts”

This drill gets the kids to dribble the soccer ball and assist in their body balance. The kids will use different parts of their body to balance on the soccer ball.

How: On coach command the kids will dribble their ball around the area using the surface coach tells them to.

The coach shouts out a part of the body (e.g. foot, stomach, knee, forehead, etc.) the kids have to stop dribbling and put that part of their body on the ball.

Be creative with modifications and have fun!



Game: 3v3 Format, 3 Ten Minute Periods, 1 Minute Rest in-between.
No Restarts. Coaches put balls back into play as fast as possible so play continues.
Manipulate the game to help each kid find success.



U4/5 Curriculum—Week Two

Objective: Dribbling continued (higher focus on keeping the ball close when dribbling, but still keep different parts of the foot in mind)

Coaching Points

Keeping the ball close while dribbling (little dribbles)

Using different parts of the foot to dribble (emphasize “no big toe”)

Don't let the kids put their hands on the soccer ball

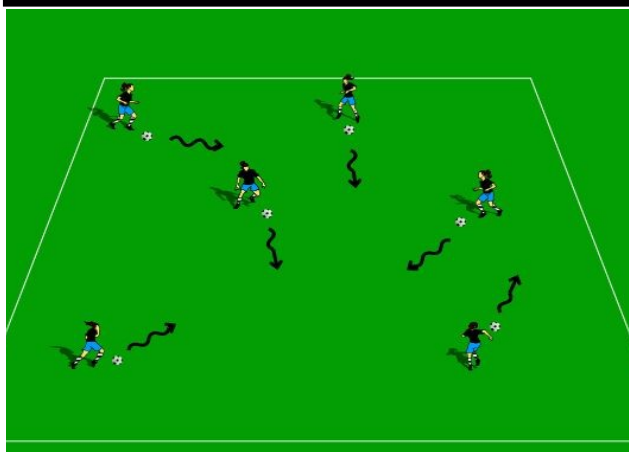
Awareness- no running into other players

Activity #1 “Walk the Dog”

How: Tell your players their ball is a dog. Now ask them to give their dog a name. Have some fun with this! Who can think of the silliest name for a dog? Now it's time to take the “dogs” for a walk (using different parts of the foot decided by coach). The coach will yell “Oh no, My dog got loose” and the players will kick their ball hard and chase it. But they need to be quick or the Dog Catcher (coach) will get their dog. Once the players have their ball again the Coach will tell the players to “walk their dog”Repeat several times

when the players are “walking their dogs” the ball should be close- don't want dog to get away

Progression: Dog catcher is looking to take dogs



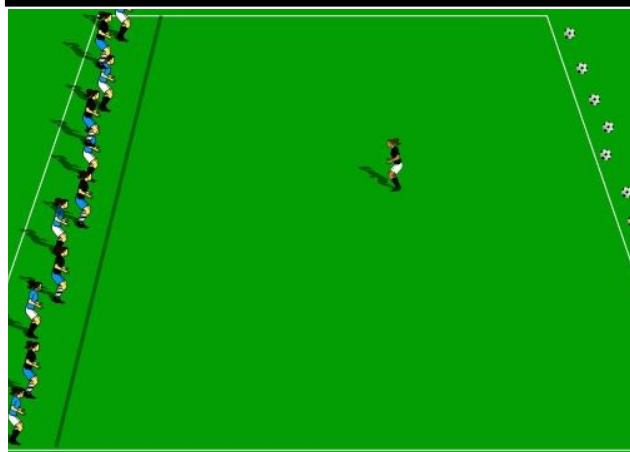
Activity #2 “Lost Dog”

How: Scatter the balls at one end of the field. Have the players line up along the end line of the opposite end.

On “GO” they run and find a lost dog (ball), but not their dog and dribble back and find the dogs owner and give it back, BUT watch out for the dog catcher (coach)!

Want to keep the ball close, otherwise the dog catcher can steal it

Progression: if their ball gets stolen by the dog catcher- they become a dog catcher



Game: 3v3 Format, 3 Ten Minute Periods, 1 Minute Rest in-between.
No Restarts. Coaches put balls back into play as fast as possible so play continues.
Manipulate the game to help each kid find success.



U4/5 Curriculum—Week Three

Objective: Dribbling and stopping the ball with the bottom of foot

Coaching Points

Controlling the ball by stopping it with the bottom of the foot (introduce that as another part of the foot)- Use “airplane wings” to gain balance

Keeping the ball close while dribbling (little dribbles)

Using different parts of the foot to dribble (emphasize “no big toe”)

Don't let the kids put their hands on the soccer ball

Awareness- no running into other players

Activity #1 “Dog Park”

How: Scatter cones in two different colors in a large playing area. In this example, I've used green and white cones. Now it's time to take the “dogs” for a walk in the dog park. Tell your players the white cones are lamp posts and the green cones are trees. To begin with, the dogs want to sniff every lamp post. This means players dribble and stop their ball at a white cone. Then: “It's raining! Get your dog under the ‘trees’!”. Now the players run with their ball and stop on the green cone.

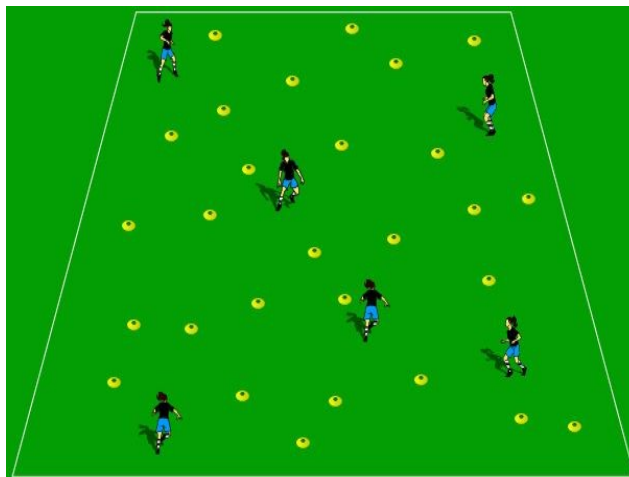
Be creative with progression ideas:

Ex. If you don't stop the ball with the

Activity #2 “Red Light, Green Light”

How: Players will dribble from one end of the field to the other when the Coach says “Green Light” and STOP their ball with the bottom of their foot when the Coach says “Red Light”. Go slow the first time and challenge them to go faster each time. If their ball gets away from them when they go to stop it with the bottom of the foot- they take 5 big steps back

No winner or loser when they get to the other side
- encourage them to keep the ball close to them so they can have more control when the go to stop the ball



Game: 3v3 Format, 3 Ten Minute Periods, 1 Minute Rest in-between.
No Restarts. Coaches put balls back into play as fast as possible so play continues.
Manipulate the game to help each kid find success.



U4/5 Curriculum—Week Four

Objective: Change of direction with pullback

Coaching Points

Controlling the ball by stopping it with the bottom of the foot and then pulling the ball back to change directions (pullback)

Keeping the ball close while dribbling (little dribbles)

Using different parts of the foot to dribble (emphasize “no big toe”)

Don't let the kids put their hands on the soccer ball

Awareness- no running into other players

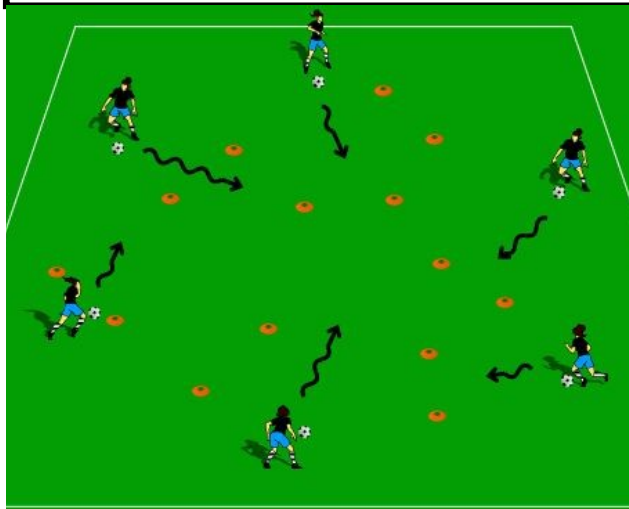
Activity #1 “Gates”

How: Set up multiple gates all over your practice area.

Introduce the pullback move. Have them dribble through every gate, do a pull back and then find a different gate. Give points out for number of gates they get through.

Have them always compete against themselves.

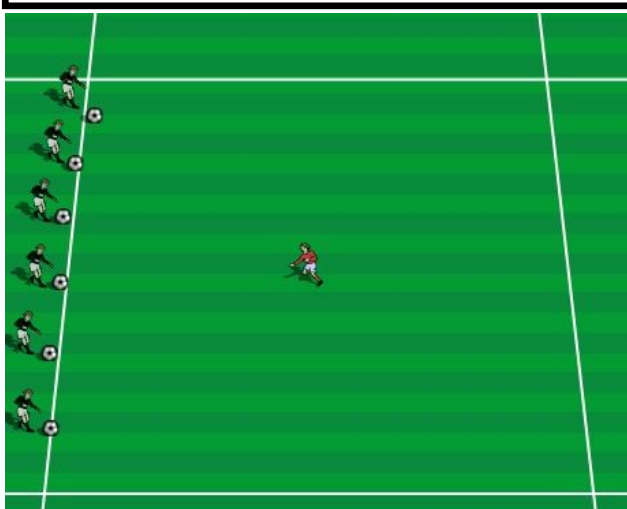
“Johnny you dribbled through 9 gates? Now try to get 10”



Activity #2 “Wrong Way Game”

How: Have the players line up along the end line of one end of the field. On “GO” they dribble to the other end to try and score by going across the line...but the coach at the other end starts yelling “Turn Around, You’re going the wrong way!” and the players use a pull back to turn around and go the other way...but when they start getting close you yell the same thing and they turn around and go the other way. After about 4/5 times let them score.

After a couple of rounds- allow a kid to be a coach and join the rest of the team dribbling and pulling back



Game: 3v3 Format, 3 Ten Minute Periods, 1 Minute Rest in-between.
No Restarts. Coaches put balls back into play as fast as possible so play continues.
Manipulate the game to help each kid find success.



U4/5 Curriculum—Week Five

Objective: Introduce striking a ball

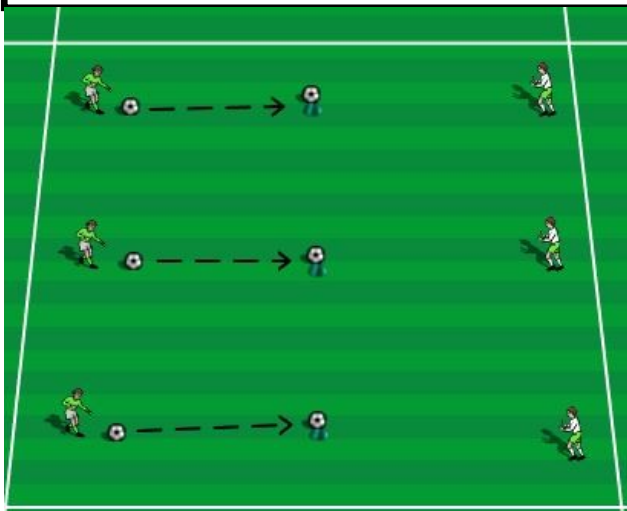
Week 5 Coaching Points

Using different parts of the foot to strike the ball- inside and laces (emphasize “no big toe”)

Planting a foot next to the ball with toe facing forward- then strike with other foot

Activity #1 “Battleship”

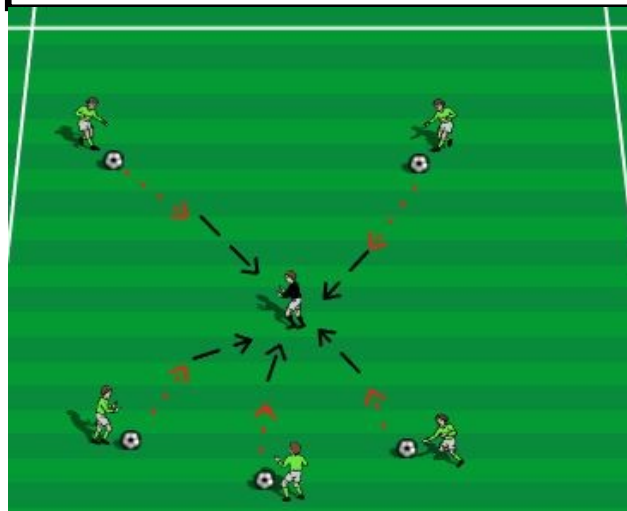
How: Demonstrate how to kick the ball and what part of the foot to use (Laces and inside of the foot....NO TOES). Player will kick the ball (as shown by the coach) and try and knock the ball off of the cone (Sink the BattleShip). They get a point each time they knock the ball off. Let them know that they do not have to kick the ball hard. Focus on using the Laces and kicking it straight. Demonstrate to them that the laces/inside part of the foot is flat compared to your pointed toe and exaggerate the miss-direction of the kick if you use the toes.



Activity #2 “Busy Bee’s”

How: Have the players “BUZZ” around like a bunch of bees. Make sure you pretend to hear the bees and begin saying that you don’t like bees. Have one of the Assistant coaches/ parent kick you with the ball and you fall down and yell “Ouch the bee stung me!” Be very dramatic and the kids will begin stinging you with their ball make sure you move around and stop frequently.

- You do not get stung if they use your toe to kick it at you



Game: 3v3 Format, 3 Ten Minute Periods, 1 Minute Rest in-between.
No Restarts. Coaches put balls back into play as fast as possible so play continues.
Manipulate the game to help each kid find success.



U4/5 Curriculum—Week Six

Objective: Striking a ball (continued), stopping the ball off of a pass

Week 6 Coaching Points

Using different parts of the foot to strike the ball- inside and laces (emphasize “no big toe”)

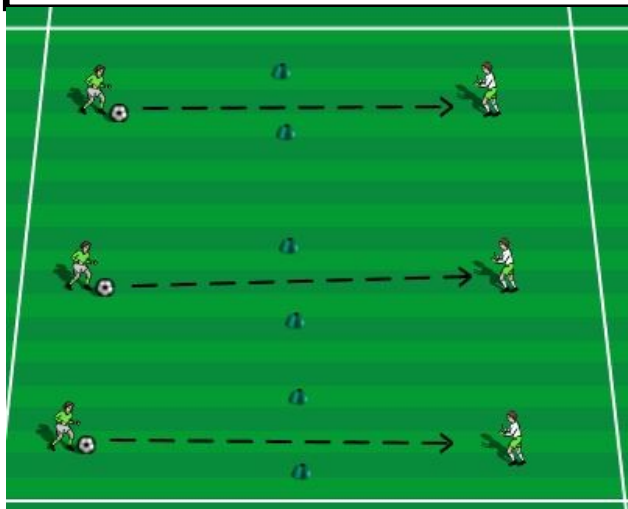
Planting a foot next to the ball with toe facing forward- then strike with other foot

Introduce how to stop a ball (heel down, toe up- 45- degree angle)

Activity #1 “Gate Passing”

How: Partner the players up, and have them lined up across from each other with a gate in between them. Have them kick the ball through the gates and partner stop the ball with the inside of their foot (heel down, toe up, 45- degree angle)

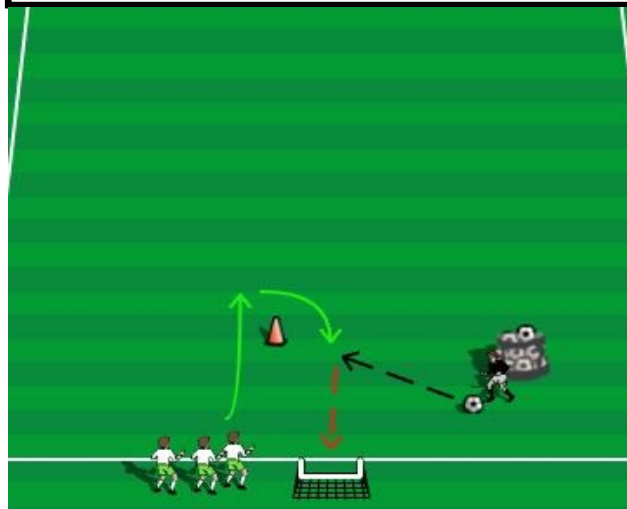
Challenge them to see how many passes in a row through the gate they can get



Activity #2 “From the Goal Shooting”

How: Have the players line up on one side of the goal. One at a time on your command, a player will run around a cone (about 10 yards from the goal). When they are rounding the cone, play a ball out to them. Have them control it with their foot, and shoot on goal.

Progression: Move cone closer- have them dribble around cone and then towards goal and then shoot



Game: 3v3 Format, 3 Ten Minute Periods, 1 Minute Rest in-between.
No Restarts. Coaches put balls back into play as fast as possible so play continues.
Manipulate the game to help each kid find success.

Adapting to the Demands of the Kids

Realities of Coaching Youth Soccer

#1... It will not look like soccer

If, as U4-6 soccer coaches, go into the season thinking we are going to experience a true soccer game we are setting ourselves up for a lot of frustration and disappointment. If we approach the season for what it is, spending time with the children, watching them run around, laugh while they work to develop skills to dribble, strike a ball, and improve coordination, then we can have a great time as coaches.

As adults we are going to the park thinking 'soccer', while the kids are going to the park thinking 'I get to see my friends and run around a lot'. We want to see the activity from a kid's perspective and teach and manage them within their perspective.

#2... Kids will find interests other than soccer during practice and games

Kids can come to a field and have a ball and a goal to score on, and coaches can talk about soccer until they are blue in the face, but this is no guarantee that the kids will be thinking about soccer the whole time they are there.

Coaches who recognize these realities, accept them and work soccer in along the way will enjoy their time with the kids much more. Coaches who resist accepting the reality of coaching very young players and who are not willing to adjust their practice plans to meet demands of their players will experience higher levels of stress.

Adapt, Adapt, Adapt

Importance of Adapting

Every single kid you will coach will be different. They will have different skill levels, different attention levels, different passion levels and the list goes on. What one kid loves could be what another kid dislikes.

At this young of an age, the kids will not adjust to you as a coach. They will not adjust themselves to a drill they don't find exciting. You will need recognize when this happens and adjust yourself and your practice plan- making yourself the best coach for that individual player or that individual group. You have to make the adjustments, not the kids.

How to be Adaptable

Eliminate the 'wrong' belief: For example, if you need to modify a drill for kids to get kids more engaged- do it! We give you the curriculum as a guideline for you. We would like you to follow it as much as possible, but will not penalize or tell you you're 'wrong' if you need to add a component to make it more engaging for your players.

Be open to change

Think big and be creative

Don't expect perfection

Accept multiple perspectives

Experiment and learn

Consider the bigger picture

“What one kid loves could be what another kid dislikes”