



**ONTARIO  
SOCCER**

EST. 1901



# Active Start Session Plan

For coaches of U4-U5 year-olds





# Ontario Soccer Player Development Model: The Station Concept



**The activities provided illustrate how stations can be used during Grassroots practices.**

**All sessions take a holistic approach to developing our youth. Each game and activity will focus on 4 main areas of the child's development; these include social/emotional, physical, psychological and also technical.**

**Total practice time 40 minutes as per the Recreational and Development Matrix.**

**Play. Inspire. Unite.**







# Ontario Soccer Player Development Model How it works



## Introduction

During the practice players will spend an allotted time at each station having fun, developing specific skills and qualities before moving onto the next station. By using station work we create an environment where players are continually motivated and challenged.

## Organization

If working with a larger group, organize players into groups of 6. Each station has a coach who leads that specific station for the session.

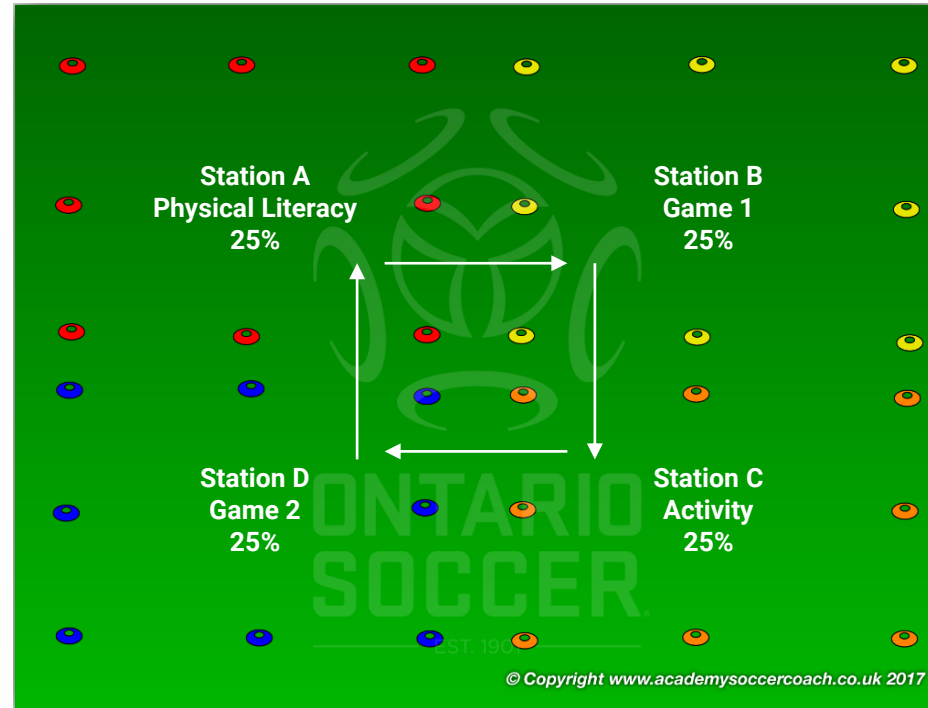
If working with a smaller group, simply move together through all 4 stations until all are complete.

## Procedure

Players rotate every 8 minutes. Provide a 2 minute break in between each station for water and to allow movement to the next station.

## Emphasis

In these examples one station focuses on Physical Literacy, two stations on movements with the ball or small sided games and the 4th station is focused around technique with decision making.



Timing	Area
Total Time: 40 4 x 8 minute Stations	20m x 20 m (x4)

Technical			Physical		
	U4	U5		U4	U5
Dribbling	1	1	Running Forward	1	1
Running with the ball	1	1	Running Backwards	1	1
Shooting	1	1	Jumping	1	1
Ball Control	3	2	Skiping	1	1
Passing	3	3	Hopping	1	1
Receiving	4	4	Bounding	2	2
Heading	4	4	Crawling	2	2
Shielding	4	4	Turning	2	2
Crossing	4	4	Falling / diving	3	2
Finishing	4	4	Twisting	2	2
1v1 Defending	4	4	Rolling	3	3
1v1 Attacking	4	4	Other Sports	1	1
Social			Psychological		
	U4	U5		U4	U5
Listening	2	2	Motivation	1	1
Co-operation	3	3	Self Confidence	1	1
Communication	1	1	Competitiveness	4	4
Sharing	3	3	Concentration	4	4
Problem-solving	3	3	Commitment	4	4
Decision-making	3	2	Self Control	3	3
Empathy	3	2	<b>Priority Key</b> High 1 Medium 2 Low 3 Not Applicable 4		
Patience	3	2			
Respect / discipline	2	2			
Fair play / honesty	3	2			

## Top Tip

Encourage the players to make decisions and have fun. When talking to the players, try crouching down so you are at eye level with them. Speaking to the players at eye level allows you to better connect with them.



# Active Start

## Physical Literacy

### The Nut Job



#### Organization

Players and parents start at any of the four coloured cones ('home'). Parents participate and encourage their child to try the various movements.

#### Procedure

Raccoon (coach) has stolen Surly the Squirrel's nuts (balls) and he needs help getting them back! He must get to his guitar (balls) but not before visiting every shop in the town square.

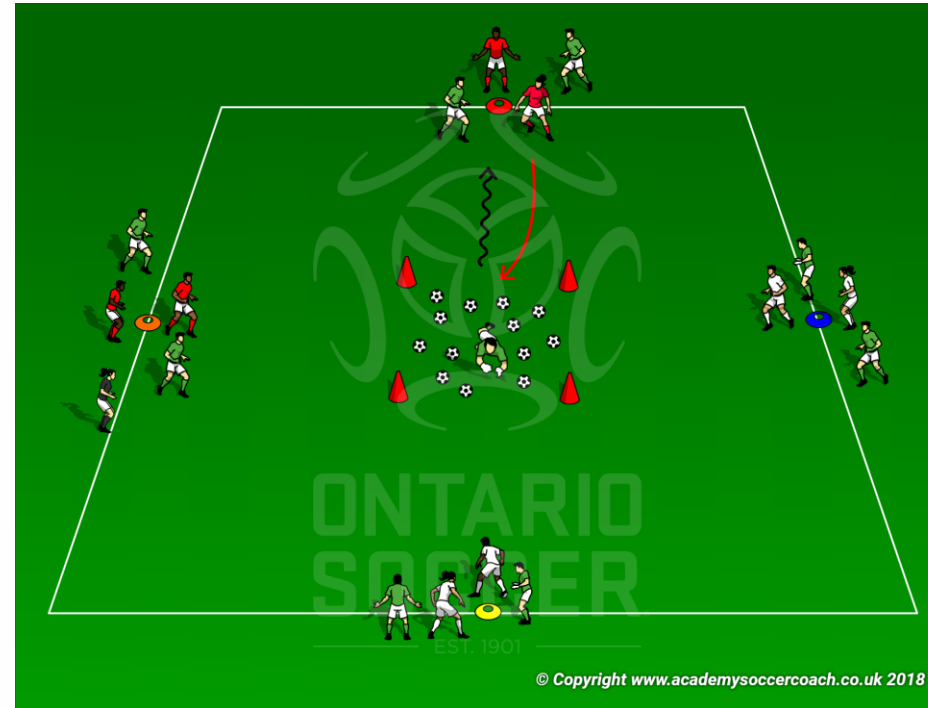
Players must sneak into Raccoon's cave (in the center) and take a nut back home. To sneak in without Raccoon catching them they must do a different fundamental movement (skipping, hopping, crawling, etc.). If Raccoon wakes up, they must not get tagged – home is safe and if they are tagged with a ball in hand, they must drop it and return home.

#### Emphasis

Creating a safe environment with decision-making and positive reinforcement

#### Progression

1. Players can dribble the ball back



Timing	Area
8 Minutes	20m x 20m

#### Objective

Players are able to be confident, safe and participate in the activities

#### Outcome

**All players** - will be able to join in and try some of the movements and skills

**Most players** - will be able to do a variety of moves and skills

**Some players** - will be able to do a variety of moves and skills and come up with their own

Technical / Tactical	Psychological
Ball Mastery Dribbling	Fun Being safe Decision making Awareness
Socio - Emotional	Physical
Problem Solving Communicating Listening	Agility Balance Co-Ordination

#### Top Tip

Don't be shy – sing the song or bring along a speaker/phone to set the tone with a bit of music. You can use this in any themed activity that the kids will relate to.



# Active Start

## Small Sided Game

### Backyard Soccer



#### Organization

Organize players into 2v2  
(1 player and a parent vs 1 player and a parent/guardian) Set up multiple times.

#### Procedure

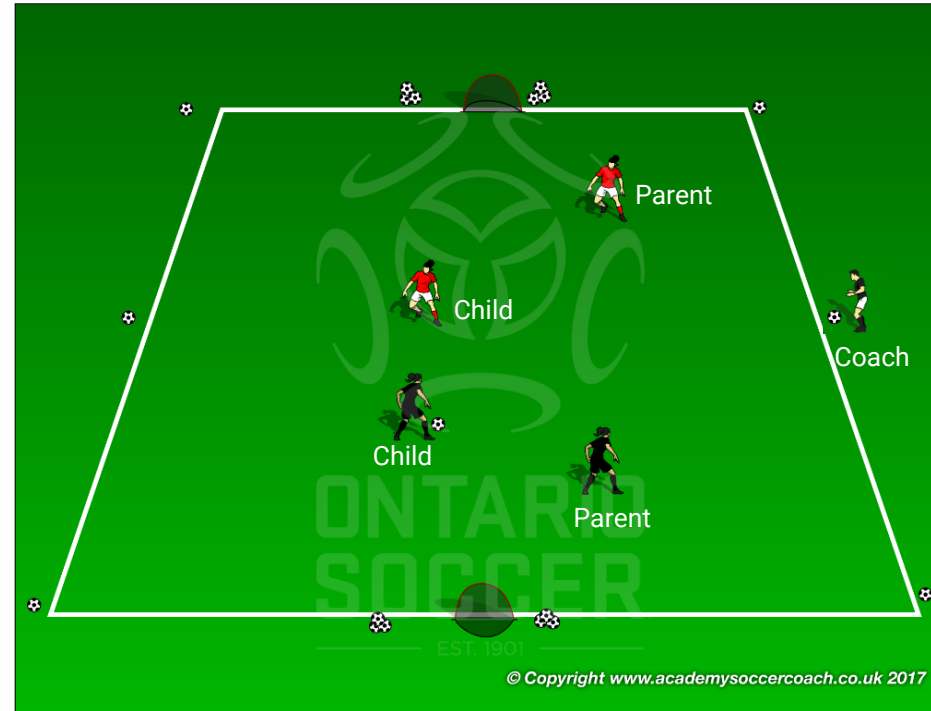
Child and parent/guardian play a 2v2 game. If the ball goes out, take the closest ball to keep the game moving. Parents / guardian should help the children as much as possible.

#### Emphasis

Free Play and FUN!

#### Progression

Serve in a second ball to allow players more opportunities to score



Timing	Area
8 Minutes	15m x 10m

#### Objective

Players are able to be confident, safe and participate in the activities

#### Outcome

**All players** - will be able to join in and try some of the movements and skills

**Most players** - will be able to do a variety of moves and skills

**Some players** - will be able to do a variety of moves and skills and come up with their own

Technical / Tactical	Psychological
Ball Mastery Dribbling Shooting	Fun Being safe Decision making
Socio - Emotional	Physical
Problem Solving Communicating Listening Celebrating Teamwork	Agility Balance Co-ordination

#### Top Tip

Players are not cognitively prepared to share (or pass) at this stage of development. Even when working with larger groups ensure each child has a toy (a ball). This is not only more developmentally appropriate as it is more enjoyable!



# Active Start

## Activity

### Nuts & Goals!



#### Organization

Players start in the “park” (end zone with balls). Parents participate and encourage their child to try the various movements.

#### Procedure

Winter is around the corner and Surly has been really lazy! Players can help him collect nuts (balls) for storage. Players collect a ball and from the ‘Park’ and dribble it towards any goal, shoot & score. Once they have put a ball in one of Surly’s hiding places (nets) they can go and get another ball.

Raccoon (coach) acts as a goalkeeper and tries to intercept/save the shots.

#### Emphasis

Creating a safe environment with decision-making and positive reinforcement

#### Progression

1. Parents (raccoons) can provide passive pressure
2. Parents and players switch roles



Timing	Area
8 Minutes	25m x 25m

#### Objective

Players are able to be confident, safe and participate in the activities

#### Outcome

**All players** - will be able to join in and try some of the movements and skills

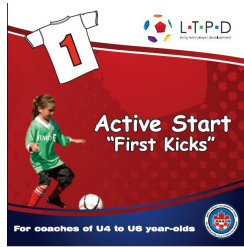
**Most players** - will be able to do a variety of moves and skills

**Some players** - will be able to do a variety of moves and skills and come up with their own

Technical / Tactical	Psychological
Ball Mastery Dribbling Shooting	Fun Being safe Decision making
Socio - Emotional	Physical
Problem Solving Communicating Listening Celebrating	Crawling Hopping Skipping Running Reaction

#### Top Tip

Understanding their bodies is an important skill going forward in life and anything we can do as community sport leaders to facilitate opportunities for children to move in different ways will have a long-term benefit – even if it isn’t soccer related!



# Active Start

## Small Sided Game

### 3v3 as Individuals



#### Organization

Players start in groups of 3 on either side of a grid with 3 goals on each end. Place balls around the grid.

#### Procedure

Players attempt to score on any of the 3 goals on the other side. When a ball is scored, or lost, players can get a new ball and play again.

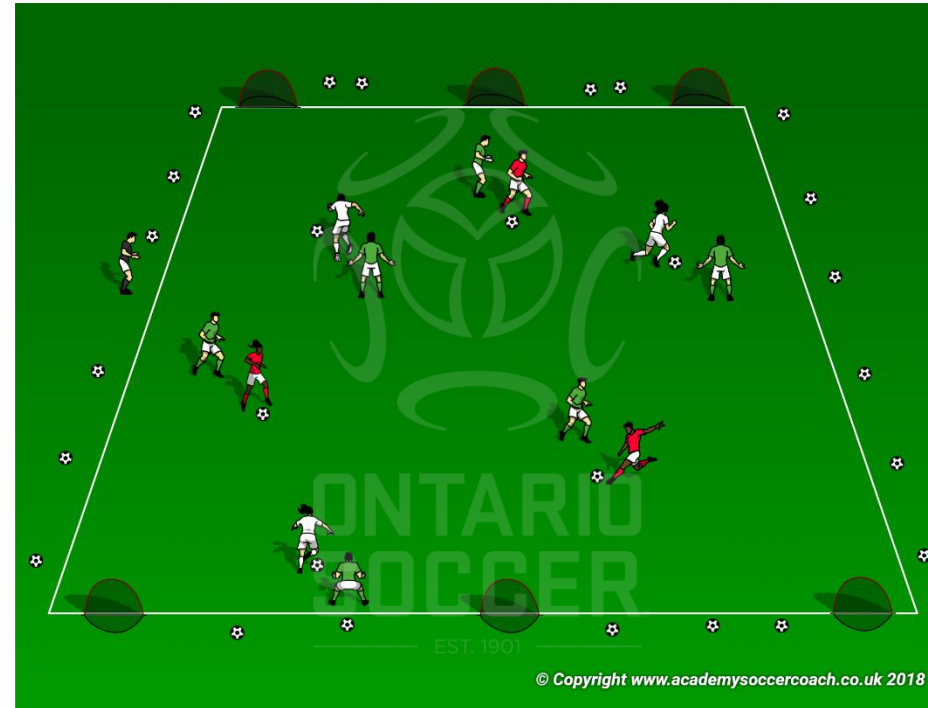
Opposition, passively, should be provided by the parents.

#### Emphasis

Creating a safe environment, positive reinforcement allowing the players to be creative and make decisions. Involving the parents and demonstration of the activity.

#### Progression

1. Encourage players to knock opponent's ball away all while dribbling their own
2. Parents act as goalkeepers.
3. Players can steal opponents ball after scoring their own



Timing	Area
8 Minutes	25m x 20m

#### Objective

Players are able to be confident, safe and participate in the activities

#### Outcome

**All players** - will be able to join in and try some of the movements and skills

**Most players** - will be able to do a variety of moves and skills

**Some players** - will be able to do a variety of moves and skills and come up with their own

Technical / Tactical	Psychological
Ball Mastery Dribbling Shooting	Fun Safety Confidence Creativity
Socio - Emotional	Physical
Celebrating Problem Solving Communicating	Agility Balance Co-Ordination

#### Top Tip

The parent/guardian is an integral part of the Active Start session. Try and engage them as well – let them try things with their child, give them specific tasks/targets so they feel valued and are encouraged to participate.



# Ontario Soccer Resources

## Coaches' Guides

- Game Organisation Guide
- Field Organisation Guide
- Festival Guide
- 8 Ways to Develop the Grassroots Game
- How does the Inclusive Programming Model work at your Soccer Club?
- Incorporating Physical Literacy in our Practices

## Grassroots Curriculum

- Active Start U4-U6 Brochure
- Active Start Workbook and Practice Plan
- Active Start U4-U6 (Curriculum)
- All other online Grassroots Practices

## Online Practice Videos

## Online Webinars

