

## U4 - U5 Practice Curriculum 2021

In these age groups, we want to focus on our fundamental movement skills as well as getting the involvement from parents. We will play some soccer games, but it will be primarily movement-skills-based sessions and making sure we develop the kids' athletic abilities. These are so important at this age to help develop agility, balance, and coordination. Even if the child does not go on to play soccer, developing these skills are important for encouraging an active, healthy lifestyle.

Parent involvement is so important as well. Kids love to show their parents what they can do and what they have learned and love to learn from their parents as well, mainly by copying. Parents do not need a soccer background to be involved. This is an amazing opportunity to play with them and strengthen your relationship. By playing with them in this way, not only do they have a lot of fun, but they begin to associate soccer with having fun which is the most important aspect of creating lifelong players.

We will be using size 1 soccer balls. The variety keeps things exciting for the kids and gives them different challenges. We will try to maintain one ball per player as much as possible.

Our sessions will be 45 minutes long, so we will not have too many changes of activity. We will be break it down into four segments as follows:

1. Animal Movements Warm Up (provided in this document) – 8 mins
2. Segment 1 – 10 mins
3. Segment 2 – 10 mins
4. Segment 3 – 10 mins
5. Clean up, debrief & goodbyes – 7 mins

\*timing includes water breaks. This is not a rigid time structure, adjust activity timings as needed. If kids are having fun, keep going for longer. If it is not working as you would like, move to the next activity.

This will give players plenty of opportunity to practice what they are being taught and maintain enjoyment levels throughout the whole session. Our activities will be repetitive so that the kids begin to learn the games as well.

During the scrimmages with these players, we will play 1v1 as much as possible, so each child receives as many touches of the ball as possible. We can double up on nets, so multiple games will be going into the same net. If we do play 2v2, the encouragement should still be placed on dribbling rather than passing. Sharing the ball is great, and we should not be tackling our own teammates, but we need to ensure that players are practicing dribbling the ball and moving with it themselves.

## Movement Skills

- Throwing
- Catching
- Running
- Jumping (two legs)
- Jumping (one leg to other), also called striding
- Jumping (height)
- Jumping (distance)
- Hopping
- Skipping
- Galloping
- Side stepping
- Climbing
- Crawling
- Kicking
- Punting (out of hands)
- Hitting (e.g., ball with bat)
- Dribbling
- Turning
- Rolling
- Landing
- Stopping
- Balance on one foot
- Balance walking on a line/beam

Additional resource: <https://activeforlife.com/activities/>

## Animals Warm Up

The idea behind this warm-up is to start off with fun, high energy and engaging the kids but also to get some of our key movement skills in. Coaches should get involved and be part of the fun with the kids as well as providing the example on how to do the movement if the kids don't know.

Important animals:

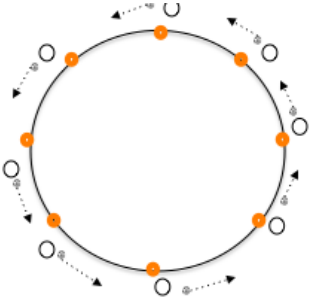

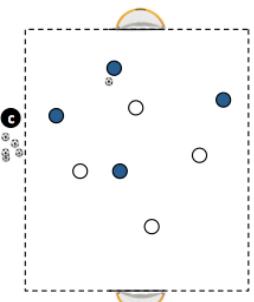
- Bunny – two footed hopping with bent knees standing up (hands like a bunny)
- Frog – on all fours, leaping and landing with bent knees
- Crab – moving sideways and with chest up on all fours
- Bear – moving controlled on all fours
- Giraffe – walking on tiptoes with arms stretched up high
- Horse – galloping
- Cheetah/Lion – go as fast as you can, don't bump into anyone!
- Flamingo – Finish the warm up with the flamingo by balancing on one leg, wings outstretched and then switch legs. This gets the kids slowed down and listening before you move into the next activity.

Fun animals – Give the kids some allowance to choose an animal (try to avoid doing the same movements over and over):

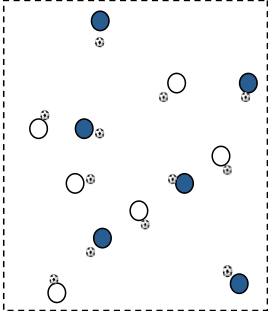
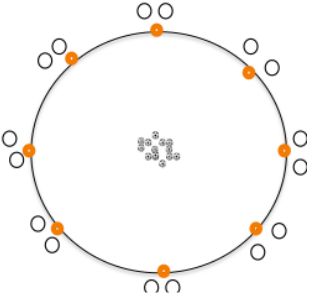
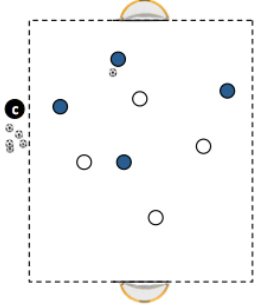
- Elephant – using an arm like a trunk
- Snake/worm/fish – wriggling along the ground (if it's dry)
- Whatever other animals they come up with!

Do each movement for approximately 30 seconds and have them pause in between movements by shouting 'STOP'. This way you have everyone's attention before starting the next movement.

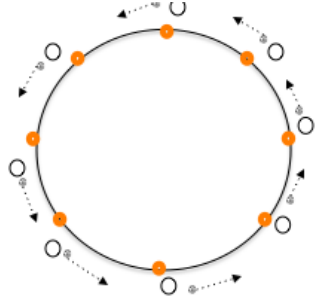
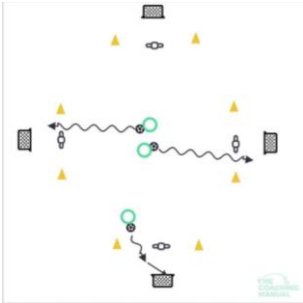
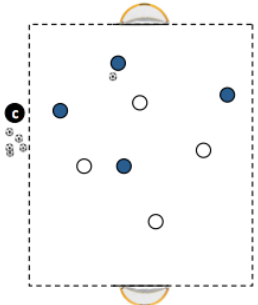
## Week 1

			
<p><b>Animals Warm Up (8 mins)</b></p>	<p><b>SPEED RACER-Dribbling for younger players (10 mins)</b>          Purpose : To provide a fun game where players can practice dribbling at speed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Create a large circle with cones.</li> <li>✓ Players find and stand next to Cone</li> <li>✓ On coach's whistle, the player race around the track and try to be the first one back to their cone.</li> <li>✓ Progression- tell players they can go in any direction. This will force them to keep their heads up and avoid collisions.</li> <li>✓ Progression- the coach shouts out a number. The player must dribble that many cones to the decided direction, turn around and return to their starting cone.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Destroyers and Construction Workers (10 min)</b>          Purpose: Soccer-specific ball and body awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Scatter 15-20 pylons or markers on the field throughout a 20 x 20-yard area. These pylons should be standing up straight</li> <li>✓ Divide the group into two equal teams. One group is designated the Destroyers and the other group the Construction Workers</li> <li>✓ On the coach's "GO", the Destroyers attempt to tip over the pylons with their hands, while the Construction Workers attempt to repair the pylons by standing them back up</li> <li>✓ Set a time for this activity and at the end count the number of pylons that the destroyers have knocked down, then allow the teams to switch roles</li> <li>✓ After each group has had an opportunity being both a Construction Worker and a Destroyer, reverse their roles again. This time they should all have a soccer at their feet at all times, stopping the ball (foot on top) before tipping or fixing.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Scrimmage (10 mins)</b></p> <p>Scrimmage 1v1 or 2v2 – parents encouraged to be involved as 'referee' or teammate/opponent for the younger kids</p>

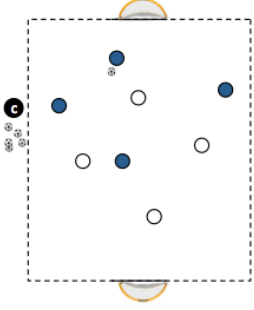
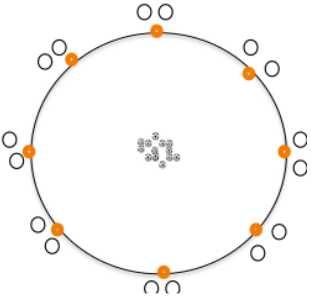
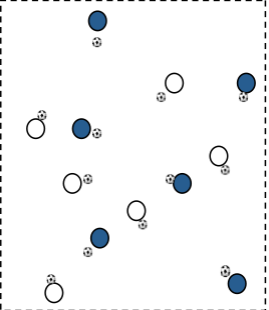
## Week 2

			
<p><b>Animals Warm Up (8 mins)</b></p>	<p><b>Learning To Dribble Game (10 min)</b>          Purpose : To get players smiling, sweating and to introduce dribbling with different parts of the feet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Everyone with a ball and is inside half of the field in a small area</li> <li>✓ Finally, have players focus on using all the available space to dribble their ball so that collisions are avoided</li> </ul> <p>??? Ask the players to tell you the parts of the foot that can be used to dribble the ball</p> <p><u>Skipping with the Ball</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The players assume a stance behind the ball with one foot forward and one foot back</li> <li>✓ They rock/skip back and forth from front foot to back foot without touching the ball</li> <li>✓ They then begin to move around their area while touching the ball as they skip forward with the inside and outside of the front foot</li> <li>✓ It is important that they touch the ball every time they place their front foot on the ground</li> <li>✓ Ask the player to make the ball move from side to side by getting their foot around either side of the ball</li> </ul>	<p><b>Squirrels and Nuts Game (10 min)</b>          Purpose: Soccer-specific body/ball management including dribbling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Divide players (the squirrels) into four equal groups (using colored pinnies or by the colors of their shorts or socks or hats, no hats)</li> <li>✓ Each group is to stand in one corner of half a soccer field (the nest)</li> <li>✓ Soccer balls (the nuts) are placed in the middle of the area</li> <li>✓ On the coach's command squirrels scamper around the area</li> <li>✓ When coach calls, "Feeding time!" squirrels try to collect all nuts and bring them back to their nest (by dribbling one ball at a time)</li> <li>✓ Squirrels can also steal nuts from other nests but are not allowed to stop other squirrels from taking the nuts/tackling each other</li> </ul>	<p><b>Scrimmage (10 mins)</b></p> <p>Scrimmage 1v1 or 2v2 – parents encouraged to be involved as 'referee' or teammate/opponent for the younger kids</p>

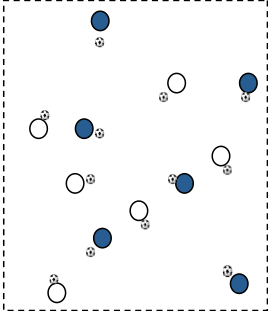

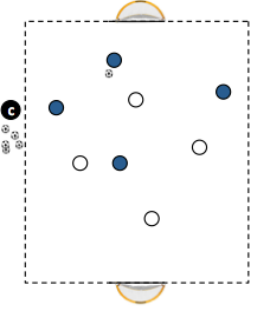
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<p><b>Animals Warm Up (8 mins)</b></p>	<p><b>SPEED RACER-Dribbling for younger players (10 mins)</b>          Purpose : To provide a fun game where players can practice dribbling at speed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Create a large circle with cones.</li> <li>✓ Players find and stand next to Cone</li> <li>✓ On coach's whistle, the player race around the track and try to be the first one back to their cone.</li> <li>✓ Progression- tell players they can go in any direction. This will force them to keep their heads up and avoid collisions.</li> <li>✓ Progression- the coach shouts out a number. The player must dribble that many cones to the decided direction, turn around and return to their starting cone.</li> </ul>	<p><b>BEAT THE DEFENDER GAME (10 mins)</b></p> <p>Purpose: to encourage players to stay on the ball and try to evade defenders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Set up 4 nets with a wide gate in front of each of them. Set up a small square "home base" in the middle.</li> <li>✓ Players dribble their balls through the gates, past the defender (who must stay on the line), before scoring into the net. All players go at the same time.</li> <li>✓ Once they have scored, they collect their ball and try to score on another defender/net</li> <li>✓ Coaches start as the defenders and constantly remind the players to run past them before shooting. Defenders will passively try to stop the attackers getting through.</li> </ul> <p>Progression: allow each player the opportunity to be a defender as well</p>	<p><b>Scrimmage (10 mins)</b></p> <p>Scrimmage 1v1 or 2v2 – parents encouraged to be involved as 'referee' or teammate/opponent for the younger kids</p>

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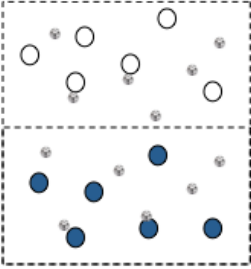
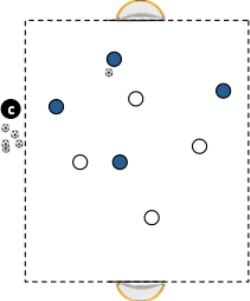
			
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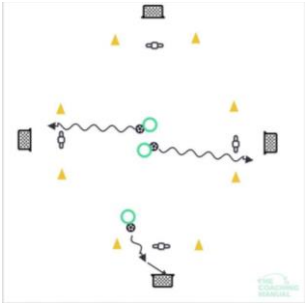
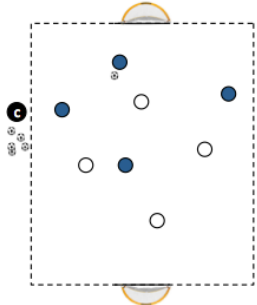
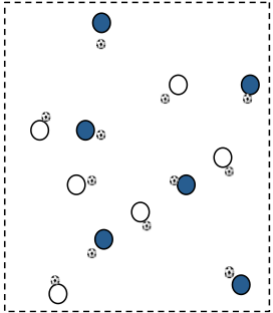
			
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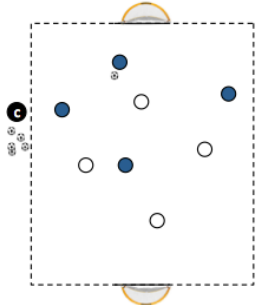
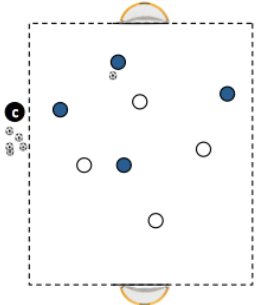
## Week 6

			
<p><b>Animals Warm Up (8 mins)</b></p>	<p><b>Pirates Game (10 min)</b>          Purpose: To help players learn to protect the ball when it is in their personal space as well as to make good use of general space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ With the ball standing still:</li> <li>✓ Two goal lines are established about 1/4 a field apart</li> <li>✓ Most of the players stand spread along one goal line with a ball except for one player (start with a coach)</li> <li>✓ One player stands at the other goal line without a ball and is referred to as the pirate (should make lots of pirate noises-ARRHHH!)</li> <li>✓ On the coach's signal all dribblers try to get their ball safely to the other goal line</li> <li>✓ The pirate tries to kick the ball away from as many dribblers as possible</li> <li>✓ If this happens, they become pirates too</li> <li>✓ The last person or two with a ball become the new pirates for the next game: give everyone a chance to start as a pirate</li> </ul>	<p><b>Clean Up Your Yard (10 min)</b>          Purpose: To practice kicking, throwing and working together with other players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Using cones place a center line in the middle of your field, separating it into two halves</li> <li>✓ Put half of the players plus coaches/parents on one side of the field</li> <li>✓ Every player / participant begins with a ball</li> <li>✓ When the coach says "Clean Up Your Yard", players will pass the balls on their side of the field to the other side of the field thus cleaning up their yard while messing up their neighbour's yard.</li> <li>✓ Players should be encouraged to keep the passes on the ground</li> </ul> <p>Winners and losers not important</p>	<p><b>Scrimmage (10 mins)</b></p> <p>Scrimmage 1v1 or 2v2 – parents encouraged to be involved as 'referee' or teammate/opponent for the younger kids</p>

## Week 7

			
<p><b>Animals Warm Up (8 mins)</b></p>	<p><b>BEAT THE DEFENDER GAME (10 mins)</b></p> <p>Purpose: to encourage players to stay on the ball and try to evade defenders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Set up 4 nets with a wide gate in front of each of them. Set up a small square “home base” in the middle.</li> <li>✓ Players dribble their balls through the gates, past the defender (who must stay on the line), before scoring into the net. All players go at the same time.</li> <li>✓ Once they have scored, they collect their ball and try to score on another defender/net</li> <li>✓ Coaches start as the defenders and constantly remind the players to run past them before shooting. Defenders will passively try to stop the attackers getting through.</li> </ul> <p>Progression: allow each player the opportunity to be a defender as well</p>	<p><b>Scrimmage (10 mins)</b></p> <p>Scrimmage 1v1 or 2v2 – parents encouraged to be involved as ‘referee’ or teammate/opponent for the younger kids</p>	<p><b>SHARKS AND MINNOWS (10 mins)</b></p> <p>Purpose: Encourage players to protect the ball, stay on it and not kick it away.</p> <p>Each player has a ball inside a medium square.</p> <p>Designate one or two ‘sharks’, everyone else is a ‘minnow’. Coaches start as sharks to show how it’s done.</p> <p>The minnows must protect their baby (the ball) from the shark, who is trying to ‘eat’ their baby by kicking it out of the square (ocean)</p> <p>If a minnow’s baby gets eaten, they must run around a cone before joining as a shark (explained as getting stronger and seeking revenge).</p> <p>Last player remaining starts next round as a shark, give everyone the chance to be a shark.</p>

## Week 8

			
<p><b>Animals Warm Up (8 mins)</b></p>	<p><b>Pirates Game (10 min)</b>          Purpose: To help players learn to protect the ball when it is in their personal space as well as to make good use of general space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ With the ball standing still:</li> <li>✓ Two goal lines are established about 1/4 a field apart</li> <li>✓ Most of the players stand spread along one goal line with a ball except for one player (start with a coach)</li> <li>✓ One player stands at the other goal line without a ball and is referred to as the pirate (should make lots of pirate noises-ARRHHH!)</li> <li>✓ On the coach's signal all dribblers try to get their ball safely to the other goal line</li> <li>✓ The pirate tries to kick the ball away from as many dribblers as possible</li> <li>✓ If this happens, they become pirates too</li> <li>✓ The last person or two with a ball become the new pirates for the next game: give everyone a chance to start as a pirate</li> </ul>	<p><b>Scrimmage (10 mins)</b></p> <p>Scrimmage 1v1 or 2v2 – parents encouraged to be involved as 'referee' or teammate/opponent for the younger kids</p>	<p><b>Scrimmage (10 mins)</b></p> <p>Scrimmage 1v1 or 2v2 – parents encouraged to be involved as 'referee' or teammate/opponent for the younger kids</p>