

Kindergarten and 1st Grade Practice Ideas

Alexander Soccer Club

General

1. All Preschool and Kindergarten practice ideas can be used at older age group. Tweak to fit your team.
2. Practices should generally last an hour, 1 hour and 15 minutes max
3. Take water breaks as needed. Best break times are transitions between activities.
4. Every player has a ball that they are responsible for throughout practice.
5. Try to minimize standing in lines and having kids waiting to do things.
6. It works well to have the coach(es) and/or players demonstrate and participate in activities.
7. Try to build practice around a general focus – dribbling, passing, shooting, etc. Tell players what the focus is for the day and the things they need to focus on.
8. Build practice off of A,B,C,D method – note lots of B and C activities apply to both
 - a. Warm-up and some skills building
 - b. Skill building (trapping, dribbling to goals, cones, hit the coach with the ball, etc)
 - c. Game-like scenarios (1v1, scrimmage, gate dribbling as a competition)
 - d. Scrimmage or small sided games
 - e. When appropriate and time allows, finish practice with a game.

Gate dribbling (A, B)

1. Setup a box with a boundary (20ft x 20ft). Place many gates (two cones a few feet apart) inside the box.
2. Each player dribbles through the gates in all directions. Players try to dribble through as many gates as possible. Use the same types of dribbling as mentioned above.
3. Go for 1-2 minutes, give 30 second rest while giving tips/suggestions/focus points. Repeat no more than 5 times.
4. To finish, have players count how many they go through in 30-60 seconds. Repeat, have them try to get more.

Dribbling/ shooting small goals (A,B)

1. To set-up place sets of two cones a few feet apart (you can also use Pugg goals) on opposite ends. You do not need to define boundaries.
2. Throw or kick one ball out and have the kids run to it. The first kid to the ball is on offense the second is on defense. If the defender wins the ball he/she tries to score or pass the ball up the sideline.
3. You can have multiple players on the field playing at the same time.
4. You can also try this with 1 v 1 or 2 v 1

Trapping (B)

1. Divide team into half. Groups go ~20 yards from coaches and face them. Separate groups by ~15yds.
2. Coaches have all the balls. Coaches serve balls by kicking or throwing. Mix up the distribution low and high.
3. Players trap the ball and dribble it back near the coach and pass it into a Pugg goal, then return to the line.
4. Focus points – Get body behind the ball. Move to ball, do not wait for it. Players cushion the ball with foot, chest, thigh, etc. to get control and keep it close. Quickly get under control and dribble.

Throw-in drills (B)

1. Since this is the first time learning a throw-in restart, start with overhead throws between a pair of players 10-15 feet apart. Both feet must stay on ground, throws must come from over the head with both hands.
2. Advance to throwing to feet, receiver focuses on trapping the ball, thrower focuses on distance of throw.
3. Progress to simple pattern play, player receives a throw and passes to other players.

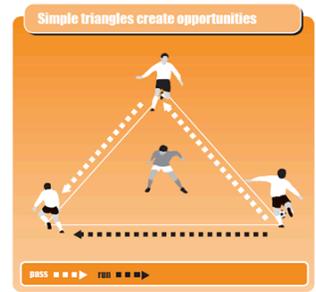
Soccer golf (B or game)

1. Have a player kick (or coach) a ball out in open space (or place cones).
2. The other players take turns kicking his/ her ball as close to the other ball as possible.
3. Using multiple “holes” will reduce congestion and amount of time kids are in line/waiting their turn.

Sharks and Minnows (B, C)

1. Setup a box with cones every several feet ~20ft x ~40ft (adjust size as needed).
2. Two kids "sharks" (can progress to one kid) try to take the ball away from the others "minnows" as they dribble around the box.
3. The minnows are "out" when they dribble out of the box or a shark kicks the ball out of the box.
4. You can also have the minnows swim from one side of the box to the other while the sharks take the ball.
5. When a player loses the ball he/ she becomes a shark.

6. Minnows learn to protect the ball with their body position, how to change direction to and how to change speeds to avoid sharks. Sharks learn to take the ball away from the minnows, how to use the box to their advantage, and how to defend as a team.



Triangle Passing (B, C)

1. Set three kids up in a triangle. The kids pass to each other.
2. Triangles are the simplest form players can take in the game to maintain possession. In games, players should look to move to support each other and form triangles.
3. You can add a 4th player as a defender. Rotate the defender every few minutes, or if the defender steals the ball he/she switches with the last person to pass the ball.

Square Passing (B, C)

1. Set the sets of three kids up in squares (10 feet per side). One corner is left open. The players form a triangle.
2. The ball should be at the corner of the square OPPOSITE the open corner.
3. Player passes to one of the other two. The player that did not receive the pass moves to the open corner to make a new triangle and be ready for a pass.
4. Players focus on moving to form triangles.

Group passing (B, C)

1. Put the players in groups of 2 to 4.
2. Throw, kick or punt the ball a good distance out the field (~20-30 yards).
3. The players return the ball passing it back and forth.
4. Challenges include - Each player must pass the ball X times. Team must pass the ball X times.
5. They can finish with a shoot on a goal, Pugg goal or making a pass to the coach.

Monkey in the middle (C)

1. Put the players in a circle (use center circle or set up ~30 feet in diameter)
2. Have one player be the monkey and try to steal the ball. Players on outside pass the ball to maintain possession.
3. You can add more monkeys as needed, no more than 3.
4. Monkeys can be in the middle for so many minutes or until he/she steals the ball.

Corner kicks (C)

1. Dedicate minimal time to practicing corners. Instruct players to “shoot” the ball into the penalty box. Aim for the area between the penalty spot and the top of the goalie box.

Shooting (shoot and save) (C or game)

1. Place the balls on one side of the goal. One coach will serve ball towards the penalty spot.
2. Players are lined up in middle of field approximately 20 yards from goal.
3. One player starts in goal.
4. Serve a ball to first player in line and that player shoots the ball first time (no trapping).
 - a. If the shot goes in, the player automatically stays in the game.
 - b. If the shot misses and the shooter saves the next shot, the player remains in the game.
 - c. If the shot misses and the next person scores, the first player is out.
5. After shot, the player becomes goalie. After playing goalie, the player is either out or goes to back of the line.

Scrimmage/Small sided games – 3v3, 4v4, 5v5 (C or D)

1. Set up small goals or use Pugg Goals.
2. Set up a small field (~15yd x ~25yd).
3. Play to a set number of goals or time period.
4. Variation – play a full field scrimmage with another team practicing at same time.

Some books to consider. These were Kindle books, but may be available in paperback.

“U6-U8 Soccer Coaching Guide” by Wesley Langdon

“20 Youth Soccer Practices” by Scott Carlson

“The Soccer Academy: 140 Overload Games and Finishing Practices” by Michael Beale

“Youth Soccer Drills & Practices: 20 pre-planned training sessions plus drill bible”

US Youth Soccer website also has a free online resource called the US Soccer Player Development Guidelines. You can find countless ideas through Google and Youtube. You can also contact the soccer club for additional ideas.