

New Zealand Football Player Development Model

AGE Group	Early Childhood Under 6 years	Middle Childhood 6 to 8 years	Late Childhood 9 to 12 years	Early Teenage 13 to 15 years	Late Teenage 16 to 19 years
Basic Concepts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing fundamental movements 2. Unstructured play 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on movement & coordination training 2. Basic football techniques dribbling, passing, shooting 3. Fun play 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extension of technical training, 2. Skill training 1v1 to small group tactics, 3. Basic tactical training 7v7 to 9v9 4. Football specific movement training 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advanced Technical & Skill training 2. Position specific training 3. Group and Team Tactics Training 4. Conditioning 	
	General Development <i>Play & Movement</i>	Primary Development <i>Explore & Learn</i> <i>Stage 1</i>	Intermediate Development <i>Practice & Learn</i> <i>Stage 2</i>	Advanced Development <i>Compete & Perform</i> <i>Stage 3</i>	

Understanding the NZF Player Development Model

Background

The practice and competition that children are exposed to must reflect their developmental needs. To support the effective planning of age appropriate practice programmes throughout NZ, NZF have created a player development model that divides junior and youth football into four basic levels, each with its own objectives. These levels provide all clubs with a clear and basic structure for youth training.

Level 1: General Development 'Play and Fundamental Movement' (age 6 and under)

The main focus is on developing and training a broad repertoire of movements/motor skills. Developing movement skills applicable to any sport.

Level 2: Primary Development 'Explore and Develop Football FUNdamentals' (age 6 to 8 approx)

In line with physical development the main focus here is coordination training. This is the foundation for the development of football-specific technical/tactical elements (ability to play). At the same time, players learn the rudiments of basic techniques like shooting, dribbling and passing.

Level 3: Intermediate Development 'Practice & Learn' (age 8 to 15 approx)

Here the initial focus is on individual training (1v1 play). Then building into basic tactics: covering space, getting open and showing for passes, group (not team)

tactics. Players learn specific techniques systematically through motivating and competitive (but fun) practices. Training objectives and methods must accommodate the affects borne out of the on-set of puberty.

Level 4: Advanced Development 'Compete and Perform' (age 16 to 19 approx)

The focus on this stage is to refine positional skills and needs and link them to the needs of the team. Whilst technical development is still important, preparing for and managing competition is stressed.

What does it mean for me?

In order for players to reach their potential, they must experience age appropriate training and competitions. If players skip key developmental levels they are unlikely to reach their potential. For example if a child misses on activities that develop their general coordination, they will be unable to maneuver their bodies as they wish resulting in low technique and low agility. Or if the child experiences a competitive environment that has too many players they will not develop good decision making and problem solving skills let alone good feel for the ball as a result of minimum touches.

The key message for each of us coaches is; know what the content of your training and game day environments should include for the benefit of your players. All of the New Zealand Coaching courses are now designed to meet the needs of the 'Kiwi' coach and the needs of the players they are coaching. The resources each coach gets with the course is age related and designed to meet the developmental stage of your players. For more information on the course check out www.aucklandfootball.org.nz or contact Aaron McFarland 579 0705 extension 7 or aaron@aucklandfootball.org.nz.