



Characteristics of U8 Children

Psychomotor Development

- Skeletal system is still growing; growth plates are near joints, thus injuries to those areas merit special consideration.
- Cardiovascular system is less efficient than an adult's; a child's heart rate peaks sooner and takes longer to recover to full resting rate.
- Temperature regulation system is less efficient than adults; children elevate their core body temperature more quickly with activity and take longer to cool down than adults.
- There is perceivable improvement in pace and coordination from U6 to U8 however the immaturity of a U8's physical ability is obvious.

Cognitive Development

- Concrete operational stage of cognitive development.
- Limited ability to attend to more than one task at a time; the simple task of controlling the ball demands most of the attention capacity, thereby leaving little or no capacity for making additional decisions.
- Concept of time and space relationship is just beginning to develop and will be limited by capacity to attend to multiple tasks.
- Limited experience with personal evaluation; effort is synonymous with performance, "if I try hard, then I performed well" regardless of the actual performance.
- Beginning to categorize information; some relationships that "do" exist are not recognized and some relationships that "do not" exist are assumed.

Psychosocial Development

- Self-concept and body image are beginning to develop; very fragile.
- Great need for approval from adults such as parents, teachers and coaches. They like to show individual skills.
- Easily bruised psychologically by both peers and adults; negative comments carry great weight.
- Like to play soccer because it is "fun"; intrinsically motivated.
- Their universe is expanding from home to the neighborhood.
- True playmates emerge with the inclination toward partner activities.
- Team identity is limited; "I play on Coach Bob's team" or "I play on the Tigers" - club league concepts are non-existent.
- There is desire for social acceptance; they want everybody to like them.
- The influential person is most likely their father or significant parent.

* Characteristics were re-printed from the US Youth Soccer National Youth License

