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# Kicking Across North Carolina

## Three and Four Year Olds' Coaching Curriculum

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### INTRODUCTION

The Kicking Across North Carolina program is designed to provide an age appropriate soccer experience for 3 and 4-year-old children. This introductory program supports associations and clubs in their effort to establish a foundation for the development of the 3 and 4-year-old player. This age specific, imagination approach, is built around the introduction and development of the locomotion skills required to play the game.

Most children that are 3 and 4 years of age do not have their core locomotor skills sufficiently developed to play the game, that is why the focus of the program, is the development of those skills. Through fun games and activities, the program develops balance, running, jumping, turning, hand eye coordination and spatial awareness, all essential to allow the young player to eventually learn and enjoy the game.

### USING THE PROVIDED CURRICULUM

“When you fail to plan, you plan to fail”. Use the provided training curriculum as a guidance for your season. This plan has been designed by experienced coaches and is proven itself to be developmentally appropriate.

### TRY TO ELIMINATE THE THREE “L’S” IN TRAINING

Eliminating lines, laps and lectures. Create activities (not drills) that ensures that all players are active. Create a flow to the session by not talking too much and only stopping an activity when absolutely necessary. These coachable moments should be chosen carefully. You either stop an entire activity to explain to the entire group, or you leave the activity running and address an issue with an individual player. You can use the Freeze method (stop an activity in the moment of play), but the best time to explain and show is at a natural stoppage of the game/activity.

### TRAINING AND GAME WARM-UP

Warm-ups should be interactive, engaging, geared towards the upcoming activities and most of all fun! This means, no lines and no long speeches from coaches. Choose activities during your warm-up that do not need long explanations, conduct activities that your players know. This eliminates waiting and idle time, idle time is counter-productive to a warm-up. WATER BREAKS ARE YOUR BEST FRIEND. Give the players a water break between each activity.

### GENERAL COACHING/TALKING POINTS

As coaches we are facilitators. You try to create the perfect environment for our youth soccer players to prosper. This means that we are guiding the players in the direction you have planned for them. The proper environment should encourage the players to start thinking independently, that the players start thinking about the game and that they take ownership. A direct result of this approach is that the coach should ask questions to the players instead of placing a demand. This coaching method is called: “Guided Discovery”. With guided discovery, the coach puts the players in learning situations in which they have to come up with the answers to the problems. Example of a guided question: “When dribbling the soccer ball, why is it best to keep the soccer ball close to you?”

### GENERAL U4 WARM-UP ACTIVITIES:

Each training session within the curriculum is designed with an activity, However, here are some additional warm-up activities for this age group. (Tag) activities without and with the ball:

- Cops and Robbers
  - Tail Tag
  - Sharks and Minnows
  - Body Parts
  - Kick the Coach
  - Red Light, Green Light
  - Everyone’s It
  - Hospital Tag
  - Ball Fetch
  - I can do this, can you?
- \*Stretching at this age group is not necessary.



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## SPRING CURRICULUM FOR 3 & 4 YEAR OLDS OUTLINE

### SESSION FOCUS

Week	Skill
<b>1</b>	<b>Locomotor Skills – Walk, Jump, Run, Skip, Slide, Gallop</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Locomotor Skills – Walk, Jump, Run, Skip, Slide, Gallop</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Body Awareness</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Spatial Awareness</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Jumping and Landing</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Pathways and Directions</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Cooperative Play</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Free Play Day!</b>

### ORGANIZATION

#### Session Structure

Sessions per week	1
Players to coach ratio	3:1
Session time	30 – 40 minutes

#### **Equipment needed:**

- Hula hoops
- Polyspots
- Soccer balls
- Tall cones & Mini cones
- Noodles or jump ropes

**Suggestion:** Read training sessions prior to the season. On the day of the training session, lay out the entire session in advance on the playing space provided to create smooth transitions.

