



Starting a Soccer in Schools Program

The Washington Youth Soccer Soccer in Schools program helps member Clubs and Associations connect with local schools, physical education teachers, and students to introduce soccer to all kids. Soccer in Schools, through the In-Class and After-School programs, gives Clubs/Associations the opportunity to support their community, create local partnerships and, most importantly, introduce school-aged youth to soccer and their local Club/Association.

The Soccer in Schools program aims to support the state learning standards for youth by teaching students about the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle through the enjoyment of playing soccer.

Program Options

In-Class Program: In a Physical Education classroom setting, the In-Class Program pairs soccer education with topics such as fitness, nutrition, and social awareness for a rounded educational experience. The In-Class program engages students in discussions on health around an easily relatable and fun topic: soccer!

After-School Program: The After-School Program is a soccer specific, short-term after-school program where students are exposed to the basic skills of soccer such as passing, dribbling and shooting. This program focuses on kids having fun and exercising through playing soccer.

Community programs like Soccer in Schools not only help build important relationships and community awareness for your Club or Association, but they can help reach new players and build your volunteer base. According to the [US Census Bureau](#) 2010 report, the state of Washington ranks 10th in the nation as most diverse and **23% of our population currently is under the age of 19**. This data highlights the importance of becoming more creative on how we expand our soccer community, build community relationships with groups outside of our traditional membership, and how we can use soccer to support the needs of our neighborhoods.

Washington Youth Soccer will help support and facilitate your Club/Association program so do not miss this opportunity to connect with your schools and community. For support or information on starting a program, visit the Soccer in Schools toolkit or contact Washington Youth Soccer at 253-476-2237.



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Target Age Groups

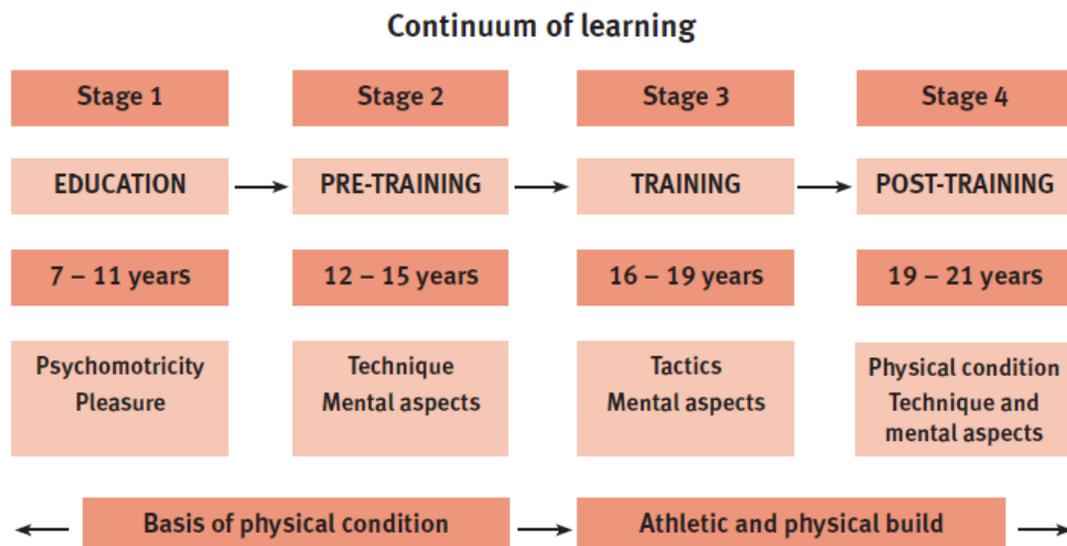
Before you begin to contact schools, you will need to determine what age groups you wish to target. This will determine if you contact elementary and/or middle schools, which classes you want to coach, what skills you will cover and the ideal length of each session.

Additionally, the player pathways available in your club and the areas you wish to develop should influence this decision. For example: if you do not offer any U10 play, offering a schools program for players 9 and under may be outside your market. On the other hand, if you are hoping to begin and develop a U10 program, the Soccer In Schools program may become one of your marketing tools to develop and grow this new direction.

Washington Youth Soccer recommends targeting the 7 – 11 years old age range that coincides with the first development stage of learning. In addition to maximizing a players' potential when exposed to dedicated coaching at this development stage, this age range will help build your participation base for the future and is more sustainable as younger kids are more apt to begin a new sport.

The following graph from FIFA touches on the developmental stages of children according to age and ability. As you can see, the Soccer in Schools program matched with the first stage of education that correlated to the 7-11 age groups. However if you choose to expand your program to other ages, use the chart to inform your focus and direction of the program.

The learning process in and the training and development of young footballers





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In-Class Program

The In-Class program focuses on supporting our Washington State physical education teachers and departments by supplying them with expert knowledge on the game of soccer. Using the Age-Appropriate Training Curriculum and the nutritional resources in this toolkit, your class visits will inspire kids to be active and healthy, while giving your club a chance to market local youth soccer opportunities.

Your school visit will be shaped by the availability of your coaches, the flexibility of the school, the class schedule, curriculum demands, your target age range and the Physical Education teacher. Below are some examples of what your in-class visit could look like.

Session Options

One class session – Physical education classes can last anywhere from 20 minutes to 45 minutes depending on the district, school and grade level.

Combined class session - Depending on the school and grade level, many schools will have combined classes for physical education. These combined classes typically last 30-45 minutes depending on the district, school and grade level.

Multiple class sessions - Depending on your target age group, often it may be necessary to hold multiple sessions per day in accordance with the daily physical education schedule.

Full day of class sessions – Depending on the number of classes, the range of your target age groups and the school's ability, coaching a full day of sessions may be possible.

Multiple visits – When possible, some schools may allow your club to do an in class program over multiple days to cover their soccer curriculum needs.

Flexibility is instrumental as you contact schools and schedule your visits. Fostering a partnership between your club and the schools develops future opportunities to reach potential players and market your club. Remember, the earlier in the school year you begin your outreach to schools, the more flexibility the schools and teachers will have in their scheduling.



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After-School Program

The After-School program supports after-school programming aimed at keeping kids active in safe and controlled environments. Often times, the PTA schedules groups to run a weekly after-school activity, which they organize, market and maintain. This program focuses on getting kids excited about playing soccer and is a good way to connect with parents as they pick up their children after school.

Session Options

Month Long Session – Most after-school programs will consist of four sessions: one per week for four weeks. This is the preferred method for schools in order to accommodate multiple activities throughout the week.

Week Long Session – A week long session could include two/three/four/five sessions in the week.

Unlike the In-Class program, the After-School program is much more flexible in terms of curriculum and is more focused on creating a fun environment for kids to have a positive experience playing soccer.

Session Types

Clinic – Using a clinic format to focus on basic skills such as passing, dribbling and shooting can be a good introduction to organized soccer and give kids an introduction of what joining your club would look like. Remember to keep it light and fun!

Futsal – Depending on the weather and space, futsal may be a great option for winter/indoor options. Futsal allows the game to be the instructor, while giving the kids more opportunity to score and touch the ball.

Small-sided games – A jamboree setting is a great opportunity to get kids excited about competition and soccer.

The above options separately or combined are only a few of the ways you can build your After-School program. Be creative, keep it fun and align your program to the ages of the students. The focus should be on getting kids excited and interested in soccer, not in advancing their elite skill. For more information and ideas, visit the Washington Youth Soccer Technical Zone.