



U11/U12 Soccer Parent Guide

Supporting Growth, Confidence & Love of the Game

Welcome to U11/U12 soccer!

At this age, players are developing stronger technical skills, game understanding, teamwork, and independence. They're learning how to compete, solve problems, and take ownership of their development — **while still keeping the game fun.**

Your support helps them grow both as players and people.

Your #1 Job

Be a positive supporter — not a sideline coach.

Let players make decisions, communicate with teammates, and learn directly from the game.

What Parents SHOULD Do

Encourage effort and mindset: “Great work rate!”, “Nice decision!”, “I’m proud of how you kept trying!”

Support development: Focus on improvement, not just outcomes

Praise teamwork, sportsmanship, and resilience

Ask positive questions after games: “What did you learn?”, “What went well?”, “Did you have fun?”

Promote independence: Let players manage their gear and preparation

Encourage responsibility and accountability Allow them to talk with coaches themselves when appropriate

Create a positive sideline: Cheer respectfully, Support all players

Keep emotions calm and constructive

Model sportsmanship: Respect referees and opponents, Handle wins and losses with class

Demonstrate behavior you want your child to copy

Help the team: Arrive on time and prepared, Volunteer when possible, Communicate clearly with coaches and team staff

What Parents Should AVOID

Sideline coaching or tactics: Avoid directing play (“pass,” “shoot,” “mark up,” etc.)

Players need to think and solve problems on their own

Focusing only on winning or playing time: Development and learning come first

Negative comments: About referees, coaches, teammates, or other families

Added pressure: Keep soccer enjoyable and age-appropriate

Remember

At U11/U12, **players are:** Still learning and making mistakes, Building confidence

Developing decision-making skills, Growing emotionally and socially

Mistakes are part of development — not something to fix from the sidelines.

If they're improving, working hard, and enjoying the game, we're on the right track.

This guide reflects U.S. Soccer's Player Development Framework for the Learning Phase (U9–U12), which prioritizes skill development, decision-making, independence, and positive adult support over results and winning.

Thank you for helping create a positive, supportive soccer experience for every player!

