



## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE U4 AGE GROUP

Coaching our younger age groups can present some unique challenges for this stage of development - cognitively, physically, and socially. The fascination for the ball, the desire to master the game, and the thrill of scoring goals can provide the catalyst for a lifetime of loving soccer. The joy and pleasure of the game are best nurtured by encouraging freedom of expression and organizing children's play in small groups.

### **COGNITIVE ATTRIBUTES:**

- Short attention span
- Individually oriented (egocentric)
- Sensitive (easily affected psychologically)
- Love to use their imagination, play pretend
- Focus on one task at a time
- Can only process small bits of information at once
- Immature understanding of time and space relations

### **PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES:**

- Always in motion
- No sense of pace (full speed ahead)
- Easily fatigued with rapid recovery
- Eye/hand and eye/foot coordination is rudimentary
- Can balance on dominant foot
- Catching skills are not fully developed
- Love to run, jump, fall and roll
- Boys and girls are similar at this age

### **SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES:**

- Love to show off
- Little or no concern for team activities
- Enjoy parallel play (play next to but not with a friend or teammate)
- Influential people in their life are mom and dad
- Like to imitate goofy actions