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Special Thanks to;
M.-A. Lucas, Director, Army Child
and Youth Services
Dear Start Smart Instructor:

Thank you for accepting the position of Start Smart Instructor. This manual will give you detailed instructions on how to run your program.

As you may know, well-meaning volunteer youth league coaches do not always have the time or expertise to teach children the basic motor skills that they need to be successful in sports. Start Smart teaches children the skills that they need to play organized sports in a FUN, non-competitive environment.

The Start Smart Sports Development Program was originally developed based on a 1993 study showing that 49% of children participating in organized sports do not have the minimum motor skills necessary to be successful in those programs. The same study also showed that children who are given proper motor skills instructions in a fun, supervised setting are more likely to be ready for organized sports. In addition to our general motor skills development program, we have created sport-specific programs to focus on the specific skills needed for future participation in particular sports.

Thank you again for bringing Start Smart to your Army Garrison. If you have any questions about the program or this manual, please call us at 1-800-729-2057.

Sincerely,

The Start Smart Sports Development Programs Staff

P.S. Please notify our national office of the start date for your program and send us pictures from your sessions.
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Introduction

What is the Start Smart Soccer?
Start Smart Soccer, a program of the National Alliance for Youth Sports, teaches children (ages 3-7) the basic motor skills necessary to play organized soccer while they work one-on-one with a member of your staff. The program focuses on teaching children basic sports mechanics without the threat of competition or the fear of getting hurt. Start Smart Soccer sessions are held once or twice a week for three to six weeks. Each week, the exercises become increasingly more difficult as the class progresses and the children show improvement.

The Start Smart Mission
The Start Smart Sports Development Programs were created to teach children the basic motor skills necessary to participate in organized sports while giving them the opportunity to work one-on-one with an adult. The programs were developed to be informative and fun, so children will have a positive first time sports experience and continue participating in sports beyond this introductory level.

Who is the National Alliance for Youth Sports?
Formed in West Palm Beach, Florida in 1981 the “Alliance” was originally developed as a volunteer youth sport coaches certification system (NYSCA) with a simple mission: to make youth sports fun and safe for kids. Since 1981, the nonprofit association has developed into a diverse organization with a number of national programs and accredited chapters in all fifty states. The programs offered by the Alliance include: the National Youth Sports Coaches and Officials Association, the National Academy for Youth Sports Administrators, Parents Association for Youth Sports, the Start Smart Development Programs and Hook A Kid On Golf. These programs are administered by the Alliance’s two divisions; Education and Youth Development.

While the Education division concentrates on programs that educate adults, the Youth Development division focuses on programs that deal directly with children. Specifically, the Youth Development division develops programs that build proficiency and confidence that youngsters need to participate and remain active in sports by 1) offering programs that teach the basic motor skills necessary for meaningful sports participation, 2) generating interest in lifetime activities and 3) providing a healthy fitness attitude for life. The Start Smart Sports Development Program, along with the other Start Smart programs, is administered through the Youth Development division of the National Alliance for Youth Sports.

Why Start Smart?
Before entering organized youth sports programs, children need to master the fundamental motor skills that serve as a basis for more complex sports skills. Children do not effectively learn these skills by playing games, but rather by practicing developmentally appropriate activities.
Developmentally appropriate activities are tasks designed for the child’s current level of performance ability while using equipment that enables the child to be successful. Success is extremely important in early motor skill learning experiences, as it builds self-esteem and the motivation and confidence needed to try and improve.

Children who enter youth sports programs with fundamental motor skills and confidence in their ability to perform are much more likely to learn new and more complex sport-specific skills, achieve success in competition, and enjoy a positive sports experience. These children are also more likely to participate in sports and fitness activities as adults.

All children should be provided with effective, developmentally appropriate activities and equipment to prepare them for future organized sports and fitness opportunities. Start Smart accomplishes this by offering programs that encourage children to participate in youth sports without the threat of competition or the fear of getting hurt.

References
The Start Smart Soccer developmental tasks and program guidelines were developed by motor skill development specialists from Northern Kentucky University. The program is based on the research findings (Kirk, 1993), practices of effective motor development teachers and programs (Graham, Holt/Hale & Parker, 1993), and is influenced by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education’s Council on Physical Education for Children’s Position Statement: “Developmentally appropriate physical education practices for children” (1991). And the following publications:


What about the products?
The 1993 study at Northern Kentucky University showed that children ages 5-10 participating in a motor skill development program improved at a greater rate while using specialized equipment as opposed to traditional elementary physical education equipment. The products used in the Start Smart programs are the most innovative available and are developmentally appropriate for teaching youngsters the basic motor skills that are emphasized in the program. The Start Smart Soccer program utilizes developmentally appropriate products from the following companies:
Program Guidelines
The following guidelines should be emphasized during your Start Smart Soccer program to ensure that the children obtain high levels of achievement and success during the program. Staff members should be aware of the guidelines at all times while working on basic motor skill development with children.

Positive Learning Environment: Children must be provided with a positive non-threatening learning environment where they receive a great deal of encouragement and success.

Children are Unique: All children are unique and learn at different rates. It takes them much effort and many practice trials to improve.

Maximum Involvement: Each child needs the opportunity to practice skills learned. START SMART activities are organized to provide children optimal time to practice skills at the same time. To maximize individual practice time, equipment is provided for each instructor-child group.

Success is Important: The child should experience high success rates on a task. Modify the task if it is difficult for the child to succeed. Once success is attained, increase the difficulty of the task incrementally. An example of modifying a task is changing the distance that a ball must travel.

Appropriate Equipment: The equipment must be developmentally appropriate for the child. Start Smart provides equipment that is the appropriate size and weight for this age group.

Keep it simple: Children are not “little adults” and they learn and comprehend differently than adults. In the early learning stages, keep it simple by demonstrating exactly what you want them to do.

Positive Feedback: Clear, concise, positive feedback from the staff regarding the child’s performance and effort will enhance learning.

Expert Success: All kids need a lot of encouragement and a feeling that your only expectations are that they learn and improve. If you expect success, the children will have the confidence to believe that they are capable of succeeding in the particular task.

Complete Tasks Before Continuing: Start Smart activities are organized from simple to more complex. A child should complete one task successfully before moving on to the next exercise.

Review Tasks: Children will benefit from reviewing previously completed tasks. This practice is especially helpful if they are having difficulty with the task at hand.
What are your Responsibilities?
As the Start Smart Soccer Instructor, you are the key to the success of your program! We recommend that you, the Child Development Center (CDC) Training and Curriculum Specialist, CDC Lead or Mentor, or Child and Youth Program Assistant (CYPA), and volunteers assigned to implement the Start Smart program familiarize yourself with all of the program materials prior to running Start Smart for the first time.

You can use the instructor manual to successfully implement your Start Smart program. This Start Smart Instructor Manual should be used in conjunction with the Skill Guide that you received with your Start Smart Starter Kit.

Program Checklist
Below is a checklist of your responsibilities as a Start Smart Soccer Instructor. Each item refers to a subject covered later in the manual. We recommend using the checklist as a timeline while working toward your program start date.

- Review Start Smart Soccer Instructor Manual
- Review the Materials Checklist (page 5) to assure that you have received all of the equipment in your Starter Kit.
- Establish a location for your program (CDC/SAS multi-purpose room or outdoor area).
- Develop Start Smart Implementation Plan.
- Schedule Smart Start into the CDC or SAS Daily Activities Plans.
- Recruit parent and teen volunteers to assist with the program.
- Order any additional materials from the National Office 3 weeks prior to the start of your program.
- Gather the additional program materials needed for your program (page 5)
- Implement Start Smart by following the Program Format (page 8) in this manual
Materials Checklist
The following is a list of items that should have been received in your Start Smart Soccer Starter Kit. Please use this list to make sure you have received your entire order.

- 2-Instructor Manual
- 2-Skill Guide
- 1-Model Youth Sports Parent Video
- 1-Carry-All Bag
- 40-Cones
- 6-Size 3 Soccer Balls
- 1-Ball Pump
- 1-Cone Carrying Strap

Don’t Forget: Check to see if you have all the equipment needed to start your program!

Additional Programs Materials You May Need
The following is a list of materials that you may need to run your Start Smart Soccer program. You most likely will already have some of these materials and most of them can be substituted by using other items.

- balloons
- duct or masking tape
- poster board
- table and chairs (for sign-in)
- name tags
- first-aid kit
- marker cones
- clothes line rope
- hula hoops
- plastic milk or soda containers
Promotional Tips
The following checklist will ensure the success of Start Smart Soccer in your centers for years to come.

Before your program begins:
  • Coordinate with your Public Affairs Office (PAO) or (MWR) Marketing Office to:
    ~ Daily and weekly local newspapers.
    ~ Local Radio Stations that may run public service announcements.
    ~ Local cable television stations that run public service announcements.

  Note: The national office can also provide you with a press release if needed!

  • Distribute a promotional flier (see sample on page A4) to:
    ~ Local youth sports leagues
    ~ Public libraries
    ~ Schools
    ~ Day care facilities
    ~ Community centers

During your program:
  • Contact daily newspapers to remind them of the program and encourage them to send a staff writer and a photographer.
  • Contact weekly newspapers in your community to let them know that the program is being held (many weeklies prefer having the story done for them since most are under staffed; the national office can provide help with a story).
  • Contact all television stations’ news and sports directors to get additional coverage. Local radio and television talk shows may be interested in having the Start Smart Soccer Instructor on the show with some parents, kids, etc. to talk about the program.
Frequently Asked Questions

When is the best time to conduct a Start Smart Soccer Program?
Smart Start Soccer can be run anytime, but you may want to consider running your program as a developmental program prior to the next scheduled soccer season. This would enable those children who would like to participate in the next season to prepare themselves in advance. The Sports Readiness Assessment will enable parents to recognize if their child is ready for organized baseball. Smart Start Soccer is recommended for children between the ages of 3-7 years old.

Where can I implement my Start Smart Soccer Program?
Start Smart Soccer can be run indoors or outside with the equipment that is included in your Starter Kit. If you are planning to hold your program outdoors, you need to consider variables like the weather, time changes in the spring and fall, and insects. Please remember - some of the Start Smart exercises require the use of a wall as a target.

How do I recruit parent and teen volunteers to assist with Start Smart?
Advertise at the front desk, Central Enrollment and Registration (CER), through the Parent Advisory Council, at the youth center and ask during sports registration sign-up, bearing in mind that many parents are apprehensive to coach a team but may be interested in teaching a skill development program.

Some questions that may be asked from parents during your program:

What if my child’s attention span prompts him/her to want to move to the next station before the instructor gives the signal?
For a program comprised of mostly young children, where attention spans are generally very short, you may want to decrease the time at each station to 7 or 8 minutes (rather than the 10 minutes, as specified in the program format).

Is the child ready to play in an organized youth sports league once he/she has finished the Start Smart Soccer program?
Refer to the “Interpreting Assessment” section in the back of the Skill Guide. However, it is important to remember that even if a child proves to be physically ready to participate in organized sports, he or she may not be emotionally ready. This decision should be based on both the physical and emotional development of the child. The National Alliance for Youth Sports recommends that children should not be involved in competitive sports before the age of eight.
Section 3 - Program Format

The following is a standard schedule for Start Smart. The 3/6 weeks of staff-child instruction should be scheduled for 1/2/3 days per week, and each session should last approximately one hour. The ratios are 1/10 in CDC and 1/15 in SAS:

**Standard Start Smart Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1:</th>
<th>Sports Readiness Assessment and Skill Development Exercises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 2-5:</td>
<td>Skill Development Exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6:</td>
<td>Skill Development Exercises, Mock Game and Post Assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Sample Schedule - Week 1**

**Child Assessment and Exercise #1**

*For example, if your class starts at 9 am...*

**8:30 am: Set-Up**
- Set-up your room with the four skill-assessment stations. Please see the sample floor plan (page A3) for how each skill area is set-up for the assessment.
- *Performance Cues* posters should be placed in a visible spot at each station.
- Appoint volunteers to specific stations to assist the participant groups.
- Set-up a check-in table with attendance sheets (class rosters) and nametags.
- Before the class begins, divide the children into equal groups according to the participating child’s age. (i.e. all of the 4-year-olds in one group)

**8:45-9:00 am: Check-In**
- Have the participants check-in and receive a nametag.

**9:00-9:10 pm: Instructor (CDC/SAS-Assigned Staff) Welcomes Participants and Conducts the Start Smart Program Assessment**
- Before administering the Sports Readiness Assessment, explain to the staff members that the assessment is ONLY an evaluation for them to gage the progress of the child. *The assessment is NOT used to rank or score any of the children, and the scores are only for the staff to see.*
- Have the participants turn to the assessment section of the Skill Guide.
- Explain to participants that they have 5-6 minutes at each skill station for assessment. If possible, there should be a volunteer at each skill station to demonstrate each task with the proper equipment.
- At this time, separate the staff/child groups into equal groups and assign them to a station.
Program Format

9:10-9:35 am: Conduct Readiness Test
• Have staff/child groups rotate every 5-6 minutes from one station to the next, performing the assessment that is explained in the skill guide.

9:35-10:00 am: WEEK 1 Exercises
• After the assessment is complete, have the groups rotate through the stations again and perform the skill development exercises for WEEK 1 (page 11) for each of the skill areas. Spend 5-6 minutes in each station.

10:00 am: Wrap Up
• Before the children are dismissed, explain the format of the program for the upcoming weeks. This is also a good time to answer any questions.

Sample Schedule - Weeks 2-6

Skill Development Sessions

8:30 am: Set-Up
• Set-up your room already set-up with the four skill stations.
• Display *Performance Cues* posters in a visible spot.
• Set-up a check-in table with attendance sheets and nametags.

8:45-9:00 am: Check-In
• Have the participants check-in and receive a nametag.

9:00-9:10 am: Preview
The Start Smart Instructor (CDC TACS, Mentor, Lead or CDC/SAS CYPs) previews the program. Include the following:

• Show each exercise for the appropriate week at the skill stations with the suggested equipment.
• Study and instruct volunteers on how to review the Performance Cues with the child and how to use the Performance Cues as praise when the child performs the exercise correctly.
• Remind staff members that tasks may be altered (adjust the distance, etc.) to make the skill easier or more difficult to suit each child’s ability.
• If a 1/10 ratio exists, then work one station at a time. If you have parent or teen volunteers, you can have the participants split into groups and rotate stations. Pay special attention to each child’s skill level in the first few weeks. Throughout the course of the program, an effort should be made to group children that have similar skill levels.
Program Format

9:10-9:20 am:  Begin Skill Development Exercises
- As the Start Smart Instructor, you should monitor all skill stations. If enough volunteers are not available, the instructor will need to run one station at a time.
- Each skill should be reviewed with the staff/child groups before they actually begin the tasks. Staff members should concentrate on proper execution of the *Performance Cues* by the children, and not necessarily the results.
- The Start Smart Instructor needs to continuously remind staff members of the importance of the posted *Performance Cues* and of giving positive feedback to the children.

9:20-10:00 am:  Rotate to all Stations
- Rotate through the rest of the stations, switching every 10 minutes.

10:00 am:  Wrap Up
- Before the staff/child groups are dismissed, answer any questions that they may have.
- Encourage the children to practice at home.
- Discuss what skills will be learned the following week.

**Special Note for WEEK 6:** Give the children enough time to complete the Start Smart Assessment again to see what progress the child has made since week 1. Tell the staff members to record the child’s score in the “Post Assessment” column of the scoring sheet in their Skill Guide. Again, this assessment is ONLY an evaluation to gage the progress of the child. The assessment is NOT used to rank or score any child, and the scores are for the staff eyes only.
Skill Development Exercises - Week 1

Station #1 - Kicking
Kicking the Ball on the Ground for Distance
*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls and Masking Tape*
Mark 2 lines, 15 feet apart. Have the children line up along one line and kick the Teslon Soccer Ball so that the ball travels along the ground and rolls past the other marked line. When the child can successfully kick 8 out of 10 balls beyond the line, encourage him/her to take 2-3 steps backwards before striking the ball.

Station #2 - Dribbling
Stationary Dribble (Soccer Boxing)
*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls and Size 3 Soccer Balls*
Have each child stand in one spot tapping (boxing) the Teslon Soccer Ball between both feet, alternating feet. The ball should be tapped with the inside of the foot, beginning with the right foot. When the child has touched the ball with each foot 5 times, have him/her do as many touches as possible in fifteen seconds. As the children improve their skills, have them use the Size 3 Soccer Ball.

Station #3 - Trapping
Stopping a Rolling Ball with the Sole of the Shoe
*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls and Size 3 Soccer Balls*
The staff member/volunteer rolls the Teslon Soccer Ball on the ground to the child. The child stops (traps) the ball using the bottom of the foot (sole of the shoe). The child then kicks the ball back to the staff member/volunteer and repeats the exercise. The child should complete 8 out of 10 attempts. As the child improves the Size 3 Soccer Ball should be used doing the same exercise.

Station #4 – Throw-Ins/Running
Throw In Technique
*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls and Masking Tape*
Mark a line on the ground and have each child stand behind it. Have each child take the Teslon Soccer Ball with both hands and bring it back behind his/her head. The child keeps both feet on the ground and brings his/her arms forward, using both arms equally. The child lets go of the ball as it passes over his/her head, both feet still on the ground, throwing the ball toward the staff member/volunteer. After the ball has left the throwers hands, the thrower can move his/her feet and should cross over the line. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts.
Skill Development Exercises - Week 2

Station #1 - Kicking

Kicking a Stationary Ball in the Air for Distance

*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls and Masking Tape*

Mark 2 lines, 15 feet apart. Line up the Teslon Soccer Balls along one of the marked lines and have each child start behind a ball and take two to three running steps before kicking. Each child should kick the ball so that it flies in the air over the other marked line 8 out of 10 times. Repeat the activity while increasing the distance in increments of 5 feet as the child shows improvement.

Kicking a Rolling Ball

*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls and Size 3 Soccer Balls*

Have a staff member/volunteer roll the Teslon Soccer Ball slowly to the child. The child steps toward the rolling ball and kicks it back toward the staff member/volunteer. The child should complete 8 out of 10 attempts. As the child improves, use the Size 3 Soccer Ball or encourage the staff member/volunteer to roll the ball at a faster pace.

Station #2 - Dribbling

Dribbling While Walking

*Equipment Needed: Size 3 Soccer Balls and Cones*

Have the child tap the Size 3 Soccer Ball between both feet, alternating feet while walking in a straight line between two cones. As the child improves, have him/her increase his/her speed, but always emphasize ball control. As the child increases speed, let him/her use any part of the foot to dribble the ball. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts.

Dribbling With Speed (Dribbling Races)

*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls, Size 3 Soccer Balls and Cones*

Set up 2 cones as a starting line and 2 cones as a second line. The two lines should be 10-15 feet apart. Have a staff member/volunteer and child each stand at one cone, as the staff member/volunteer is going to race the child between the two cones. When they reach the second cone both the staff member/volunteer and child will dribble around the cone and back to the starting cone. The child will use the Size 3 Soccer Ball and the parent will use the Teslon Soccer Ball. The exercise should be repeated 8-10 times.

*Week 2 Continues…*
Station #3 - Trapping
**Stopping a Rolling Ball with the Sole and Kicking to a Target**
*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls, Cones and Size 3 Soccer Balls*
Set up a target 10 feet away from a starting line (the target should be 10 feet wide). The staff member/volunteer rolls the *Teslon Soccer Ball* on the ground to the child. The child traps the ball using the bottom of the foot (sole of shoe). The child then kicks the ball toward the target. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts. As the child improves the *Size 3 Soccer Ball* should be used and the target should be moved back 5 feet at a time.

**Stopping a Rolling Ball with the Inside of the Foot**
*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls and Size 3 Soccer Balls*
The staff member/volunteer rolls the *Teslon Soccer Ball* on the ground to the child. The child stops (traps) the ball using the inside of the foot. The child should relax and give slightly when the ball contacts the foot. The child then kicks the ball back to the staff member/volunteer and repeats the exercise. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts. As the child improves, the *Size 3 Soccer Ball* should be used, and the ball should be rolled to the child at a faster pace.

Station #4 – Throw-Ins/Running
**Throw In to a Large Target**
*Equipment Needed: Size 3 Soccer Balls and Cones*
Mark a line and have each child stand behind it. Have the child throw the *Size 3 Soccer Ball* to the large target area that is 6 feet away and 6 feet in diameter. After throwing the ball, the child steps toward the target. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts. As the child improves, increase the distance away from the target by 5 feet.

**Run and Change Direction on a Signal**
*Equipment Needed: None*
The child begins to run at a start line on a staff member/volunteer’s call, and the child will either be told to cut to the left or right. As the child’s skill improves, have him/her turn around to look at his/her partner after making each cut while still running (as if he/she would be receiving a pass).
Skill Development Exercises - Week 3

Station #1 - Kicking

Kick and Chase

*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls*

Children kick the ball in the air for distance and then run and chase the ball. When the child reaches the ball, he/she kicks it again, as far as he/she can, in another direction, then chases it again.

Kicking for Accuracy at a Large Target

*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls, Cones, and Size 3 Soccer Balls*

Mark a starting line, and then place 2 cones or markers 15 feet away. Space the cones or markers 12 feet apart. Have each child kick the stationary ball between the 2 cones. After the child has completed 8 of 10 attempts, increase the distance or make the target area smaller.

Station #2 - Dribbling

Dribbling the Ball and Kicking to a Stationary Target or Goal

*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls, Cones, and Size 3 Soccer Balls*

Set up 2 lines, and mark off a “goal” using cones (or use an actual goal). Have the child begin at the designated start line and dribble the *Teslon Soccer Ball* to the next line where he/she kicks the ball to a target or goal. As the child’s skill becomes better, have him/her dribble faster and pass the ball to a smaller target or greater distance. The first few times the exercise should be done with the *Teslon Soccer Ball*. As the child improves the *Size 3 Soccer Ball* should be used. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts.

Dribble in a Square

*Equipment Needed: Size 3 Soccer Balls and 4 Cones*

Place 4 cones (approximately 15 feet apart) as the corners of a square. Have each child dribble the *Size 3 Soccer Ball* around the outside of the square. Reverse directions after everyone has had a turn.

*Week 3 Continues…*
Station #3 - Trapping
Stopping a Rolling Ball With the Inside of the Foot and Kicking to a Target
*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls, Size 3 Soccer Balls and Cones*
A staff member/volunteer rolls the Teslon Soccer Ball on the ground to the child. The child traps the ball using the inside of the foot. The child then kicks the ball toward the target. The target is 10 feet away and 10 feet wide. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts. As the child improves the Size 3 Soccer Ball should be used and the target moved back 5 feet at a time.

Circle Trap
*Equipment Needed: Size 3 Soccer Balls*
Have your participants (children and staff members/volunteers) stand in one large circle. Use one ball and have the participants kick the ball to anyone in the circle (except to the person standing next to them). Encourage the person who is receiving the pass to trap the ball, and then kick it to someone else. To increase the difficulty of this station, have the participants take a few steps backwards and increase the distance between the kicks.

Station #4 – Throw-Ins/Running
Throw In to a Partner (Accuracy and Technique)
*Equipment Needed: Size 3 Soccer Balls*
Mark a line and have each child stand behind it. Have the child throw the Size 3 Soccer Ball to a staff member/volunteer. The child aims his/her throw at his/her partner’s feet. The child throws the ball toward that partner and the ground. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts.

Run Around and Dodge Obstacles
*Equipment Needed: Cones*
The child will begin to run around an obstacle course or figure 8 set up by the instructor. As the child improves, ask him/her to increase his/her speed.
Station #1 - Kicking
Passing the Ball to a Partner
Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls
In a 15x15 foot area, have the child and staff member/volunteer pass the Teslon Soccer Ball back and forth while walking in the same direction. When the ball is passed from the staff member/volunteer to child, the child will stop the ball before passing it back to the staff member/volunteer.

Kicking a Rolling Ball to a Target
Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls, 2 Cones, Size 3 Soccer Balls
Set up a target with the 2 cones and give each parent a Teslon Soccer Ball. Have a staff member/volunteer roll the Teslon Soccer Ball slowly to the child. The child will step toward the rolling ball and kick it toward the target using their instep. The child should complete 8 to 10 attempts. As the child improves, the Size 3 Soccer Ball should be used and the ball should be rolled to the child at a faster pace.

Station #2 - Dribbling
Dribble Behind the Leader
Equipment Needed: Size 3 Soccer Balls, Teslon Soccer Balls, and Cones
Set up cones randomly around the area in this station. Have each child dribble the Size 3 Soccer Ball following a staff member/volunteer who dribbles the Teslon Soccer Ball. The child will mimic the staff member/volunteer’s moves. As the child’s dribbling skill improves, the staff member/volunteer will increase speed and directional movement. As the child improves his/her skill, the child will use the Teslon Soccer Ball. The exercise should be repeated 8-10 times.

Circle Dribble
Equipment Needed: Size 3 Soccer Ball
Have the staff members/volunteers and children stand in a large circle. Give one person a Size 3 Soccer Ball, and encourage him/her to dribble around the outside of the circle. To increase difficulty, encourage the child or staff member/volunteer to weave in and out between the members of the circle.

Week 4 Continues…
**Station #3 - Trapping**

**Soccer Dance**

*Equipment Needed: Size 3 Soccer Balls*

Give each child a *Size 3 Soccer Ball*. Have each child place the sole of his/her right foot on top of the ball while the left foot is on the ground. When directed, the child will hop and switch feet. The left foot will switch to the top of the ball, and the right foot goes on the ground (the Soccer Dance). When the child touches the ball with each foot 5 times, have him/her do as many touches as possible in 15 seconds.

**Stopping the Ball and Passing to a Partner**

*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls and Size 3 Soccer Balls*

Have a staff member/volunteer and child stand 10 feet apart. Encourage the staff member/volunteer to roll the *Teslon Soccer Ball* on the ground to the child. The child will trap the ball with inside of the foot and pass the ball with the instep back to the staff member/volunteer. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts. As the child improves, the *Size 3 Soccer Ball* should be used.

**Station #4 – Throw-Ins/Running**

**Throw In to a Small Target**

*Equipment Needed: Size 3 Soccer Balls and Cones*

Standing behind a line, the child will throw the *Size 3 Soccer Ball* at a target 6 feet away and 3 feet in diameter. After throwing the ball at the target, the child steps toward the target. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts. As the child improves, increase the distance away from the target by 3 feet.

**Run Backwards and Sideways**

*Equipment Needed: Masking Tape or Cones*

The child will practice running backwards for 20-50 feet from the starting point. The child will also practice running sideways, right and left. As the child improves, have him/her increase his/her speed.
Skill Development Exercises - Week 5

Station #1 - Kicking
Shooting On Goal

*Equipment Needed: Teslon soccer Balls, Cones, and Size 3 Soccer Balls*

Mark a starting line, and make a “goal” with cones (or use a real goal). The child will kick a stationary Teslon Soccer Ball toward the “goal” using the shoelaces to contact the ball. The child takes two to three steps toward the ball nad kicks the bottom half of the ball with the toe pointing down. The child will direct the ball toward the “goal”, where a staff member/volunteer will play goalkeeper. As the child improves, the shooting distance should be moved back and the Size 3 Soccer Ball should be used. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts.

Keep Away

*Equipment Needed: Size 3 Soccer Ball*

Have a staff member/volunteer run while dribbling the Size 3 Soccer Ball. Encourage the children to try and kick the ball away from the staff member/volunteer.

Station #2 - Dribbling
Dribbling Through an Obstacle Course

*Equipment Needed: Size 3 Soccer Balls and Cones*

Set up cones in a line. The child will start dribbling the Size 3 Soccer Ball in and out of cones until reaching the end of the line. The child should get faster as he/she goes through the course more often. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts.

Dribbling Through the Obstacle Course and Kicking to a Target

*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls, cones, and Size 3 Soccer Balls*

Set up cones in a line, and then mark an area as a “goal”. The child will dribble through the obstacle course. When the child reaches the finish line he/she will cross the finish line and kick the ball toward the target. The target is 10 feet away and 10 feet wise. As the child improves have him/her kick the ball for longer distances. The Teslon Soccer Ball should be used during the first attempts. As the child improves the Size 3 Soccer Ball should be used. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts.

*Week 5 Continues…*
Station #3 - Trapping
Moving to the Left and Right to Stop a Rolling Ball
*Equipment Needed: Size 3 Soccer Balls*
Give each staff member/volunteer a *Size 3 Soccer Ball* and encourage them to roll the ball on the ground to the child’s right. The child will move to the right and trap the ball with the inside of his/her right foot. The child will then kick the ball back to the staff member/volunteer. Encourage the staff member/volunteer to then roll the ball on the ground to the child’s left. The child will move to the left and trap the ball with the inside of his/her left foot. The child will then kick the ball back to the staff member/volunteer. The child should complete 8 of 10 successfully (4 with each foot).

Standing the Ball and Dribbling
*Equipment Needed: Size 3 Soccer Balls*
Have a staff member/volunteer roll the *Size 3 Soccer Ball* on the ground to the child. Encourage the child to trap the ball with the inside of the foot and dribble back to the staff member/volunteer as quickly as possible. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts.

Station #4 – Throw-Ins/Running
Circle Throw In
*Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls*
Have all children and staff members/volunteers stand in a circle and choose one person to stand in the middle of the circle. The person in the middle will “throw in” the soccer ball to another participant, and then the participant will “throw in” the soccer ball back to the person in the middle. Rotate the person who is in the middle of the circle.

Run then Leap
*Equipment Needed: None*
The child will run a few steps then leap. Alternate the take-off foot as the child experiences success.
Skill Development Exercises - Week 6

Station #1 - Kicking
Circle of All Participants with one Person in the Middle
Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Ball
Have all of the children and staff member/volunteers stand in a circle and choose one person to stand in the middle of the circle. The person in the middle will kick the Teslon Soccer Ball to another participant, and then the participant will kick the ball back to the person in the middle. Rotate the person who is in the middle of the circle.

Station #2 - Dribbling
Dribbling Through the Obstacle Course and Shooting on Goal
Equipment Needed: Teslon Soccer Balls, Cones, Size 3 Soccer Balls
Set up cones in a line, and then mark an area as a “goal”. The child will dribble through the obstacle course. When the child reaches the finish line, he/she will cross the finish line, and shoot the ball toward the goal. The Teslon Soccer Ball should be used during the first attempts. As the child improves the Size 3 Soccer Ball should be used. The child should complete 8 of 10 attempts.

Station #3 - Trapping
Moving to the Left and Right to Stop a Rolling Ball and Kicking to a Goal
Equipment Needed: Size 3 Soccer Balls and Cones (or goal)
Set up 2 cones, 10 feet apart (or use an actual goal). Give each staff member/volunteer a Size 3 Soccer Ball and encourage them to roll the ball on the ground to the child’s right. The child will move to the right and trap the ball with the inside of his/her right foot. The child will then kick the ball between 2 cones (or into a goal). Encourage the staff member/volunteer to then roll the ball on the ground to the child’s left. The child will move to the left and trap the ball with the inside of hi/her left foot. The child will then kick the ball between 2 cones (or into a goal). The child should complete 8 of 10 successfully (4 with each foot).

Station #4 – Throw-Ins/Running
Follow the Leader
Equipment Needed: Cones (optional)
Encourage the staff members/volunteers and children to line up and have the “leader” walk, run, skip, etc. around the area where you are conducting your session, or set up cones as markers around the area to add variety to this exercise.
APPENDIX

Performance Cues Posters.......................... A1
Sample Floor Plan................................. A2
Sample Promotional Flier.......................... A3
Sample Press Release.............................. A4
Coordinator Survey............................... A5
Participant Roster................................. A6
Performance Cues Posters

Performance Cues are designed to teach children basic sports mechanics for each skill area. Have staff members/volunteers use them to encourage the children and praise them when they remember individual steps involved with the particular skill. Make posters to be displayed at each skill station for easy reference during your Start Smart Soccer program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Kicking</strong></th>
<th><strong>Trapping – Inside of Foot</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Step behind and to the side of the ball with your non-kicking foot</td>
<td>• Turn toes out with your stopping foot, while keeping your foot flexed</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Kicking leg should be back, knee bent, and toes pointed</td>
<td>• Face the ball</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Swing kicking leg forward, straighten knee at contact</td>
<td>• Watch ball to side of foot</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Contact behind and in center of ball with the top of your shoe for long and low kicks</td>
<td>• Keep your knees bent slightly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contact behind and to the bottom of ball with the top of your shoe for high kicks</td>
<td>• Keep foot flexed and “give”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Point toes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Arms out to your sides during kick</td>
<td><strong>Trapping – Sole of Foot</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Follow through high with leg</td>
<td>• Hold foot at an angle with your heel close to the ground</td>
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<td>• Face the ball</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Watch ball to foot</td>
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<td>• Bend knees slightly</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Dribbling</strong></th>
<th><strong>Throw Ins</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Touch the ball on the side of the toe, inside or outside of the foot</td>
<td>• Use both hands equally</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Upper body tilted slightly forward</td>
<td>• Keep your feet on the ground</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Keep the ball close to your feet between dribbles</td>
<td>• Look at your target</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Keep arms out to sides and away from body</td>
<td>• Follow through with throw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Run or jog on the balls of your feet</td>
<td><strong>Running</strong></td>
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<td>• Take short strides</td>
<td>• Keep your head up</td>
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<td>• “Lean into” run slightly</td>
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<td>• Lift your knees</td>
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<td>• Bend your elbows and swing your arms freely</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Run on the balls of your feet</td>
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<td>• Run lightly</td>
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Sample Floor Plan

The following is a sample of a floor plan for the Start Smart Soccer program. Please keep in mind that if you do not have enough space for four stations you can alter this floor plan. Refer to the Program Format section of this manual for details.
Sample Promotional Flier

The following sample can be used as a guide when creating a flier for recruiting participants for your Smart Start program. *Used for traditional Start Smart Program, operated through S&F Program.

Is Your Child Ready For Soccer?

The National Alliance For Youth Sports and ____Your Organization____ present the Start Smart Soccer program.

What: Start Smart is a six-week instructional program that helps children learn the basics of soccer: kicking, dribbling, trapping, throw ins, and running. The program helps prepare children for organized soccer by using safe and fun equipment to teach them the basic motor skills.

Who: Start Smart Soccer is open to children (3-7 years old) who can attend each session to prepare for organized soccer.

Where: Start Smart Soccer will be held at the ____site____ for six consecutive ____Day(s) of the week____.

Cost: Each participant will be charged ____fee____ which includes any additional materials provided____.

*To register please call ____sports and fitness director____ at phone number____ or stop by the ____address____ and sign up before ____deadline____!
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: START SMART Soccer Instructor

Parents in __city/town__ have a special opportunity to help their children develop sports skills through a unique national program that’s available.

The Start Smart Soccer Program is open to youngsters ages three to seven whose parent or another adult is able to attend the six, one-hour sessions with them.

There are ____ spots available for participants that will be filled on a first come, first serve basis.

The Start Smart program will begin __start date__ at the __facility__ and will be held from __time__ every __day(s) of the week__ for __number of weeks__.

“We are excited about being chosen to be a part of this national program,” said __Smart Start Soccer Instructor__. “We are always looking for innovative ways to help improve youth sports and this program certainly helps.”

The Start Smart Soccer program targets children who need to develop basic motor skills such as kicking, dribbling, trapping, throw ins, and running that are needed to participate in organized soccer.

It will teach children how to develop those skills while building their confidence which will enable them to enjoy participation in all youth sports programs.

A variety of innovative products will be utilized to enhance the child’s skill development.

The program is being administered by the Youth Development branch of the nonprofit National Alliance for Youth Sports based in West Palm Beach, Florida.

For more information, contact __Smart Start Soccer Instructor__ at __phone #__.

*This is only to be used with the traditional Parent/Child Start Smart Program
Instructor Survey

Please complete the following survey at the conclusion of your Start Smart program and mail or fax to: Start Smart, 2050 Vista Parkway, West Palm Beach, FL 33411 (561) 712-9887. This is only used for the traditional parent/child Start Smart Program.

Instructor: __________________________ Organization: _______________________________

Date Program ended: ________________ Number of Participants: ________________

How much did you charge each participant for the program? __________ Do you feel this price was well-received by the community?

Do you have any concerns regarding the time frame of the program (six one hour sessions)?

Do you feel the program is appropriate for children 3-7 years old?

Do you feel the children showed improvement from the beginning of the program? In what area(s)?

Were the Skill Guides clear for both the instructor and the participants?

Did the Instructor’s Manual contain everything you needed to run your Start Smart Soccer program? What could be added/changed, if anything?

Will you be hosting another Start Smart Soccer program in the future? If so, when?

Did your participants express an interest in a follow up program?

What was the overall perception from the participants in your program?

Do you feel the program helped prepare your participants for future participation in organized soccer?

Please list additional comments you have to enhance our program on the back of this sheet.
Participant Roster

Site: _____________________________
Instructor: ______________________________
Address: ______________________________
Phone: ________________________________

Make copies of this page if you have more participants than the space provided

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Attendance (circle weeks present):</th>
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