



UNIONVILLE MILLIKEN SOCCER CLUB

House League

Parent Education Guide

Introduction

- The Unionville Milliken Soccer club offers programs for players at all levels
 - *Micro Soccer* - for 4 and 5 year olds, an introduction to soccer with an emphasis on fun.
 - *House League soccer* - ages 6 to 21, emphasis on fun, fitness and equal playing opportunity
 - *Academy* - ages 6 to 12, emphasis on skill development to progress into the competitive or all star program.
 - *All Star* - ages 13 to 21, players play house league games and play in tournaments, additional skill development
 - *Competitive* - ages 6 to 21, players with advanced skills and ambition, with potential for college soccer and Ontario/Canadian National teams
 - *Elite Program* - show case teams that participate in show case tours/training to obtain international experience and playing opportunities

In addition to these programs UMSC offers a full suite of training programs to develop youth and coaches, for example, referee training, coaches training, goalie clinics, shooting and scoring clinics, skills and drills clinics.

- UMSC offers healthy activity through its recreational programs and various clinics. These programs emphasize FUN, activity and skill development. They also de-emphasize winning as the top priority. Every child is guaranteed equal playing time and the game is taught in a fun, encouraging and enjoyable atmosphere.
- The Ontario Soccer Association is the largest member of the Canadian Soccer Association, the governing body for soccer in Canada. The CSA is a nationwide body of over 300,000 volunteers and administrators, and over 100,000 dedicated coaches, most of who also are volunteers. The CSA registers over 3,000,000 youth players between the ages of five and nineteen.
- The CSA is a not for profit and educational organization whose mission is to foster the physical, mental and emotional growth and development of Canada's youth through the sport of soccer at all levels of age and competition. At UMSC it is our job to make it fun, and instill in young players a lifelong passion for the sport.

This guide is designed to provide a tool to assist parents who are new to the game of soccer to promote the spirit of the game and support the physical, mental and emotional growth of their children through the sport.

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UMSC is a not for profit organization run by volunteers

UMSC Parent Education Guide

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1. Why Do Players Play?

- To have fun
- To be with their friends
- To make new friends
- To improve and learn
- To feel good
- To wear the stuff

“Make sure they know that you are there because it is fun for you to watch them participate, not because you want to criticize or evaluate.”

2. Six Guidelines for Soccer Parents

1. Cheer
2. Relax and Let Them Play
3. Don't distract players by yelling instructions.
4. Remember, They Have YOUR Genes
5. Have Reasonable Expectations
6. Meet with the Coaches

The greatest gift that you can give to your children throughout their sporting involvement is support. When asked what it is that they would most like from their parents in terms of support, most children suggest encouragement and acceptance of their choices.

3. Being a Good Soccer Parent

- **Encourage your child**, regardless of his or her degree of success or level of skill.
- **Ensure a balance** in your student athlete's life, encouraging participation in multiple sports and activities while placing academics first.
- **Emphasize enjoyment**, development of skills and team play as the cornerstones of your child's early sports experiences.
- **Leave coaching to coaches** and avoid placing too much pressure on your youngster about playing time and performance.
- **Be realistic** about your child's future in sports, recognizing that only a select few earn a college scholarship, compete in the Olympics or sign a professional contract.
- **Be there** when your child looks to the sidelines for a positive role model.

Athletic participation must be healthful, positive and safe for everyone involved, conducted in an environment that teaches values and ethics, strengthens the community, promotes competition without conflict and enriches the lives of the athletes

4. Why Do Players Quit?

- Criticism and yelling
- No playing time
- Over emphasis on winning
- Fear of making mistakes
- Boredom
- Not learning

5. What Is a “Practice”?

a) Warm-up

- Enthusiastically sets the tone for fun.
- The warm-up prepares the mind and body for upcoming activities.
- Young players need very little stretching, but it is a good habit for them to begin at an early age.
- Warm-ups encourage each player to use a ball and often incorporate games and exercises that emphasize a lot of touches and dribbling

b) Individual Activities

- Fun filled activities that emphasize technical development. Remember this is the discovery age. Lots of ball contacts.
- Activities are appropriate for the skills and ages of the players.
- The coach should be conducting a number of short and different activities.
- Remember a child's attention span is limited.

6. Teaching Sportsmanship

Here are 3 things you can do to show your child (and other parents) what being "a good sport" means:

1. Cheer for all the children, even those on the other team. What a surprising difference it can make on the sidelines and the stands when parents applaud a good effort or a fine play - no matter who makes it.
2. Talk to parents of the other team: They are not the enemy.
3. Be a parent, not a coach: resist the urge to critique.
Children dread their parent going over their performance in detail, pointing out all their mistakes. Sometimes just being there shows your children what being a good parent is all about. Leave the coaching to the coaches: this includes motivating, psyching your child for practice, after game critiquing, setting goals, requiring additional training, etc.

7. Kids Don't Care Who Wins

“Asked what embarrasses them most, every single child surveyed listed parents hollering plays or instructions from the sideline or stands.”

- Don't keep score, the kids don't regard it as that important.
- Don't care who wins or loses, they are having fun and that is the objective NOT winning or losing.

Note: Winning can become more important as the child develops; for that reason, administrators seek to form balanced teams to create equal opportunities to win and lose.

“Youth house league sports offers an ideal venue to sit back and allow children to take risks and learn, with your support and encouragement in an environment where the stakes are not as high as they will be later in life.” - Abrams

8. The Ride Home

- **Never reward** what you perceive as success
- **Never punish** what you perceive as failure
- **Don't evaluate** your child's performance, he or she is playing to have fun, not to earn a grade! If he/she had fun, the day was a success
- **Meet your child's Needs** remember the questions you asked and the answers you got as to why your child is playing soccer

a) Good Questions on the Way Home

- **Did you have fun today?**
- **What did you think you did well today?**
- **Did you learn any new moves?**

If you are greeted with the sound of silence, give off the gentle sounds of approval, be sure he/she knows you are there for him/her.

9. Dealing with the Coach

- **Let the coach - coach**
- **Ask the coaching philosophy, team rules and guidelines**
- **When to ask questions** - Don't ask questions during a game or in front of a small group that you wouldn't want asked of you.
- **Ask the coach how you can help, during practice and games** - Get involved.
- **Be supportive** - Always role model positive behavior, support the program.

"What often happens in the parent-coach relationship is that the parents become critical of the "poor job" the coach is doing. They complain to their spouses and other parents, often in front of their children. This serves to undermine what authority and "expert" knowledge the coach may have had in the beginning. This results in greater challenges for the coach. In such a case, those engaging in vociferous complaints are contributors to the problems challenging the coach."

10. What about Referees?

Everyone sees the play differently.

- The main goal of the referee is to make the game safe and fun for the children.
- Being a referee is not as easy as it appears. They are the other coach on the field for small sided games.
- Remember, many referees are brothers and sisters of soccer players or soccer players themselves. Others are fellow parents trying to just help youth soccer players have FUN!
- Recognize that the referee is doing his/her best. It may not be what you saw, but the goal is to let the game be played so that children can have FUN!.

Let the Referee Call the Game

Referees deserve respect and support too!

- Helping the referee to call a trip or a foul only confuses children.

- Disagreeing hurts your child's respect for the referee, and may hurt the view of the referee towards your child's team.
- Referees in our House League program are often older youth players from UMSC and refereeing is part of their development with the club.
- Criticism causes referees to quit rather than become better. Many referees quit due to being yelled at by parents.
- As you cheer for the players, cheer for the referees too.

“Parents and coaches need to remember that if officials can hear profanity and other verbal abuse directed at them when a call goes against the team, the children on the field can also hear it.”

11. Resources

“The Challenges Facing Parents and Coaches in Youth Sports: Assuring Children Fun and Equal Opportunity”, Douglas E. Abrams, Villanova Sports and Entertainment Law Journal

“Through the Eyes of Parents, Children, and a Coach: A Fourteen-Year Participant-Observer Investigation of Youth Soccer”, Steven Aicinena

“Games Girls Play”, Caroline Silby

“Sports Done Right” TM - The Maine Center for Sport and Coaching

www.mcsc.umaine.edu/sportsdoneright

“Developing Decision Makers”, Dr. Lynn Kidman, www.ipcltd.com

“Teaching Character through Sport: Developing a Positive Coaching Legacy” by Bruce Brown

“A Guide for Parents” – Florida Youth Soccer

“Parent Booklet” - The Australian Sports Commission

“The Cheers and Tears”, Shane Murphy, PhD.

WWW.U-MSC.COM

Thank you for taking the time to read The Parent’s Education Guide – An Introduction to Youth Soccer. The guide is designed to provide a tool to assist parents new to the game of soccer to grow the spirit of the game without limiting the child.

Now that you have completed the guide, please take a moment to go online at www.umsc.com to take a short tour of our club. At the successful completion of the tour, you will be able to have a better understanding of what the UMSC is all about.

The spirit of a child knows no bounds until limited by adults.

To promote the growth of the game in UMSC by properly preparing those new to the game to encourage the child to develop a love for the game is the mission of UMSC Coaching Committee and Coaching Education Department.