

The Tiny Tykes program is designed as a fun learning environment working with the youngest children and their parents introducing them to the fundamental skills of both soccer and athletics.

We have designed the sessions based on the skill level, maturity and basic cognitive & physical development of players ages 3-5.

Through repetition, movement education, and coordination activities, we aim to provide your child an environment that is best suited to their development as a player and an athlete, with new and exciting skills for them to use. We focus on individual play because this maximize touches on the ball and enables the players to learn at their own pace.

Players this age are egocentric they see the world from only their perspective. This means they all want the ball. They have not formed the concept of group or collective play, so they do not understand the concept of team. Even if a player is on a team, they will think nothing of taking the ball off of their teammate. This is something you will see and although you can continually tell a 5-year-old that they shouldn't take the ball from their teammate, they will continue to do so. There is no point in telling players to spread out or play positions as they will chase the ball when they see it as they want it.

The development of the youngest player's soccer skills should revolve around dribbling. Most of our activities will be centered around the basic skill of dribbling. We will also include activities to work on the development of gross motor skills, Falling, rolling, jumping, skipping. There will be no introduction of positions or any kind of tactical play!

We will spend minimal time competing in a traditional game of 1 ball and 2 teams. A game of sharks and minnows or egg hunt is more fun than a "real game" to players this age and is much more beneficial to their athletic development. While the excitement of full-sized games and being on a team may seem like the ultimate thing for us adults, to the children it just means less time playing with the ball, which means less touches, less repetition, less development, and a lot less fun!

Although every session will end with a "game" where the object is for the teams to score and keep the other team from doing so we ask that you as parents not to focus on this part of the session. No instructions need to be given on where or what to do with the ball. Just watch and let the kids learn from the game and have fun.

We will be asking you as parents to participate in the activities during the sessions so please come prepared to play this program is designed around parent involvement.

Finally we hope that during the week you will get in the backyard with your child playing with the soccer ball building on the skills learned during each session!

This is the favorite of all the athletic activities we offer! I love watching the players play with their parents, and the ideas behind the development of the full athlete without the pressures of a result is exactly what is needed at this age!

Missy Martin

Athletic Director Opelika Parks & Rec



Mondays

April 4,11,16,25

May 2,9,16

- ⇒ **Ball**
- ⇒ **Water**
- ⇒ **Wear shin guards under socks**
- ⇒ **Wear uniform on outer layer**

In case of weather cancellations you will be notified through text message.

Decisions on cancellations will not be made prior to 3pm