

**SPI Recommended**  
**Coaching Guidelines**  
**U-8's and U-9's**

- Adhere to the “**ball at their feet**” philosophy by making sure players have as much active time with a ball as possible
- Focus your sessions on basic skill development (introduction of **Inventory of Skill's**-passing, shooting, ball control, dribbling etc.)
- Keep instructions “short and sweet” limiting long explanations
- Show up to your session prepared with lesson plan/session objectives and then prepare to be flexible
- Familiarize players of this age group with specific movements and associated exercises
- Involve yourself in every drill and small sided game being played-demonstrate specific movements as often as necessary
- Plan to keep your sessions to 60 **minutes** in length
- Limit the implementation of drills that require players standing in lines
- De-emphasize winning and losing as much as possible
- Communicate with parents and trainers often on the specific players’ development and behavior concerns
- Do not allow players to be disrespectful to you or each other-players need to understand what behavior is appropriate and what is not
- Do not speak to players standing over them. Go down on your knees or sit next to them when explaining upcoming games/drills
- Select your language appropriately when communicating with players. Make sure it is inclusive and it effectively invites all to participate
- Utilize 4 v. 4 small sided format as a teaching “tool” and increase player contact with the ball