

UNITED STATES SOCCER PROSPECTS



Ball Mastery Guide – Drop Balls

When working with your child you want to ensure that you have the correct ball size (3-5 years of age is a size 3, 6-11 years of age is a size 4, and 12 – adult is a size 5).

Things to look for:

- Applies no momentum when catching the ball with their foot
- Toes pointed out
- Foot is relaxed
- Using both feet

The goal is to catch the ball with your foot while maintaining control of the ball within reach. What you want to look for is proper technique.

Teaching the technique

Advice: *It is better to do it slow and right rather than fast and wrong!*

1. Stay composed and relaxed.
2. Hold the ball ready to toss out towards either foot – not to the middle.
3. Toss the ball head or chest height, Read advice 1.
4. When you toss the ball, you want to make sure it is being tossed toward your foot not away from you or behind your head.
5. Once the ball is tossed toward your foot let it land on your foot, Read advice 2 & 3.

Watching the Drop Ball training video for multiple variations of the drop ball exercises you may begin at home.

Advice 1: *as you begin to master this exercise you may experiment with different heights to challenge yourself further.*

Advice 2: *apply no strength or momentum towards the ball as this will cause the ball to be punted or kicked elsewhere. You want the ball to land gently on your foot.*

Advice 3: *Do not extend your leg out above your waist, let the ball drop to your foot for instant dribbling or met the ball about 2 feet off the ground and bring the ball down by slightly pulling your foot back.*

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We want to ensure all workouts are done correctly, so before leaving your child alone to do the workouts by themselves make sure they are doing it slow and right rather than fast and wrong before increasing speed. As others teach that practices makes perfect our technical director teaches that practice makes permanent.

Not all kids learn at the same pace and it is important that you as a parent coach understand this when you go through these exercises with them. It may take a few training days before your child begins to master the ball on their own so, it is imperative that through the duration of your parent coaching you encourage your child while letting them know when it is being done wrong as well. You never want to tell your child he or she is doing it correctly when you know they are not. Since these practices are more personal, you should take advantage of the situation to correct as much as possible without overdoing it and burning out your child. Let them know soccer is like any subject, you could misspell one word and you lose a point on your essay, you rushed through a math problem and missed the answer by a couple digits and you lost a point... You rushed through the exercise and did not execute the correct technique and now your passes to a teammate is not as good. Therefore, going through the learning process and taking your time with it is better than rushing through it because practice does make permanent. Technical Director, Jarsi Ibanez says - 'If you are used to rushing then mistakes are your forte, but if you train the brain to slowly go through things diligently, the brain will be taught to catch mistakes and master it.'