

# Coach FAQ

[Why should I coach in AYSO?](#)

[I don't know anything about soccer. Can I still help coach?](#)

[What is the time commitment to being an AYSO coach? Assistant coach?](#)

[How old do I have to be to coach?](#)

[How do I become a coach?](#)

[Does an AYSO coach have to have a child on the team?](#)

[What training is provided for coaches?](#)

[What is Safe Haven™?](#)

[What are the various levels of coach certification?](#)

[What are the requirements and time involved with the various coach certifications?](#)

[What and/or where is my certification?](#)

[Do I have to coach little kids before I can coach the older kids?](#)

[Must each player play half of every game, or can it be averaged out across the season?](#)

[Why do we play short-sided games and is it mandatory?](#)

[What are the correct field dimensions/markings, goal sizes, ball sizes, number of players on the field and on a roster, and game durations for each age group?](#)

[Can we have paid trainers?](#)

[Where and how can I get coaching equipment?](#)

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## Why should I coach in AYSO?

It's a chance to spend quality time with your child and it's fun. It's a great break from work. It makes you feel good. It's a great way to give back to the community.

The rewards come in the form of helping kids have fun at a game or practice, and contributing to their individual skills and teamwork. There is also a great sense of accomplishment when you reach the end of a season, look back and see how far the team has come.

[Back to Top](#)

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## I don't know anything about soccer. Can I still help coach?

Yes! AYSO provides training and materials. Being a coach involves skills you probably already have in addition to specific soccer knowledge. If you are uncertain, try being an assistant coach. Your Region's Coach Administrator will be happy to try to match you up with somebody with a little more experience.

[Back to Top](#)

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## What is the time commitment to being an AYSO coach? Assistant coach?

Coaches run two weekday practices and a game on Saturday or Sunday. Coaching in AYSO is all about teaching and encouraging kids, and having a lot of fun. Parents help with team organization tasks.

[Back to Top](#)

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## How old do I have to be to coach?

You must be 18 years old or older to be an AYSO coach. Though AYSO appreciates and encourages young people to participate in all aspects of soccer including coaching, an individual under 18 years of age may not be listed as the head coach or assistant coach on the official roster due to liability issues. They can certainly assist in training and even make decisions regarding the team, but may not ever be left alone with players and may not be listed on the official roster.

[Back to Top](#)

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## How do I become a coach?

You sign up to coach at registration time when you register your kids to play. If you need contact information, you can contact our Coach Administrator, Loretta Amaro at [lcamaro@hotmail.com](mailto:lcamaro@hotmail.com)

If you have a child that is already on a team that has a coach, just let the coach know that you are interested in coaching and would like to help. Most of our coaches will be delighted to use you.

[Back to Top](#)

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## Does an AYSO coach have to have a child on the team?

No. Anyone over the age of 18 can volunteer to be a coach in AYSO. Generally speaking, most coaches are the parents of a child on the team; however, AYSO welcomes and encourages anyone who wants to volunteer to come out and coach!

[Back to Top](#)

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## What training is provided for coaches?

There are two parts to coach training. One is an online course which covers team management, safety, volunteer protection and AYSO's principles. This course is known as Safe Haven™. There is also age-specific training which covers soccer techniques, strategies, and teaching ideas appropriate to the age group. These clinics are held on weekends, and vary from a half day to two days. You must attend coach training to be covered by the Volunteer Protection Act. There is more about coach training in the coach pages.

[Back to Top](#)

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### What is Safe Haven™?

AYSO makes a commitment to provide a safe place for children to play and compete. The coach has a responsibility to help make the environment safe, as well as fun. To ensure the safety of both children and volunteers, each volunteer is required to take a short in-person or online training session called Safe Haven™. It focuses on safety and appropriate behavior with children as well as first aid and other on-field issues. Agreeing to a background check is also required for each volunteer.

[Learn More about Safe Haven™](#)

[Back to Top](#)

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### What are the various levels of coach certification?

AYSO offers coach training for every age group. The various levels are as follows and each one has its own course: U-6, U-8, U-10, U-12, Intermediate, Advanced and National.

[Back to Top](#)

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### What are the requirements and time involved with the various coach certifications?

AYSO's U-6, U-8, U-10, and U-12 courses are all considered “stand-alone” courses, meaning that you may take any one of them without having taken any prior courses. The U-12 course then becomes the prerequisite for taking the Intermediate course, which is the prerequisite for taking the Advanced course, which is the prerequisite for taking the National course. Course times are as follows

- U-6 Coach - 2 hours
- U-8 Coach - 2 hours
- U-10 Coach - 3 hours
- U-12 Coach - 5 hours
- Intermediate Coach - 15 hours
- Advanced Coach - 18 hours
- National Coach - 56+ hours

[Back to Top](#)

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### What and/or where is my certification?

Record of all coach training is stored in AYSO's on-line database, [www.eayso.org](http://www.eayso.org). Every individual that has filled out a Volunteer Registration Form is entered into the database and record of all training is attached to the individual's file. Anyone is allowed access to eAYSO by going through a short, one-time

registration on the eAYSO home page. Once in the database you may view your own records by going to Look-Up/Volunteer and looking up your record. Once there, click View Certifications. If your records do not reflect the training you have taken, please call the Coaching Coordinator (800) 872-2976

[Back to Top](#)

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### **Do I have to coach little kids before I can coach the older kids?**

There is no requirement to coach younger players before coaching older players. The only requirement is that you have the age-specific certification, meaning if you are coaching U-10-you've taken the U-10 coaching certification course.

[Back to Top](#)

---

### **Must each player play half of every game, or can it be averaged out across the season?**

True to one of AYSO's founding philosophies, Everyone Plays™, every player must play at least 50 percent of every game. Additionally, it is strongly recommended that no player play four (4) quarters before all players have played three (3) quarters. The only exception to this rule would be a serious injury that truly prevents the player from participating or if the player arrives to the game after it has begun, in which case the following National Rules and Regulations apply: ...if the player arrives in the first quarter, the player must play a minimum of two (2) of the remaining three (3) quarters ...if the player arrives during the second or third quarter, the player must play a minimum of one (1) quarter.

[Back to Top](#)

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### **Why do we play short-sided games and is it mandatory?**

AYSO highly recommends that all children under the age of 12 play short-sided soccer (less than 11 players per team) for the following reasons:

- A. Young soccer players need special consideration:
  - B.
    - They are children playing a child's game.
    - They must be regarded as young children, not mini adults.
    - They are essentially self-oriented and relate naturally to one or two others, not to large groups.
    - Fun and activity factors must be a central part of a child-centered program.
  - C. Educators agree early learning experiences are the most important and produce the most retention:
    - D.
      - Most children cannot sustain prolonged activity.
      - They function best in suitable starts and stops (rest periods).
      - Concentration span is limited, so frequent changes of pace and activity are essential.

E. Children love to learn:

F.

- They learn a great deal more when the ratio of teacher (coach) to student (player) is reduced.
- With small numbers and the simple nature of soccer, the best teacher is the game itself.
- With fewer players on the field, each player gets more touches on the ball and has greater opportunity to change location in a fast-flowing, fluid game.
- Playing short-sided allows players to make simpler decisions and develop an earlier, better understanding of organization of play.
- Smaller fields mean more players are directly involved in play, creating increased levels of both concentration and interest.
- The reduced field size encourages more shots on goal by all players, therefore more goals scored.

G. Residual benefits:

H.

- Parents are introduced to the game in smaller, more understandable doses.
- Short-sided soccer is a great place to train new referees.
- The rest of the world is playing short-sided develop player skills and we are part of the soccer world.

[Back to Top](#)

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### **What are the correct field dimensions/markings, goal sizes, ball sizes, number of players on the field and on a roster, and game durations for each age group?**

All these items are part of AYSO's National Coaching Program guidelines. View the [Coaching Program guidelines](#) for answers to these questions.

[Back to Top](#)

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### **Can we have paid trainers?**

Paid trainers may not be used to benefit individual teams or players within a Region. Such training must be offered to all players within the Region.

The curriculum used must be consistent with the practices of AYSO and must be approved by the AYSO National Coach.

All trainers must be approved in writing by the Regional Commissioner, Area Director and Section Director.

In the AYSO Reference Manual under Article One: Use of AYSO Name, Trademarks, Mailing List, AYSO's Licensing Program, Paying Volunteers, Part 2.5 in the last paragraph it states: *AYSO is a volunteer organization and does not condone or approve of the use of paid volunteers such as trainers of coaches. The use of such personnel is contrary to the basic philosophy of AYSO.*

Now, if your question is about using a soccer camp company to provide trainer type activities; the

following is read from the National Coaching Advisory Commission and the National Board of Directors. The National Board of Directors must be assured that any such program will not overburden or conflict with the current existing programs and philosophies of AYSO.

[Back to Top](#)

### **Where and how can I obtain coaching equipment?**

Our Region will provide each coach with some basic equipment every year: some cones, a soccer ball and some first aid supplies. Otherwise, coaches are expected to provide their own equipment. You can obtain equipment at the [AYSO Store](#) which carries everything you could possibly need.

[Back to Top](#)