

Diesel's Skill Builders is an innovative new program from the Houston Dynamo and Houston Dash, targeted at children ages 2-8 – and their parents. Our professionally trained and licensed youth coaches will visit your child's school five times over the course of the semester focusing on ball mastery and technical development. At each session, they'll teach the kids soccer skills designed to help young children develop balance, coordination and agility in a fun way.

Where it differs from other youth soccer programs is you – the parent. After each session, we'll send the kids home with "homework" – to practice the skills they learned with mom & dad using the Size 1 soccer ball we've given them. Play with them for 20-30 minutes a day, working on keeping the ball close rather than kicking it away. Encourage creativity and experimentation. Most of all, have fun!

Research has shown that developing new skills – whether those are athletic, musical or artistic – at an early age jump-starts the cognitive development in young minds, so whether your child becomes the next U.S. National Team star or not, Diesel's Skill Builders will create benefits that will last a lifetime.

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SOCCER STARTS AT HOME®

Diesel's **SKILL BUILDERS**



Soccer Starts at Home®

Diesel's Skill Builders was designed by world renowned youth soccer expert **Tom Byer**, the author of best-selling book Soccer Starts at Home®.

Tom has worked with many of the biggest soccer clubs and federations in the world. With his help, the Japanese soccer federation completely transformed how they teach the game, resulting in their women's national team winning the 2011 Women's World Cup.

Tom's philosophy is based on using the critical power of parents during early childhood to encourage children to manipulate a small ball (rather than kick it), inside or outside the house, and repeat core moves and skills. We do that by empowering parents with basic knowledge of setting achievable tasks and building the child's interest and motivation through success and encouragement.

Some of the benefits to parents and children include:

- Bonding opportunities
- Active & healthy kids
- Self-confidence
- Coordination, balance & agility
- Improved cognitive skills
- Playing together
- Creating a love of soccer

"Whenever a child can master any particular skill from a young age, this has tremendous benefits throughout life. Mastering something creates belief in oneself that can transfer into many other things, such as walking into a math class to take a test." - Tom Byer



SOCCER SKILLS CHECKLIST



01

01 USE "BOTTOM OF THE FOOT" FOR BALL MASTERY

Teach the child to maneuver the ball between both feet using the soles of the foot.
Open the stance up and place the ball on the inside of either foot to start.
Then take the opposite sole of the foot and slide it over to the opposite side.
Continue doing this with both feet and find a rhythm.



02

02 KEEP THE BALL CLOSE

Don't kick the ball away – keep it close to yourself.
Practice protecting the ball by pulling the ball back with both left and right soles of the feet.
Plus – keeping it close keeps things in the house from getting broken!



03

03 CHANGING DIRECTION

Learning to change direction with the ball is another essential skill needed to play the game.
We do this by using both the insides of both feet to manipulate changing direction by turning and cutting with the ball.



04

04 PRACTICE WITH BOTH FEET

Starting with basic skills, encourage the child to try each skill with both feet.
This not only improves ball mastery; it improves coordination and agility, and engages different parts of the child's brain.

PARENT GUIDE

01 CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Children learn best when they are in a safe protected environment where they are allowed to fail without ridicule.
When playing indoors ensure safety first in an area they won't fall over and injure themselves.
When playing on a wooden or linoleum surface we recommend no socks so they don't slip and fall into something.
This can be done outdoors in a relatively small space.

01



02 ENGAGE WITH YOU CHILD 20 MINUTES PER DAY

The first line in a child early development are the parents.
The interaction between you and your child is paramount, because of a child need for parental approval is what really sets them up for deep learning and long term memory.
Uploading these skills to their brain in an emotionally charged environment with a parent is key.

02



03 PROVIDE POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT

Celebrate by praising your child's effort as much as his/her ability to learn new things.
Many kids learn at different speeds so you need to be patient.
Get them to show you what they have learnt and give positive reinforcement.

03



04 DOCUMENT PROGRESS, AND SHARE YOUR JOURNEY

Video your child practicing with the ball so they can see their own improvement.
Not only will those be fun family memories, but as you continue to document their progress, you'll be amazed at how quickly they pick up new skills!

04

