



## Characteristics of U12 Children

### Psychomotor Development

- The average age for the beginning of pubescence in girls is 10 years with a range of 7-14, for boys is age 12 with a range of 9-16.
- Strength building activities require overloading the muscles to a greater extent than endurance activities.
- Flexibility training is key to prevention of injury.
- Overuse injuries, burnout and high attrition rates associated with high-intensity children's programs that fail to stress development and learning enjoyment.
- Begin to develop abilities to sustain complex coordinated skill sequences.

### Cognitive Development

- Formal operational stage of cognitive development.
- Changes in thought process are the result in an increased ability to acquire and apply knowledge.
- Begins to think in abstract terms and can address hypothetical situations.
- A systematic approach to problem solving appears at this stage, the game of soccer must present the ability to think creatively and solve problems while moving.

### Psychosocial Development

- More TV, less structured play.
- Beginning to spend more time with friends and less with parents.
- Popularity influences self-esteem.
- Whether a child enters puberty early or late has important psychological implications.
- Learning an appropriate sex role.
- Children are susceptible to conform to peer pressure.
- Most children seek peers that are most like them in age, race, sex and socio-economic status, opportunity to introduce the value of cultural diversity.

\* Characteristics were re-printed from the US Youth Soccer National Youth License

