



Start Smart Football is a developmentally appropriate introductory football program for children in 1st & 2nd grade. The program prepares children for organized football in a fun, non-threatening environment. Start Smart Football prepares children and their parents for organized football without the threat of competition or the fear of getting hurt. Age appropriate equipment from Franklin Sports® is used in teaching **throwing, catching, kicking/punting and running/agility**.

What is the Start Smart Football? Start Smart Football, a program of the National Alliance for Youth Sports being offered through the Valley Center Recreation Commission which teaches children in 1st & 2nd grade (2017-18 school year) the basic motor skills necessary to play organized football while they work one-on-one with an adult (preferable their parent). The program focuses on teaching children basic sports mechanics without the threat of competition or the fear of getting hurt. Start Smart Football sessions are held once a week for four to six weeks. Each week, the exercises become increasingly more difficult as the class progresses and the children show improvement.

The Start Smart Sports Development Program was originally developed based on a 1993 study showing that 49% of children participating in organized sports do not have the minimum motor skills necessary to be successful in those programs. The same study also showed that children who are given proper motor skills instructions in a fun, supervised setting are more likely to be ready for organized sports.

The Start Smart Mission. The Start Smart Sports Development Programs were created to teach children the basic motor skills necessary to participate in organized sports while giving them the opportunity to work one-on-one with an adult (preferably their parent). The program are developed to be informative and fun, so children will have a positive first time sports experience and continue participating in sports beyond this introductory level.

Why Start Smart? Before entering organized youth sports programs, children need to master the fundamental motor skills that serve as a basis for more complex sports skills. Children do not effectively learn these skills by playing games, but rather by practicing developmentally appropriate activities. Children are introduced to developmentally appropriate activities where tasks are designed for the child's current level of performance ability while using equipment that enables the child to be successful. Success is extremely important in early motor skill learning experiences, as it builds self-esteem and the motivation and confidence needed to try and improve. Children who enter youth sports programs with fundamental motor skills and confidence in their ability to perform are much more likely to learn new and more complex sport-specific skills, achieve success in competition, and enjoy a positive sports experience. These children are also more likely to participate in sports and fitness activities as adults. All children should be provided with effective, developmentally appropriate activities and equipment to prepare them for future organized sports and fitness opportunities. Start Smart accomplishes this by offering programs that encourage children to participate in youth sports without the threat of competition or the fear of getting hurt.

START SMART FOOTBALL