



CHILDREN'S  
FOOTBALL  
ALLIANCE

let them play in a CFA.

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## **FAMILY FOOTBALL FUN – ARSENAL Pilot**

2<sup>ND</sup> – 6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2010

REPORT

Written by Ernie Brennan

- Aims of the project
- Need/Rationale
- Evaluation
- A Family Conclusion



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## ARSENAL FAMILY FOOTBALL FUN AT A GLANCE

**All inclusive** achievement alternative breaking barriers **building**  
**relationships** celebration caring **CHILDHOOD** coaching  
**community concern** competition **confidence** congratulations contribution  
**communication** creative development education **engagement**  
enjoyment experience expressive **FAMILY** fair play workshop **friends**  
**Fun** healthy lifestyles information inventive **involvement** learning **lives**  
**mentor** opportunity **ownership** Tournament parents positive  
environments **partnerships** participation pathways personal  
**PLAY** physical activity public progress **respect**  
responsibility **relationships** role models safety sharing  
self esteem sportsmanship support talent team building  
**team work** training **trust** volunteers  
young people



### **Aims of the Project**

- Improving communication and recognising the value of intergenerational relationships to strengthen the family team.
- Putting the fun back into football as a family activity
- Challenging a bullying culture in the family, on the pitch and in the wider community

#### **Improving communication and recognising the value of intergenerational relationships to strengthen the family team.**

Football can be a daunting challenge for many parents and carers especially those that don't actively have an interest in the sport and yet they find their children enjoy playing the game in its many forms. Family communication through football can often be stifled by adults' lack of recognition in that the children's game is not the adults' game. It is essential that adults contextualize football through childhood and feel confident trusting children to play their game in safe loosely supervised environments.

Intergenerational relationships can play a vital role in community cohesion and if children are allowed to form circles of trust both young and old generations can benefit in the long term.

#### **Putting the fun back into football as a family activity.**

Football can provide families with wonderful memories for life. There are many formats in the game which help children develop their social and technical skills. Family football is a fundamental introduction to a life long love of the game. It is the one area in childhood when football should be focused on fun without expectations.

#### **Challenging a bullying culture in the family, on the pitch and in the wider community.**

Football can be a passionate game and often ignites emotions that some of us find difficult to control. Children often mimic poor adult behaviour from the touch line where being angry, frustrated and negative can be considered the norm. This aspect of the game can be positively addressed at a very early age. Families provide a rationale when playing and watching the game together at all levels. When football is played in the wider community families often provide positive support and respect all participants which children instinctively respond to.



## **Need/Rationale**

- Number of e-mail correspondence from parents to CFA and founder members concerning bullying in football – a number one issue for families and children.
- The importance of strengthening the family unit as a sustainable solution to tackle the rising violence in the community e.g gangs and knife crime
- The rise in aggressive behaviour of parents at children's football games

### **Number of e-mail correspondence from parents to CFA and founder members concerning bullying in football – a number one issue for families and children.**

Since the CFA's conception a consistent stream of correspondence from parents, coaches and other organizations regarding issues around bullying in the children's game has been prominent at all levels.

### **The importance of strengthening the family unit as a sustainable solution to tackle the rising violence in the community e.g gangs and knife crime.**

Football can be a vehicle for social inclusion which drives on strong family units educating children at home about anti-social behaviour. There is ongoing work with many organisations playing an important part tackling violence in the community through football. The CFA's extended network recognise there is no room for complacency and the family have a vital role to play in education of young people and how we can all foster positive intergenerational relationships.

### **The rise in aggressive behaviour of parents at children's football games.**

A number of press articles and debates on coaching forums have once again given rise to parents' poor behaviour on the touch lines of children's football matches.

Lessons learnt from communities that have suffered from aggressive behaviour of parents in the past can provide solutions in areas that may have been overlooked such as football in the family?



## Evaluation

### Day 1 - Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> August

10:15: Arrive and refreshments

10.30-11.25 Football for fun playing the children's game (55 mins)

Fair play / sportsmanship looking at fun safe play

Homework task: Interview your Parents (5mins) (Appendix 1)

11.30 – 12.00: Parents and children can stay behind to chat to each other and staff.

### Football for fun playing the children's game (55 mins)

Introducing Fair play / Sportsmanship looking at fun safe play

Two games; **First to Score** and **Play Off** helped introduce the children to each other and acted as a good ice breaker.



Ice breaker



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Both games encourage children to take ownership and ultimately make friends. The children were asked how they can best make the game fair and how they can all play the game without any one missing out.

Solutions; Fair teams, Size, Speed, Fun, Rules, Safety, Tackling, No Goal Keepers, Lots of touches of the ball, Lots of goals scored, Good Communication



Making friends



The children did not want to play with goal keepers because it was decided that every one wanted to score.

Rather than goal keepers children decided to take it in turns to play in the goal scoring zone. Both games were played with different size balls and players nominated balls that would reward play with 5 points, 3points and 1 point.

First to Score results; 9-5, 6-7, 7-8, 8-6 total goals **56**

Play Off results; 10-7, 12-8, 8-10, 11-7, 12-10 total goals **95**



The total number of goals scored in 55 minutes **151 Goals**

**Interview Your Parents;** the children were given a brief questionnaire to interview their parents about their childhood and play. The exercise encouraged children to listen to their parent's favourite games when they were young.



## Day 2 - Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August

10:15: Arrive and refreshments

10.30-11.30: Workshops

11.30 – 12.00: Parents and children can stay behind to chat to each other and Arsenal staff.

### **Football for Life**

Exercise in pairs.

The children were asked how else could they decide a kick off in a match other than toss a coin. Lots of great answers but the one everyone felt was the most fun was the best of three playing Rock, Paper, and Scissors. The game led to discussing sportsmanship and the importance of making friends in football. Everyone agreed that to play football you needed to be part of a team.

The children organised 3 teams and nominated captains to represent there team.

Children review Parents / Carers interview

The children discussed their parents answers in their teams. A group discussion followed with the children recognising their parents / carers played the same games they play.

Football, Rounders, Skipping, Hockey, Cricket, Pool, Table Tennis, Swimming, Hopscotch, Hula Hoops, Tag, Cats Cradle, French Skipping, Badmington, Netball, Hide and Seek, Bike Riding, Running.

Children also felt that their parents / carers memories from childhood mirrored their own.

However, children did not recognise all their parents / carers favourite sports person:

Maradona, Pele, Daly Thompson, Mohammed Ali, George Foreman, Ganesh Thapa, Denis Lewis, George Best



This led to the children discussing why they had not heard of their parents sporting heroes and it was pointed out that the children's sporting heroes (David Beckham, Wayne Rooney, Usian Bolt, Monty Paneasar) may well have been inspired by their parents sporting heroes.

When reviewing their parents answers for 'Who was your best friend' all the children wanted to tell every one about their parents best friends. This exercise clearly worked on a level where parents communicated with their children in a positive manner and all the children were totally engaged to the point where they were excited to tell everyone.



Children note their sporting role models



### Exercise in pairs

The Numbers Game is a fun demonstration of different forms of communication. The numbers 1,2,3 are spoken in turn and eventually replaced by actions; clap, jump and hop. The game led to how the players can respect everyone's abilities and help each other to improve.



The numbers game in action



## Everyday Football



Group discussions about relationships through football with adults. The children completed questionnaires (Appendix 2) in their groups.

The exercise would be shared with parents therefore the children's names were not warranted on the forms.

- When you are playing football and your parents shout something positive at you how does this make you feel?

'Nervous and they shout I feel over confident and not playing good anymore'

'I feel proud and happy because my mom thinks I'm good at football'



‘When my dad shouts something positive whilst playing football I like there is a rush of energy inside of me’

‘I feel very happy because it encourages me and makes me feel proud’

‘It makes me feel happy and not to quit and carry on’

‘I feel like I have improved’

‘I feel good’

‘It makes me very happy and proud of myself’

- When you are playing football and your parents shout something negative at you how does it make you feel?

‘Very sad because you are trying’

‘I don’t want to play’

‘I feel angry and down heartened and my throat feels dry’

‘I don’t mind because I know she doesn’t mean it and we joke about it’

‘Don’t feel like playing anymore because it’s not about winning it’s about having fun plus he should be supportive’

‘Don’t feel like playing anymore in my life because my parents should be supportive’

‘Unhappy because your parents are meant to encourage you instead of upsetting you’

‘I feel like I need to improve something’

‘Makes me want to say something back at them’

‘It makes me feel bad’



'I feel upset'

'Sad'

- When they SHOUT something positive what do they say?

'Well done'

'That's my boy'

'Come on'

'Excellent'

'Go on you can do it'

'Brilliant'

'Come on Son'

- When they SHOUT something negative what do they say?

'That shot was the worse ever'

'Your no good'

'You play like a girl'

'Why do you even waste my money how can you miss an open pass'

'Don't be selfish'

'That was terrible'

'Oh man your rubbish'



1=not important 5=very important	1	2	3	4	5
The number of children that said					
How important is your football result	3		5	4	3
How do you see your relationship with your parents or carers at home				8	5
How do you see your relationship with your parents at football			5	3	5
How often do you feel your family comes together as a team		2	4	5	3

Exercise in pairs

All winners' game is a knock out competition featuring Heads, Shoulders, Knees and FOOTBALL.



The semi final.



At the end of the session captains picked a player from their team that they felt contributed to all the discussions and helped by taking part in the activities. The captains explained their reasons why they awarded player of the team and the teams applauded sportingly.



Captains awarding their players



## August

### Parents' workshop

#### COME THE WHISTLE (audio-visual)

Parents discussed the positive and negative communication issues arising from the film.

Some parents comments from the Feedback form (Appendix 3);

'Good insight – it was enlightening to watch from the outside. I was moved by the fact that children cried when they lost a game. It's taught me to teach them to have fun'

'Very helpful and see all the negatives of adults being involved in football'

'Not good for the child because parents get involved'

'Let child's play be child's play'

'Good eye opener'

#### LET THEM PLAY

The Children's game is not the adult's game – looking at how adults can enjoy children's football without expectations.

Parents discussed their expectations when they watch their children play.

#### GET STUCK IN (Audio Visual)

A film recorded on the touch lines of children's football matches

Some parents comments;

'Parents need to step back'

'Crushing stuff – Amazed at the language – highly abusive and potentially crushing'

'I think parents should be role models for children'

'Parents have to improve positive education so child can improve'.

'Parents should not put them (children) down'

'Ugly side of the parents getting involved – sitting targets children'



### 'Shocking'

Parents discussed their experiences watching children's matches and how Positive Communication becomes learned behaviour amongst young people.

### INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Parents discussed the answers the children provided from their questionnaires. Some parents felt that they forget that they are watching their children and get wrapped up in the competition. Other parents felt embarrassed that they recognised themselves in the GET STUCK IN film.

Positive Communication was discussed in the context of sport in the community and parents recognise that it acts as a public arena therefore they have wider responsibilities.



The discussions drew from the children's parents' interview whereby parents remembered their childhood and how play helped them to develop in an environment often without parental pressure.



Workshop Feed back form;

. Please tick 3 = high, 2 = average, or 1 = low to each question in the box, thank you.

Workshop feedback ....?	3.	2.	1.
<b>The number of parents</b>			
Did you enjoy the workshop?	<b>8</b>		
Was the workshop informative?	<b>8</b>		
How do you rate your facilitator?	<b>8</b>		
How do you rate the facility?	<b>8</b>		



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### Day 4 Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> August

10:15 Arrive and refreshments  
10.30-11.30

#### First Team Training

Arsenal first team training day. The children and parents watched the Arsenal team's training session at the Emirates Stadium.



Mums, Dads and children prepare for Arsenal Emirates tour.



## Day 5 - Friday 6<sup>th</sup> August

Celebration day –

Parents and children's football for fun featured four teams playing small sided games. The children once again decided how best to make the games fair and fun.

Children's rules;

Parents could only score a goal by a sit down on the ball.

Parents could only touch the ball with their left foot.

Parents could only take a penalty by sitting down.



Some of the children coaching a Dad how he should take a penalty sitting down.



### A Family Conclusion

Critically, whilst Children's Football Alliance is not a sport development programme, it does make contact with large numbers of parents and young people in these localities. It does so principally through the CFA website and a range of community football clubs across the country sending e-mails but crucially, and in contrast to many diversionary activity programmes, seeks to sustain young people's engagement with football with support from their families. Through the course of the pilot week the CFA seek to develop the good work by providing workshops across NW1 and the surrounding areas. The project highlighted the importance of intergenerational relationships and how families play a vital role not just at home but also in the community as a whole.

### THE BEST FOOTBALL TEAM IN THE WORLD EVER.





## Appendix 1.

INTERVIEW with PARENTS). 02.08.10

1. What games did you play as a kid and where did you play them?
2. What is your favourite memory of your parents / guardians?
3. Did you have a favorite football player or sports person?
4. Who was your best friend and why were they your best friend?

The exercise encouraged children to find out about their parents / guardians childhood. The questionnaires were discussed the next day in the children's workshop 03.08.10 and again in the parents' workshop 04.08.10.

## Appendix 2.

EVERYDAY FOOTBALL. Questions;

- When you are playing football and your DAD shouts something positive at you how does it make you feel?
- When you are playing football and your MUM shouts something positive at you how does it make you feel?
- When you are playing football and your DAD shouts something negative at you how does it make you feel?
- When you are playing football and your MUM shouts something negative at you how does it make you feel?
- When they shout something positive what do they say?
- When they shout something negative what do they say?
- How would you see your relationship with your mum and dad at home?
- 1=poor. 2. 3. 4. 5=excellent
- How do you see your relationship with your mum and dad at a football match?
- 1=poor. 2. 3. 4. 5=excellent
- How often do you feel your family comes together as a team?
- 1=hardly. 2. 3. 4. 5=all the time



### Appendix 3

In the context of the workshop it would be helpful if you could fill in the form and return it to the facilitator for research purposes. Please tick 3 = high, 2 = average, or 1 = low to each question in the box, thank you.

Workshop feedback ....?	3.	2.	1.
Did you enjoy the workshop?			
Was the workshop informative?			
How do you rate your facilitator?			
How do you rate the facility?			

**What did you think of Come the Whistle film?**

**What did you think of the Get Stuck In film?**

**Do you know parents / guardians who may benefit from the Children's Football Alliance and why would they benefit?**