Mission

The CFA’s purpose is to promote and advance children’s unalienable right to engage in football play that is fun, safe, engaging, inclusive and developmental.

We seek to break down all barriers which prevent children from actively playing football and we hope to influence structure, practice, attitudes and behaviour in the children’s game. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that all of the millions of young children who want to be playing football are actively playing and receiving the highest quality sporting experience possible. We aim to help generations of children to gain more enjoyment from football and, as a result, increase children’s self-motivation for lifelong activity.

As a humanistic voice and advocate for children in the beautiful game, The CFA also acts as a focal point and network for those individuals and organisations seeking sustainable partnerships, information, education and/or training on child-centred approaches in football. The CFA’s reach is extensive, covering all aspects of children’s football, including:

1. Informal Football
2. Grass Roots and Schools Football
3. Youth Football at Professional Clubs

The power of football to be an influential and dominant force for good in the daily lives of millions of children, and in society as whole, is enormous.

The CFA work tirelessly to liberate that power. Join Us!

Aim

- To be the voice of children in football and provide them with a platform to have their say in their game.
- Empowering children to play their football game whilst supporting them in education, health, sportsmanship and citizenship.
- Provide a practical link for all key stages in infant, junior and youth football.
- Protect childhood in the game of football.
- Promote the children’s game as a vehicle for social inclusion.

Objectives

The CFA’s extended family is intended to be a collection of organisations, devoted to and focused on our children’s welfare, who will form a vital network of partnerships and a forum for sharing information and best practice for the protection of every stage of childhood. The CFA will be accessible to all communities seeking advice on the children’s game.

have your say in a CFA

For more information please contact info@TheCFA.co.uk

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR A CFA

www.childrensfootballalliance.com
1. What we do matters.

The children’s game is not the adult’s game. We look at children’s football from the proper perspective, a child’s point of view. How we respond to that is with flexibility, adaptability and always with boundaries wide enough to encourage learning through play; and most importantly by letting children explore through play. We monitor their security safe in the knowledge that participation aids development. As adults (facilitators, parents, teachers and coaches) always ask yourself, What effect will my decision have on children’s play? in other words what we do matters.

2. Falling in love with the game.

We respect every parent’s right to enjoy their child’s football. We believe that the most important coach in a child’s life is the first one - the parents, relative or guardian. We aid good parenting / coaching and nurture support through play. The fundamental right of all children when they first pick a ball up is to explore its fascinating properties. Do they eat it, kick it, throw it, catch it, bowl it, roll it and what age do they do this? Is it at 3 months old, 3 years old, 13 years old? What if they don’t like a ball at an earlier age and they refuse to play? Or will they come back to the ball at 14 years old and fall in love with its characteristics for the rest of their lives? Either way we do not force the issue. We let play take its course and ultimately encourage falling in love with the game.

3. Let the children play.

Is your motivation for being involved in the children’s game driven by a sense of duty, a passion for the game or an overwhelming desire to be involved in every developmental step issued by society’s ‘great expectations’? To miss a step is often bound in guilt; to miss the photo opportunity might be a memory lost? Yet we acknowledge that children need space to play away from adults who can overly control that freedom. We need to recognise the line marked adult and the space marked child and ultimately let the children play.

4. Competition.

Competition is healthy in the context of children and competition is healthy in the context of adults, however, adult driven competition is unhealthy in the context of children’s football. Adults can help galvanise and foster development from infancy to junior and youth football, but when combined with some adults’ infatuation for football’s cult of personality (plus the pursuit for perfection) it can become a recipe for long term damage. In this day and age the right for every child to play football needs to be defended. There is no gender in children’s football, there are no substitutes in a child friendly game. Good educators, facilitators keep pace with children’s development by recognising natural progression. Football should not come at a price of childhood. It should be fun with consistent participation of all abilities throughout the formative years. The ability to explore, be creative, inventive and master the craft is in every child as they strive to achieve football excellence at appropriate levels nurtured in healthy competition.

5. Reclaim their game.

There are rules applied to football which have served the adult game well but the newly qualified rules applied to children’s football have created a false economy. In the current climate the game is one of the biggest entertainment industries in the world. The market’s tap supplies on demand and the consumer’s appetite for gorging on its every whim is manifesting itself into a win at all cost cash cow? Our children are fed a diet of ‘must have’, ‘must do’, ‘must get’ and ‘let me show you how’. The last four decades have witnessed the main football artery denied of a vital supply of young blood and this is now at a critical point. As adults we need to recognise that the supply (children) needs to reclaim their game.

6. Support their game.

The essence of the beautiful game is ever present in Children when they place their jumpers down for goal posts. Adults from any community can turn their backs and children will undertake a game no matter what age, what gender or colour. Many parents in the western world mistakenly equate their child’s independence with rebelliousness or disobedience. Children push for independence because it is part of human nature to want to feel in control rather than to feel controlled by someone else. Fail to recognise this fact and you will end up loosing the essence of the beautiful game hence it is important to support their game.

There is no guarantee that following these guidelines will result in perfect facilitators... remember, there is no such thing!

Get more boys and girls actively playing football.

Secure for them the most enjoyable, developmental and child-centred football experience when they do play.

Create playing environments and formats which allow children to reach their full potential in football.

Eliminate the factors which cause boys and girls to drop out of football.

‘I agree with every word’

Sue Palmer, 23th July 2008
(Author of best selling book Toxic Childhood)