

The VIP program carries the AYSO philosophy of "Everyone Plays" to a new height, giving **everyone** a chance to play. Through participation in VIP soccer, our goal for every player is to:



Have fun playing soccer

Understand the fundamentals of the game

Learn teamwork and fair play

Increase positive self-esteem

Become more physically fit

Meet and be comfortable with new people

"The thing I'll remember most about this, our first year with a VIP program, is that several special people in my community found out that 'yes, they can' play soccer: be part of a team, make new friends and increase their mobility. These VIP kids are a great asset to our AYSO program in that they show some of the best sportsmanship I've ever seen."

Teresa Wray, *VIP Administrator*
Clio, MI

"We had one player who had always been told there wasn't a team for him. His older brother played AYSO and his father was a coach. When he was told he was signed up for soccer he started sleeping with his soccer ball. That began in March...and he continued to sleep with his ball until soccer started in August!"

Stephen Ekegren, *VIP Administrator*
Bakersfield, CA

For more information, please contact:

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Everyone plays!





The AYSO VIP program provides a quality soccer experience for children and adults whose physical or mental disabilities prevent them from successful participation on mainstream teams. VIP teams may include individuals with Down syndrome or mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy, emotional disturbances, visual impairments or other conditions that impair mobility, strength and/or comprehension.

In the American Youth Soccer Organization, these individuals are Very Important Players (VIP). AYSO recognizes that everyone needs to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance. Through participation in soccer, VIP players experience all of these and more.

Everyone Plays

People with disabilities are members of our community: the children of friends, neighbors, relatives; our classmates and coworkers. Special programs and schools can isolate these individuals, but VIP provides integration with non-disabled players, or "buddies," who assist VIP players on the field. These relationships frequently grow beyond support into meaningful friendships.

Everyone Benefits

VIP benefits all participants, not just the players. Buddies and other volunteers increase their understanding and appreciation of people with special needs. They find their lives greatly enriched by their involvement with these new VIP friends.

For parents and caregivers who may have thought they would never see their children playing a sport and belonging to a group, VIP renews hope and gives them joy. They are able to relax and enjoy watching their VIP players having fun like everyone else.

The Players

VIP teams are typically small and coeducational. As few as three players on each side can play! VIP teams are balanced by size, mobility and ability rather than by age. When numbers allow, older and younger age divisions may be formed as well. Players who have reached the age of four may participate.

There is no upper age limit for VIP players as long as they remain on VIP teams, and teams can be formed anywhere. Expect a wide variety of ability levels and sizes. Flexibility is the key!



TO FIND A TEAM:

Contact:
 Alan Devan at
 AYSO Region 128
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 AlanRDevan@Gmail.com



Within AYSO, VIP



Theodora Rockwood has been playing VIP soccer for a few years now and her father, Bill Rockwood, says,

"Theodora has been having a great time and she's just very excited coming out to the soccer field every weekend. Every time she scores a goal, she gets excited, 'Did you see me? Did you see me score my goal, daddy?' I would encourage families who are considering the program to bring your kids out here. The kids have a great time and you'll enjoy watching the kids play soccer."