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## "The RYSL Rug Rat Program Rational"

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When the Rug Rat program was being developed, we knew there would always be a parent or two who felt that their child was ahead of all of their peers. That even though they were young, they had the motor skills to "Play Up" with the older kids. We took that into consideration as we designed this program.

1. The problem is, just as with walking, if you don't crawl first, you end up having some motor skill deficiencies. In sports in general, if you start the player into the competitive cauldron too soon, they can have emotional scarring for the rest of their lives. This type of scarring doesn't show up right away. It is insidious and may take years to manifest itself.
2. Parents yelling at them, the requirement to score goals, the requirement to defend, an overzealous coach who demeans them, peers who criticize them, etc., etc., etc. That is why we don't throw 2 and 3-year-old children to the wolves (actual Soccer matches). They are just too young, psychologically, to deal with it. That might seem trivial or like something that won't happen to your child, but believe me, it happens to **ALL** children.
3. They may have the motor skills to compete, but that is not what is important. We want the kids to be kids. To go out and enjoy the opportunity just to play and to get that 'normal' development in the true course of time the way it is supposed to happen.
4. I have seen, far too often, parents pushing their child up an age group or two because they have the motor skills to **maybe** handle it, only to see them drop out of the sport at a later time because they don't like it anymore due to the pressures and expectations they've had to endure and deal with throughout their young lives (the emotional scarring).
5. The RYSL Rug Rat program was designed to **'ease'** the child into the very competitive world of Sport. Even though the RYSL is a Recreation League, kids are inherently very competitive as are the parents and coaches.
6. It has far more to do with the mental and emotional development of the player than the physical development at this age.  
See you on the soccer pitch...