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Tips For Good Practices:

1. Kids love playing games & keeping score. **In practice, try to use games & not drills.** Make your drill a game!
 2. Everyone should stay active & participate. Avoid lines.
 3. Maximize "touches" on the ball. At least 100 touches per practice for each player.
 4. Teach proper technique and emphasize games that practice technique or simulate play or playing situations.
 5. Run games by keeping time (e.g., so they last 1, 3, or 5 minutes) or by keeping score (e.g., first to 3, 12, etc.).
 6. Praise hustle, improvement and a good attitude. Measure each player's performance by his or her personal improvement and effort, and not by comparing them to someone else. Try to motivate in a positive way that builds self-esteem.
 7. A good game must be easy & quick to set up and should be simple to explain and manage. If you are spending too much time on set up or instruction, simplify it.
 8. If it's not fun, it's not a good game.
 9. You must have at least one ball per player.
 10. Adopt this philosophy: **Keep it simple, keep them active, keep it fun & at least 100 touches per player per practice".**
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Things You Need For A Good Practice:

1. **Small Soccer "Disk" Cones.** Disk cones are ideal for marking areas for small-sided games. You need 2 disk cones per player (e.g., 30 disk cones for 15 players). Disk cones look like an upside down bowl and come in fluorescent yellow and orange; orange is most visible on brown grass. Consider buying a strap to keep your disk cones on. It is only a few dollars and worth it. As an alternative, you can use strips of brightly colored cloth to mark the areas.
 2. **A Way To Identify "Teams".** Soccer players wear their reversible yellow/red jerseys. You can buy practice vests (also called "bibs") for about \$6 each, or there are several cheaper ways to identify teams during practice games. But I would save this expense for later years.
 3. **A Ball for Every Player.** Ask each child to bring a ball to practice, but buy some extras to bring because some kids will forget. A nylon mesh laundry bag makes a great ball bag. Also, buy a ball pump to keep the balls inflated.
 4. **Shin guards & Water.** Every player should wear shin guards & bring a plastic water bottle with their name on it. I always take extra water because some always forget.
 5. **Assistants.** The more the better. Ask parents to help, even if it is just to pick up balls.
 6. **Use your voice instead of a whistle.** Getting your players used to the sound of your voice. When to stop, when adjust play, when to go. They'll hear the whistle later. Trying using the word "freeze" to stop all action.
 7. **An Equipment Bag.** To keep your gear in. In it should be some Band-Aids or a small medical kit (about \$5). One of the 99¢ instant ice packs is good. (You squeeze these & they get cold. They are at drugstores).
 8. **Do You Need a Goal or a Lined Field?** No. Not for just practice, just use cones to mark your area of play. Practice Games require a goal or a lined field. However, a goal or a net backstop is handy if you are practicing shooting.
 9. **A Watch With A Countdown Timer.** You can get by without this, but it makes it a lot easier to run timed games. Timex and Casio make models that are available at Target and Wal-Mart for about \$25.
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