



**FOOTBALL
NSW**

REQUEST TO PLAY DOWN IN AGE

Guidelines

These Guidelines relate to applications to play down in age group by grassroots football players who have a diagnosed medical condition, disability or developmental condition. These Guidelines are unrelated to Biological Maturation assessments (BM) or Relative Age Effect (RAE) applications and assessments.

1. In grassroots football, players are required to play in the age group applicable to a player's natural age.
2. A request to play down in age group because of lack of height or size (not associated with a medical condition or disability) or for convenience reasons shall not be considered.
3. A child's age is still regarded as the best indicator of similarity in physical growth and development for children participating in sport in terms of strength, stamina and physique. Ideally, children should play in teams with other children of the same or similar age due to the various stages of growth and development which normally occur during the different phases of a child's life.
4. Consideration can be given to a player to play down in age is where there is a confirmed diagnosis by a medical practitioner or specialist that a player has a medical condition or disability and as a result of that condition the child is lesser in strength, stamina and physique and/or is more suited to playing in a younger age group for a genuine medical reason. This may also include conditions relating to muscle development, bone density, heart and/or lung conditions where the player may be at increased risk in their natural age group. However, a player's physical weight and height is also considered due to the potential for players in the younger (requested) age group to be placed at increased risk of injury.
5. Applications may also be considered where a player has a diagnosed developmental condition confirmed by a medical practitioner or specialist (ASD, ADHD, GAD etc.) and where the player's physical size does not place players in the younger age group at increased risk of injury.
6. To play down in age application must first be made in writing to the club by the player's parent or guardian, the club then contacts the local association. A FNSW Play Down Application form must then be completed by the club or local association and submitted by the Association to Football NSW. The application must include; a written request from the player's parents/guardian for the child to play down, support for the application by the club and association and must include the relative medical or specialist documentation, confirmation of the player's weight and height and any additional information available to support the application.

A Medical certificate from a General Practitioner is acceptable but where possible detailed specialist documentation outlining the player's medical condition, disability or developmental condition. Other medical or specialist documents which may support the application can also be provided.

7. Applications to play down in age group are permitted for amateur grassroots football only and are not permitted where the participation relates to any Football NSW state run competitions including NPL, WNPL, Youth League or any elite or representative level or football competition or tournament.
8. Players participating in FNSW State run football competitions and tournaments must participate in their age appropriate team in all cases unless competition regulations allow.
9. All applications shall be made annually, and all approvals expire 31 December of the participation year.
10. SDFA reserves the right to deny any application at its sole discretion without explanation or recourse.
11. SDFA reserves the right to request further information and/or assessment of the player at any time.

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