

PARENT EDUCATION & SUPPORT

2026 Age Group Changes

Dear OEFC Families,

We want to share an important upcoming change to youth soccer age groups that will take effect beginning in **Fall 2026**. This update is designed to better align players with their school peers and improve the overall development experience.

1. THE BIG CHANGE: AUGUST 1 CUTOFF

Starting in Fall 2026, age groups will shift from the current January 1–December 31 system to an **August 1 – July 31** cycle.

Why this matters:

- Players grouped with school classmates
- Better peer alignment, especially for Aug–Dec birthdays

2. YOUR CHILD MAY CHANGE AGE GROUPS

Depending on your child's birthdate, they may move age groups starting in the 2026–2027 season.

Example: October 2016 player remains U10 but grouped with Aug 1, 2016 – July 31, 2017.

Important: No changes for 2025–2026 season.

3. ADDRESSING 'TRAPPED PLAYERS'

This change helps eliminate players whose soccer age doesn't match school grade.

Benefits include better participation, peer alignment, and development continuity.

4. TEAM STRUCTURE MAY ADJUST

Teams may be reorganized under the new structure.

- Some teams stay together (playing up)
- Others restructure by age group

Decisions based on skill, maturity, and development.

5. HOW TO PREPARE

What you can do:

- Review your child's projected age group
- Stay informed in early 2026
- Be flexible during transition

Timeline:

- 2025–2026: No changes
- Spring 2026: Communication begins
- Fall 2026: New system starts

THE BOTTOM LINE

This change aligns players with school peers, improves participation, and supports long-term development.

We are here to support you. Please reach out with any questions.