

PARENT ZONE FEMALE PLAYER PATHWAYS



This is a guide for parents and carers to help define the different football environments for female players within the County of Essex, from Grassroots Clubs to the Regional Talent Club.



GRASSROOTS CLUBS



Provide a safe, fun, and engaging environment for all abilities to play football within their local area.

England Football Accredited clubs demonstrate that they are setting the highest standards across their club.

The FA's Weetabix Wildcats: U5 – U11

An informal fun environment for girls only where they can access weekly sessions in a relaxed setting.

Mini Soccer: U7 – U10s / 5v5 & 7v7

Festivals and non-competitive fixture programmes, teams will play within a group of similar ability level teams to experience playing organised matches. Some leagues offer the opportunity for Girls Only teams to play a year group down.

Youth Football: U11s – U18s / 9v9 & 11v11

Introduction to larger formats, teams experience competitive leagues from U12, adding an introductory level of competitive football.

Open-Age: 16+ / 11v11

Adult Womens grassroots football is mostly played on Sundays within the Essex County Women's League. After promotion the next tier is the Eastern Region Womens League, then the Womens Championship and finally the WSL.

REGIONAL TALENT CLUB (RTC)



The top tier of female football for talented youth players is the Essex FA RTC. Girls at the U12, U14 and U16 age group trial each season to be a part of the FA Elite player pathway.

RTC's are governed by The FA and follow strict criteria around coaches, facilities, and player development. The RTC currently runs out of Shrub End in Colchester.

EMERGING TALENT CENTRES (ETC's)

There are a national network of over 60 Emerging Talent Centres across the country aimed at girls 8-16 years old. The new centres will commence in September 2022 and will offer a 30-week training programme and occasional festival fixtures.

The centres are funded by The FA and offer a subsidized programme improving access and providing a wider and more diverse talent pool for the game. Within Essex both Colchester United and West Ham hold Emerging Talent Licences.



ESSEX COUNTY FA SCHOOLS REPRESENTATIVE GIRLS TEAMS



The Essex County Schools FA, in partnership with Essex FA, provides the opportunity for players aged U14 & U16 to represent their school within a County schools competition. Both squads play within the South East England Schools FA league and the National Cup.

Selection is organised by Essex Schools FA through a nomination process, where PE leads nominate players to trial.



DISTRICT FOOTBALL

Players aged U11 – U15 have the opportunity to represent their geographical District (District dependant).

This is organised by each individual 'Schools District Association'.

Players will represent their District in which they go to school, not where they live.

For more information, please visit [Essex County Schools FA](https://www.essexfa.com).



GIRLS PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CENTRES

Many professional clubs & independent companies run Girls Only Development Centres. The programmes are set up to compliment a players' grassroots football not conflict. The following organisations delivers Girls Only Development Centres.



SHE CAN PLAY



PROFESSIONAL CLUBS THAT NEIGHBOUR ESSEX

Professional clubs that neighbour Essex, may also provide additional opportunities within the County. Some examples may be, Arsenal, Chelsea, Ipswich Town & Tottenham Hotspur.

There is a fee for parent/carers to pay for their child to participate within this environment.

Other names used for this type of provision:
Elite Centres & Development Squads.



FOOTBALL COACHING COMPANIES

Across Essex there are multiple opportunities for grassroots players to access external coaching and playing sessions outside of their more formal offers, such as their clubs and schools.

Like Professional Clubs, many coaching companies may brand their provision as an 'Academy' or 'Elite Centre', but this does not mean they are linked to a Professional Club or hold an Academy Licence.

Currently there is no national accreditation programme for individual coaching company providers. Therefore providers should acquire their own insurance policies and ensure all coaches undertake the required safeguarding checks. Essex FA is looking at providing a local accreditation scheme in this space, with information shared in due course.

Check out the Parent/Carer checklist below for more info on coaching companies:



Parent/Carer Checklist: Are all coaches DBS checked? Do they hold FA Safeguarding & First Aid Qualifications? Does the provider have Public Liability Insurance? What FA Coaching Qualifications do they have? Have they conducted a Risk Assessment?

Creating a united grassroots environment which delivers football For All