

**FOOTBALL NSW**  
**GUIDELINES**  
**Requests to play down in age**

1. Football NSW requires a player to play in the age group applicable to a player's age and date of birth.
2. A request to play down in age group because of lack of height or size is not permitted.
3. In accordance with information obtained from NSW Sport & Recreation and the Australian Sports Commission, a child's age is considered to be the best indicator of similarity with other children participating in sport in terms of strength, stamina and physique.

Team based sports are considered more equal and safer when playing children in teams of the same or similar age due to the ongoing development (including muscle and bone density) which occurs at certain stages of a child's life.

4. Playing older players, even if smaller in height and/or weight, in a younger age group can still place younger players at risk due to the differing developmental stages.
5. The only time consideration can be given to a player to play down in age is where there is medical evidence to confirm that a player has a medical condition and as a result of that condition, the child is lesser in strength, stamina and physique. This may also include the affect to muscle development and bone density. Consideration must also be given where such conditions may place a player at increased risk if playing in their usual age group however approval cannot be given if such player places younger players at risk.

In such cases special application must first be made in writing to the relative club and local association and be granted conditional approval at these levels. All applications must then be submitted to Football NSW by the local association and include; written request from the player's parents/guardian, conditional approval from club and association including detail of the age and level of participation the player is applying for, relative medical documentation, confirmation of the player's weight and height and any additional information available.

A Medical certificate from a General Practitioner is acceptable but where possible detailed specialist documentation outlining the medical condition and the player's current 'physical growth age'.

6. In such cases Football NSW reserves the right to request further information and/or conduct an assessment of the player subject to the application.
7. Applications to play down in age group on the basis of a proven medical condition and indicative of the physical size and development of a player are only applicable to participation in amateur football or a special needs football program and shall not be applicable to any premier, elite or representative level of football or competition.
8. Players participating in premier, elite and representative level football competitions must participate in all cases in their age appropriate team unless other regulations apply.
9. Any consideration or approval of such requests are made on a case-by-case basis and are conditional and subject to ongoing approval at club, association and state level.