

# Junior Law Review Research Insights



## Supporting children's development through age-appropriate rugby

Research shows children learn best when sport aligns with their age and developmental stage, encourages exploration, and fosters physical literacy.

Junior rugby laws should reflect these principles by reducing early specialisation, increasing opportunities for meaningful engagement, and promoting skill-building and decision-making.

Aligning the laws with children's growth ensures rugby supports their physical, cognitive, and social development positively.



## A safer, smarter pathway for junior players

Evidence supports gradually introducing contact, focusing on proper tackle technique, and designing game formats that protect young players.

Updating junior laws creates safer learning environments and progressive stages, helping players build skills and confidence before moving to older age groups and more competitive rugby.



## Game-based learning for junior rugby development

Modern coaching methods such as Game Sense, Play with Purpose, and the Constraints-Led Approach show children develop skills more effectively when the game suits their developmental level rather than replicating senior rugby.

Smaller fields, fewer players, and more frequent, varied interactions enable young players to make decisions, understand the game, and stay engaged. Adjusting the laws ensures rugby serves as a better teaching tool, allowing players to develop core skills, improve game awareness, and enjoy a more meaningful experience.



## Developmentally aligned rugby progression

Research confirms children benefit from a game that progressively increases in challenge as they mature. Models like FTEM emphasise the importance of strong foundations before advancing to more complex or physical forms of rugby.

A clear, consistent progression in the junior laws is essential to help players develop safely, build confidence, and prepare effectively at every stage.