



## ***What is TOPSoccer (for children with Special Needs)***

The **Parkland Area Soccer Club** is proud of our **TOPSoccer (The Outreach Program for Soccer)** program that we introduced in the fall of 2006 as the first program of this kind to the Lehigh Valley! The spring 2009 season will be our 6th season for this program. **TOPSoccer is** a community-based training and team placement program for young athletes with disabilities, organized by youth soccer association volunteers. The program is designed to bring the opportunity of learning and playing soccer to boys and girls who have a mental or physical disability. The goal is to enable the thousands of young athletes with disabilities to become valued and successful members of the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer (EPYSA) & US Youth Soccer families. After 3 seasons when **TOPSoccer** was offered only to children who have **Autism Spectrum Disorder**, **PASC** is proud that **TOPSoccer** will be extended to include children with **Down Syndrome** and **Cerebral Palsy**. As the program grows, so will the opportunities for athletes with other disabilities.

## **Why *Parkland Area Soccer Club's* TOPSoccer program is so successful**

The emphasis of this program is on development, training and meaningful participation rather than on competition. Key Elements for Successful **TOPSoccer**:

- **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**
- Community support – monetary and non-monetary
- Volunteers willing to work with children
- 'Buddy' system: some players paired with a buddy
- Placement of players primarily by ability, not age
- **Emphasize ability, not disability**
- Involve players and provide meaningful experience
- Dependability of coaches
- **Fun! Fun! Fun!**

