



Coaching children

Coaches of children should remember that:

- children's sport should be FUN!
- children need lots of opportunities for unstructured play, a broad range of activities, and the opportunity for creativity
- early sports specialisation is not recommended for young children
- the social aspects of sport are highly valued by children
- coaches should focus on skill development and individual improvement, rather than winning as the outcome
- all children deserve time and attention, not just the most talented

Children's Characteristics *(Note: these characteristics may vary among children)*

Children's Social Characteristics	Coaches Should
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concerned with themselves • learning social roles and skills • learning how to cooperate • come from different cultural and social backgrounds • learning how to cope with winning and losing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote cooperation, teamwork and fair play during activities, • reinforce the contribution all children make to the group • provide a supportive environment and show sensitivity to individual differences
Children's Level Of Understanding	Coaches Should
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning the best way to do things • unable to process too much information • do not do things automatically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use role models to demonstrate good performance • introduce one thing at a time, keep instructions or questions short and simple • allow time for children to absorb information and practise skills
Children's Physical Characteristics	Coaches Should
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • very active • lack fine motor control • develop at different rates • have different levels of ability • growing rapidly • less tolerant of heat and cold • children develop at different rates, and coaches may have both early and late developers in any group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan a variety of activities • allow time to learn skills • cater for varying ability levels • be aware that growth periods will alter the child's coordination and skills • ensure children wear adequate clothing, drink enough fluids
Children's Personality Characteristics	Coaches Should
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • easily motivated • wide range of reasons for playing sport • sensitive to criticism and failure • short attention span 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen to what the children say • be positive, compliment effort and the parts of the skill that were performed correctly • maintain interest with a variety of activities, maximum participation and limited talk