



# COACHING CHILDREN

When coaching children, remember:

- 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
- the focus is on skill development and individual improvement, not winning
- to give all children time and attention, not just the most talented.

## Children’s characteristics

<b>Children’s social characteristics</b>	<b>Coaches</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerned with themselves</li> <li>• Learning social roles and skills</li> <li>• Learning how to cooperate</li> <li>• Different cultural and social backgrounds</li> <li>• Learning how to cope with winning and losing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote cooperation, teamwork and fair play during activities</li> <li>• Reinforce the contribution all children make to the group</li> <li>• Provide a supportive environment and show sensitivity to individual differences</li> </ul>
<b>Children’s level of understanding</b>	<b>Coaches</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning the best way to do things</li> <li>• Unable to process a lot of information at once</li> <li>• Do not do things automatically</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use role models to demonstrate good performance</li> <li>• Introduce one thing at a time, keep instructions and questions short and simple</li> <li>• Allow time for children to absorb information and practise skills</li> </ul>
<b>Children’s physical characteristics</b>	<b>Coaches</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very active</li> <li>• Lack fine motor control</li> <li>• Develop at different rates and any group may have both early and late developers</li> <li>• Have different levels of ability</li> <li>• Growing rapidly</li> <li>• Less tolerant of heat and cold</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan a variety of activities</li> <li>• Allow time to learn skills</li> <li>• Cater for varying ability levels</li> <li>• Be aware that growth periods will alter a child’s coordination and skills</li> <li>• Ensure children wear adequate clothing drink enough fluids</li> </ul>
<b>Children’s personality characteristics</b>	<b>Coaches</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily motivated</li> <li>• Wide range of reasons for playing sport</li> <li>• Sensitive to criticism and failure</li> <li>• Short attention span</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to what the children say</li> <li>• Be positive, compliment effort and the parts of the skill that were performed correctly</li> <li>• Maintain interest with a variety of activities, maximum participation and limited talk</li> </ul>

Note: these characteristics may vary among children.

**The ideal coaching session will last between 45 and 75 minutes, depending on the age of the children.**

