

Children's Characteristics



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 social characteristics

- 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

Coaches should:

- 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

- learning the best way to do things
- unable to process too much information
- do not do things automatically

Coaches should:

- 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

- 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
- coaches may have both early and late developers in any group

Coaches should:

- 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

- easily motivated
- wide range of reasons for playing sport
- sensitive to criticism and failure
- short attention span

Coaches should:

- 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

The ideal coaching session for young people will last between 45 to 75 minutes, depending on the age of the athletes.

Note: the characteristics above may vary among children