

Essentials for Coaching Children

Coaching Tips 6

Better training sessions - 3 ideas

Keep kids active – maximum participation

Keep them active (maximum participation)

To keep kids meaningfully active, the activity needs to be:

- constant
- challenging
- game-related
- relevant
- physical
- engaging.

This is important because children will:

- learn more when they are 'doing' rather than listening or watching
- improve more quickly
- have more fun
- have less time to misbehave.

Avoid kids standing in long lines or waiting to be active.

Keep it clear and simple – demonstrations and progressions

Keep it clear and simple (demonstrations)

When demonstrating an activity:

- Wait for kids to look and listen.
 - Don't speak while they are talking, fidgeting etc. (e.g., balls still, eyes to you).
- Keep it brief.
 - Avoid explanations that are too long and complex. Keep instructions short and sharp.
- Get them in position first.
 - Sometimes it is best to position kids in the drill first and then explain how to do it, walking it through as you explain.
- Get the sun or any other distractions behind them, not you.
 - It is important that kids are not distracted or have the sun in their eyes.
- Can they all see you easily and at the correct angle?
 - If you are demonstrating a skill, make sure you show them from an angle that makes sense to them – for example, copying you from behind.
- Who will do the demonstration? Are you the best person?
 - You may not be. If not, get the right person – such as one of the kids. This can be a good behaviour management tool.



Keep it clear and simple (progressions)

One way to introduce a new skill to beginners is to use progressions. Start with a simple skill to give them success, build on it gradually and then add more game-like components. For example, when teaching dribbling in basketball, you may:

- Start a skill without defenders
- Start stationary/walking pace
- Place time constraint (e.g. number of drills in 30 seconds)
- Increase distance
- Add movement/increase speed
- Add in defenders, passive then active
- Add in aiming for a goal/target
- Set game-like conditions into the practice drill
- Use role play/game scenarios

Make it like the real game/competition – a game-centred approach

‘You will play as you practise, so practise as you want to play.’

When planning your training session aim to relate the drills, activities and games specifically to the game or competition.

This is important because:

- it increases the players’ motivation
- it creates ‘thinking’ players
- players learn to read the play, use tactics and use their skills in a game-like situation.

Ways to use a more game-centred approach:

- Make the warm-up game relate to the real game.
- After the warm up, play a modified or mini game, with a focus
- Modify current drills to make them more like the game.
- Analyse the tactics or skills in your sport and make up games to practice them
- Use freeze-play – ask lots of questions, get them thinking
- Give players a chance to discuss tactics with each other or with you.