

Essentials for Coaching Children

Coaching Tips 1

Why do kids play sport?
What makes a great coach?
How does a coach improve?

Why do children play sport?

Children play sport to:

- have fun (keep it fun when you can)
- play the game – excitement of competition (make sure all kids get a chance to 'play the game' with minimal drills and skills at training)
- be with friends (be conscious that friendships are important to them, and may need to be encouraged for some)
- to learn the sport/new things (ensure they are all individually challenged and progressing).

Maybe they are playing because their parents want them to. Parents put their kids in sport for many reasons:

- they see the value in their child playing sport – fitness, life-skills, relationships, etc.
- because they loved the sport themselves
- a child-minding opportunity.

It is important to remember all of these factors when coaching.



Why do children quit sport?

Children quit sport because:

- there is too much criticism and yelling – by coaches or parents
- there is too much emphasis on winning
- they are bored
- there is a lack of playing time
- peer problems
- they feel they are not good enough.

Teenagers may quit because of the above and also:

- they are too busy
- there are too many other distractions
- there are too many choices of activities
- they have to study.



Great coaches

Coaches can have a profound impact on a child, whether they keep playing or quit sport, their attitudes towards sport and how they feel about physical activity. A great coach:

- is enthusiastic – they show they love the sport, they are first at trainings and games and show they are happy to be there/see them, etc.
- is caring and encouraging – they show interest in individuals and develop a relationship with them
- can communicate well – they are good listeners too
- has well-planned, fun, productive trainings
- is fair – inclusive, consistent in applying team rules
- has a sense of humour – keep it fun, try to understand the 'level' of the kids
- knows the sport well – rules, techniques, tactics.

Kids don't like coaches who:

- yell
- shame kids
- run pointless, boring trainings
- aren't fair
- emphasise winning too much.

Ways to improve your coaching

- Coach -gain more experience – you'll become better with practice.
- Be an assistant coach.
- Watch other coaches in action, record what you do and do not like.
- Ask someone to watch you coach and give honest feedback (a mentor).
- Reflect on what you do well and what you can improve.
- Go to your sport: look at the website of your state body for training opportunities or resources
- Investigate coaching pathways, training and development.
- Develop your sport-specific expertise.
- Look at examples on the Internet.
- Borrow ideas from other sports to enhance your sessions.

Useful websites

Office for Recreation and Sport – Home Page
www.ors.sa.gov.au/

Office for Recreation and Sport – Coaching
www.ors.sa.gov.au/sport_and_recreation/coaching_and_officiating/coaching
 (includes other Essentials for Coaching Children factsheets)

Office for Recreation and Sport – YouTube Channel
www.youtube.com/user/ORSSASI

Australian Sports Commission – Coaching
www.ausport.gov.au/participating/coaches

Play by the Rules
www.playbytherules.net.au/