

COACHING TIPS



1. PREPARE THE ENVIRONMENT

- Use a clear visual schedule (Now - Next)
- Routine (Welcome - Warm Up - Skills - Games - Cool Down - Finish)
- Minimise distractions and mark out playing area

2. COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

- Use short, simple instructions
- Pair speech with visual cues and gestures
- Repeat key instructions using the same wording

3. GAIN & KEEP ATTENTION

- Get down to the child's level, use names and eye contact
- Use 'call-and-response' or group signals (e.g. "1-2-3-eyes on me")
- Incorporate songs or rhymes for transitions and rotations

4. SHORT & ACTIVE

- Break tasks into small, clear steps
- Use timers or countdowns to signal changes
- Alternate active and less active/calm activities

5. POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

- Give immediate, specific praise (praise effort, not outcomes)
- Use stickers or visual rewards to encourage focus

6. ADAPT TO INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

- Offer a quiet/break area if needed
- Use a buddy system
- Allow non-verbal responses (e.g. Thumbs up)

7. ADAPT TO INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

- Adjust if something isn't working as intended
- Keep a calm tone
- Reflect and debrief with Coaches, parents, helpers post-session



COACHING TIPS & BEHAVIOURAL CUES

Tip/Strategy	What it means	When/How it can be used
First → Then	A simple two-step instruction: <i>First → non-preferred task,</i> <i>Then → preferred task.</i>	Use when motivating a child to complete a skill they find difficult or less preferred. Helps reduce anxiety and improve task completion.
Visual Schedule	A picture or symbol sequence showing what's happening next.	Use at the start of training or transitions (e.g., warm-up → drills → game). Great for children who benefit from routine and predictability.
Modelling / Demonstration	The coach or peer performs the action so the child can copy.	Use when verbal instructions are not enough. Ideal for new skills or complex drills.
Clear, Simple Language	Short instructions with 1–2 key words (“Catch ball” / “Run to cone”).	Use at all times, especially during noisy sessions or for children with processing difficulties or hearing impairments.
Give Choice	Offering two acceptable options to increase engagement (e.g., “Blue cone or red cone?”).	Use when motivation drops or behaviour escalates. Gives control while keeping structure.
Prompting (Verbal / Gesture / Physical)	Giving cues to guide behaviour or skill (pointing, tapping shoulder, modelling).	Use when a child knows the skill but needs a reminder. Fade prompts as independence increases.
Praise Specific Behaviour	Praise describes exactly what the child did well (“Great job keeping your eyes on the ball!”).	Use immediately after the behaviour to reinforce learning. Works particularly well for building confidence.

All examples are guides only; tailor your approach to each player.

COACHING TIPS & BEHAVIOURAL CUES

Tip/Strategy	What it means	When/How it can be used
Calming Space / Break Option	A safe, quiet place or activity to reset emotionally.	Use when the child shows signs of feeling overwhelmed (sensory overload, frustration, shutdown). Helps prevent escalation.
Consistent Routines	Keeping training structure predictable each week.	Use with children who rely on routine. Enhances security, reduces behaviour challenges, and supports learning.
Use of Visual Cues / Signals	Hand signals, cards, or coloured cones to show instructions.	Use in noisy environments, with children who struggle with verbal instructions, or during matches where verbal cues are difficult.
Smaller Tasks	Breaking a skill into smaller, manageable steps.	Use for complex skills (soloing, hand passing, kick passing). Helps children experience success more quickly.
Buddy System	Pairing the child with a supportive peer.	Use for group drills, games, or moving between stations. Encourages social interaction and improves understanding through peer modelling.
Positive Redirection	Guiding the child towards a positive action instead of highlighting the negative (“Let’s try kicking toward this cone”).	Use when correcting behaviour without causing embarrassment; keeps focus on learning.
Countdowns / Transition Warnings	Giving time cues before changing activities (“2 more minutes... 30 seconds... Stop”).	Use before ending a preferred activity to reduce frustration and support smoother transitions.

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