

NEURODIVERSITY

AUTISM

DESCRIPTION:

- Neurodevelopmental condition affecting communication, social interaction, and sensory processing.
- Children may have strong routines, sensory sensitivities (e.g., to noise, textures), and need visual structure.

GAELIC GAMES COACHING TIPS:

- ✓ **Predictability is key** – start every session with the same warm-up and routine.
- ✓ **Visual supports** – use picture cards or coloured cones to show drills.
- ✓ **Break tasks into small steps** – demonstrate slowly and repeat often.
- ✓ **Reduce sensory overload** – allow quiet breaks (designated zone), avoid loud whistles
- ✓ **Buddy system** – pair with a peer mentor for guidance and encouragement.
- ✓ **Celebrate effort** – positive reinforcement builds confidence.

ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

(ADHD)

DESCRIPTION:

- Challenges with attention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. Children may get easily distracted or need frequent movement.

GAELIC GAMES COACHING TIPS:

- ✓ **Keep drills/games short and active** – 5/10 minute activities with plenty of movement.
- ✓ **Use clear, simple instructions** – one step at a time.
- ✓ **Positive feedback immediately** – reward focus and effort.
- ✓ **Rotate roles** – allow them to try different positions to maintain interest.
- ✓ **Movement breaks** – integrate fun sprints or skills challenges between drills.

NEURODIVERSITY

DOWN SYNDROME

DESCRIPTION:

- A genetic condition associated with mild to moderate intellectual disability, low muscle tone (hypotonia), and sometimes heart or joint issues.
- Children learn best through repetition and may take longer to master new skills.

GAELIC GAMES COACHING TIPS:

- ✓ **Break skills into small steps** – e.g., hand-passing before soloing.
- ✓ **Repeat, repeat, repeat** – Use the same drills each week for familiarity.
- ✓ **Fun** - Focus on fun & participation rather than competition.
- ✓ **Be aware of low muscle tone** – include balance and coordination games.
- ✓ **Awareness** - Avoid overexertion if heart issues are present; include regular water breaks.
- ✓ **Positive reinforcement** – lots of praise and visual cues (thumbs up, claps).

SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

(E.G., DYSLEXIA, DYSCALCULIA)

DESCRIPTION:

- Neurological differences affecting reading, sequencing, or processing, but not intelligence.

GAELIC GAMES COACHING TIPS:

- ✓ **Show, don't just tell** – demonstrate skills rather than relying on verbal explanation.
- ✓ **Use visual markers** – numbered cones, coloured bibs to show positions.
- ✓ **Repeat** – use simple language and repeat key points.
- ✓ **Allow extra processing time** – don't rush instructions.

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LEARNING DISABILITIES (MILD TO MODERATE)

DESCRIPTION:

- Cognitive delays affecting learning, reasoning, and problem-solving; children may learn at a slower pace.

GAELIC GAMES COACHING TIPS:

- ✓ **Simplify drills** – focus on 1–2 core skills per session.
- ✓ **Use repetition & routine** – repeat the same drills weekly to build confidence.
- ✓ **Step-by-step progression** – break down a skill (e.g., soloing) into smaller parts.
- ✓ **Visual praise** – thumbs up, high fives, and team claps encourage participation.
- ✓ **Modify rules** – use smaller pitches, lighter balls, or allow extra steps.

SPEECH, LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION NEEDS

(SLCN)

DESCRIPTION:

- May involve stuttering, articulation difficulties, or challenges understanding spoken instructions.

GAELIC GAMES COACHING TIPS:

- ✓ **Model actions** – demonstrate drills visually.
- ✓ **Use gestures & signals** – thumbs up, pointing to cones, coloured markers.
- ✓ **Speak clearly & slowly** – give one instruction at a time.
- ✓ **Be patient** – allow extra time for responses.
- ✓ **Use peer support** – buddies can help explain drills.