**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