

SECTION 05

TEACHING TIPS



05



CANADA
BASKETBALL



5.0 TEACHING TIPS

This section is designed to assist coaches with quick, easy to read information that will help them work with children. It was created to provide tips for coaches that will make learning a positive experience for everyone.

The section outlines how to communicate with the children, tips to enhance the teaching of players, how to establish positive behavior, ways to create a Fair Play atmosphere, as well as suggestions for dealing with children that have behavioral problems.

If coaches familiarize themselves with this section it will help ensure that the teaching delivered by the coaches is successfully received by the children.

5.1 - HELPING KIDS TO LISTEN

Many first-time coaches have trouble getting kids to listen. Even experienced coaches sometimes have difficulty in engaging young participants so that they stop and listen to words of wisdom from their coach.

When Trying to Get Kids to Listen to You:

- Develop a listening posture. Have athletes show they are listening by, for example, dropping to one knee. Teach your athletes early on that you expect them to show they are ready to listen by adopting this posture. Demand their eyes and ears.
- Practice listening. It may sound silly, but have your team practice coming in quickly to you from the court and getting ready to listen. Have them see how quickly they can run in and get into the listening posture.
- Reinforce listening with your attention. Most often we give our attention to the kids who are NOT doing what we want them to do. Make a point of focusing your attention on the kids who immediately get into the listening posture. Say something like: "Thanks, Jeanie and Teri, for getting ready to listen so quickly. We have limited time for practice so when you do that it helps the team." This will tend to cause the kids who are not coming quickly to do better next time in the hope that you will recognize them.
- Listen to them! Being listened to fills kids' Emotional Tanks and kids with full E-Tanks are more likely to be able to listen to you.
- Give them something you can take away. Kids like to have something in their hands and they will tend to modify their behavior to be able to keep it. If coaching basketball, make sure every kid has a ball. When you ask for their attention, say "Hold the balls." If a child doesn't stop dribbling or talking, simply and matter-of-factly take the ball away from them without any show of anger or irritation. They won't like this, and they will pay attention next time so as to not have the ball taken away. They will quickly see that the way they get to keep the ball is to hold it and listen.
- Make it short and sweet. Many coaches talk too much at one time. Kids can only be expected to remain still for a brief period of time. It's better to have several 3-minute meetings during the course of a practice than one or two 10-minute sessions. In general, the less a coach says, the more the kids listen.
- Have conversations more often than lectures. Good questions can engage kids in a way that even the best speech can't. Ask them to help solve a problem, for example, "Any ideas on how we can improve our hustling during this drill?"
- Develop a team signal to bring people together to listen. A specific whistle sequence can signal that it's time to come together (e.g., three shorts and a long). Some coaches develop a clapping rhythm to signal that it's time to listen. Others start clapping and ask players to join in until everyone is clapping together and then increase the rate of clapping to a crescendo before stopping to say what they want to say.



5.2 - COMMUNICATION

To be successful in coaching, you must be able to effectively communicate with your players, parents, other coaches and officials. Good communication skills arise from constantly making an effort to become a better communicator.

The keys to becoming an effective communicator are being able to communicate openly, positively and clearly.

Communicating openly depends on you being honest with your athletes. It relies on you being sensitive to their needs and responding to their needs. It relies on you listening in a non-judgmental fashion, to what they have to say, both as individuals and as a group. Then you can make judgments where you deem necessary. It is very important to communicate openly with parents as well.

Communicating positively, especially with young athletes, is extremely important. We must remember why these kids participate in sports – to have fun and be with their friends. Everything else is secondary. When corrections are made (and there will be many), it should be done in a very non-threatening manner. For example, the sandwich effect – “You had a great follow through on your shot, but you must use your legs more, and it was great to see your feet squared to the basket.” In this technique, a negative is sandwiched between two positive and encouraging statements.

Communicating clearly involves getting to your point in a simple, precise manner. It is a good idea to speak a little louder than normal (outside voice) to get the attention of wandering ears. In order to keep everyone focused when you are talking, be sure to make eye contact with each person.

When communicating with your players:

- Make eye contact at all times
- Use non-verbal communication
 - High 5's
 - Thumbs Up
 - Clapping
- Provide each player with genuine and deserved praise.
- Make statements in a positive manner and praise them.
- Use the child's name whenever possible.
- Use humor where appropriate.
- Encourage each player to do their best.
- Emphasize fun and fairness.
- Teach players to respect their teammates, their opponents and the officials.

5.3 - TEACHING PLAYERS

When teaching players:

- Try to be relaxed and professional.
- Be open, honest, fair and consistent.
- Be patient.
- Move around while instructing drills and activities.
- Keep everyone in sight to ensure everyone can hear you.
- Keep activities short.
- Keep everyone busy.
- Give precise instructions, such as “Please walk slowly to get balls and then return quietly and slowly. Stand on this mark on the floor.”
- Have a child repeat instructions just to ensure they understand.
- Name lines on the floors to use as landmarks and meeting places, for example, “Everyone run and stand on Big Blue.”
- Use descriptive words: freeze, dart, pop, pounce, wriggle, fierce, tiny, gentle, soft, sharp, etc.
- Use body language – Quiet when you need control and energized when you need excitement.
- Individually challenge players to better themselves.



- Use challenging phrases such as:
 - Can you ...
 - Show me a different way ...
 - Show me how ...
 - See how many times you can ...
 - What would happen if ...
 - Now try ...
 - Shout praise. Whisper criticism.
 - Be aware of children's cultural differences.
 - Reinforce effort and improvement, NOT results.
 - Interact with highly-skilled and less-skilled children in the same manner, giving every child feedback and encouragement.
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5.4 - ESTABLISHING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR

The relationship between the coach and the young athlete is critical. How a coach teaches new skills, manages a practice, gives feedback, recognizes effort, and behaves with players and parents is essential to establishing a healthy environment.

When establishing positive behavior with your players:

- Model the behavior and attitude you want them to have.
 - State rules positively.
 - Make sure children understand rules and consequences.
 - In order to teach children responsibility, establish rules for getting, putting away and handling equipment.
 - Insist children place equipment in the proper location, not throw it.
 - Establish non-verbal signals as subtle reminders of misbehavior. For example, time out signals, finger to lips, and touching your ear lobe.
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5.5 – BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

Building self esteem means helping children to feel good about themselves. When young people have fun and enjoy their experiences in sport, they stay involved longer and their self-esteem grows. Coaches can help children develop confidence and self-esteem through the following ways:

- Greet each child individually when they arrive for each session. Make them feel good about being there.
 - Show confidence in their ability to learn.
 - Offer activities that suit their level of development.
 - Encourage effort without always focusing on results.
 - Avoid elimination games and other activities that may add undue pressure. Create situations where there are lots of successes.
 - Be specific when telling them what you like about their effort or performance.
 - Use a smile, a nod, or a wink to acknowledge them.
 - Give them responsibilities. Involve them in making decisions and give each of them a chance to be a 'leader'. Alternate captains.
 - Ask them for their input and invite their questions.
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5.6 - CREATING FAIR PLAY RULES

When creating Fair Play rules:

- Always be positive when communicating.
- Provide quality attention when someone is speaking.
- Respect other's personal space, no pushing or knocking each other.



- Be respectful when speaking to someone.
- Respect cultural and gender differences.
- Applaud good play or performances of other.
- Support others when they make a mistake.
- Say "Thank you."
- Be honest when tagged, put out, or scored against.
- No negative talk allowed.
- Model, encourage and applaud good sportsmanship.

5.7 - DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CHILDREN

When dealing with difficult children:

- Have private discussions to avoid embarrassment for the child or reinforcing the negative attention the child may be seeking.
- Direct behavior by giving a difficult child a task. Have the child demonstrate, lead a group or choose an activity.
- To show you care, ask about the child's day, family or how they feel. Do something special for them, but be aware that overt attention may cause jealousy.

5.8 - GOAL SETTING (SMART Goals – Specific; Measurable; Adjustable; Realistic; Time-based)

Although your athletes are young, it is still a good idea to introduce them to the concept of goal setting, as this can serve as an important motivational technique. When discussing goal setting with your athletes, have your players decide their team goals together. Also encourage each player to write down (on a piece of paper), their immediate and long term goals for themselves and their team. Some children may need your assistance with setting goals. The importance of performance-based (as opposed to outcome-based) goals must be stressed, as well as the focus of individual and team goals.

Try to have a number of specific, achievable goals, so that a number of successes can be experienced. It is important for athletes to know how it feels to be successful. Remember that identifying and outlining the goals is only half of the process. Monitoring and constant reflection of the progress of the goals play an integral role in the effectiveness of goal setting.

5.9 - PLANNING A PRACTICE

Using Practice Time Wisely

Practice tips:

- Take stock of the practice environment: gym space, pylons, balls, number of baskets, etc.
- Maximize activity time from drill to drill. Don't give them a chance to even think about being bored.
- Provide simple, clear, precise instructions. Keep them brief.
- Have names for all your drills so that as players become familiar with the drills, they respond quicker to commands.
- Constantly provide feedback on player's performance, on an individual and team level.
- Be creative with gym equipment. Use what you have.
- Know your limits: don't teach something you don't know. If unsure of something, seek help from those who do know.
- Frequently give participants time to get water, but make sure they do not stall or linger.
- Encourage participants to bring water from home to minimize water breaks.
- Be over organized for practice. Make photo copies of practice templates, and be very detailed when filling them out.
- It is ideal to have mini-meetings at the beginning of practice to discuss the goals or focus of the day. This will narrow the players' focus as to what you expect from them.
- At the end of practice it is imperative that you meet again briefly to review the practice and discuss what went well, and what needs improving. Be sure to include action steps that athletes can do to work on these improvements.