

DEVELOPMENT-BASED  
*coaching guidelines*  
FOR **INFANTS** AGED **6-9**



PSYCHOMOTOR

At this age, children begin to have a notion of distance and shape. They also start to become aware of their own physical aspects, becoming capable of complex coordination of their arms and establishing the disassociation between their arms and legs.



COGNITIVE

Infants are imaginative, curious, impatient and subjective. They are developing the ability to remember and recall basic information, and they are starting to understand the concepts of space and time. Along with this comes an unstable attention span and a relatively limited vocabulary. They are 'in the moment' thinkers, unable to think hypothetically or abstractly.



EMOTIONAL

6-9 year olds are typically egocentric and individualistic. They are rarely generous and lack the ability to fully accept criticism, due to their need for the approval of adults.



*coaching approach*

*example:*  
"Keep the ball away from the bad guys!"  
❌ "Find the space"

INSTRUCTIONS

Make instructions relatable and use basic vocabulary  
Repeat and reinforce with visual cues  
Include demonstrations (if necessary, use physical manipulation to show proper technique).  
Ask open questions to fortify comprehension and recall. Avoid yes/no questions.

*example:*  
"So, who do you keep the ball away from?"  
❌ "Do you understand?"

*example:*  
"Good job for trying that long pass!"  
❌ "Good pass!"

FEEDBACK


Immediate feedback is imperative  
Feedback should praise good effort as opposed to perfect execution  
Utilise positive reinforcement rather than constructive criticism  
Use silly extremes to exaggerate errors in movement or technique  
Avoid hypothetical language about what the player could or should have done

ACTIVITY

Make it fun  
Set short-term objectives in every activity to maintain motivation and interest  
Provide visual aids (props, colored cones, place markers etc.)  
Start to introduce group games

*example:*  
"Complete three passes for a bonus point"  
❌ "Win the game"

# coaching guidelines FOR **PREADOLESCENTS** AGED **10-12**




**PSYCHOMOTOR**

Between the ages of 10 and 12 children experience bodily changes which leads to a variation in maturity between individuals. They also undergo a surge in energy which is often displayed in constant activity and an increased interest in competition and games of physical ability. During this time they also discover their laterality.



**COGNITIVE**

Preadolescents are typically curious and logical thinkers. They have a longer attention span than younger age groups and have the ability to self-correct using comparison. They have an eagerness to understand the purpose of activities and to show off their abilities.



**EMOTIONAL**

Although shyness tends to decrease when children reach the preadolescent stage, they can still become easily embarrassed and discouraged. They are beginning to develop a more resistant mindset, and can often argue over what is correct or incorrect.



## coaching approach

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Repeat and reinforce with visual cues  
 Include demonstrations (if necessary, use physical manipulation to show proper technique).  
 Ask open questions to fortify comprehension and recall. Avoid yes/no questions.

*example:*  
"I know you can do it better!"

❌ "Do it like James"

*example:*  
"So, what do you do when you win the ball?"

❌ "Do you understand?"

**FEEDBACK**

A mix of positive reinforcement and constructive criticism (given in a positive tone)  
 Avoid comparisons with peers  
 Use guided questions

*example:*  
"How do you think you could improve that pass?"

❌ "Pass it with your left foot"


**ACTIVITY**

Use a mixture of fun-oriented and goal-oriented activities  
 Game-like situation drills and simulations can be both useful and stimulating  
 Begin to incorporate unplanned or unanticipated reactions to stimuli.  
 Use variations to advance motor coordination and cognitive abilities.

*example:*  
Games which require decision making


❌ Line drills

# coaching guidelines FOR ADOLESCENTS AGED 13-17



## PSYCHOMOTOR

The majority of individuals reach puberty at this age, which causes several changes. In males it often leads to greater improvement in tasks which require muscular strength, whereas females often progress more in tasks which require balance and control. For both genders this time is often characterised by a lack of physical activity. During adolescence a total integration of the corporal system is developed.



## COGNITIVE

Adolescents are capable of hypothetical, creative and abstract thought. They are able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, and along with this they can self-correct in real time. They possess the ability to analyze details within their totality, and they have a significant increase in both attention span and intellect.



## EMOTIONAL

At this age, individuals are often emotionally unstable. They have a tendency to be "against the group", often times against adults. Despite being sensitive and vulnerable, they are becoming more mature and more self-motivated.



## coaching approach

### INSTRUCTIONS

Primarily verbal, but visual aids may still be needed for more complex exercises. Should include intentions and purpose for further learner understanding. All details of an activity may not have to be explicitly expressed. Short directions allow athletes to process information and adapt on the fly.

**example:**  
"How could you have improved that pass?"

✗ "Pass it with your left foot"

**example:**  
"Look over your shoulder before you receive the ball to see where the defenders are"

✗ "Look over your shoulder before you receive the ball"

### FEEDBACK

Use constructive criticism and guided self-correction. For emotionally underdeveloped athletes, praise may be more beneficial for motivation.

**example:**  
"Can anyone beat James' personal juggling record?"

✗ "Try harder"

### ACTIVITY

Use peer comparison and personal records. Fast-paced play that requires quick reactions and appropriate physical responses. Include complexity and elements of unpredictability in exercises. For small groups consider ability, age and gender.

**example:**  
Games which require decision making

✗ Line drills