



CONFIDENTLY COACHING ADHD CHILDREN

A child with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) can place many demands on time, energy and sense of competence for a coach. The constant interruptions and need for repeated instructions and close supervision can be taxing. It is essential that if coaching is to be rewarding for both the coach and child, that the coach has a good understanding of ADHD and can use this to adapt their coaching style when required.

POTENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ADHD CHILDREN

- Curious and creative
- Energetic and entertaining
- Unable to regulate and unaware of their behaviour
- Not personally attacking the coach or trying to be disruptive
- Short attention span
- Risk-takers, so greater care may be needed around safety
- Don't consider consequences of their behaviours - e.g. dropping in on waves/surfing too close to rocks

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Children with ADHD work best under close monitoring and with minimal distraction. The following strategies may be helpful:

- Being at the front of the group often diminishes many visual distractions, including the movement of other children
- Staying still for any length of time can also be difficult for these children. Consider allowing children to run or move around, if they are not too disruptive to others and not already doing so



Strategically placing a child at the front of a group can help minimise visual distractions and aid in focusing on the coach



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PRACTICAL COACHING STRATEGIES:

- Clear and structured instruction will enhance their ability to engage and follow directions
 - o Ask them to repeat the directions or pair them up to tell a partner what they have to do, or have learnt – check for understanding! Try not to single them out in front of the group.
- Allowing them to be the coach's assistant will aid them to fully engage and contribute to the session
- Bring a positive, supportive and flexible attitude to coaching
- Express consistent and clear expectations early and reinforce throughout
- Deliver strategic praise
 - o Children with ADHD deserve praise for achieving seemingly simple things other children can do without much effort, for example putting up their hand before speaking. Positive attention is powerful - "Catch them being good".
- Offer corrective feedback
 - o Give corrective feedback immediately after a negative behaviour is noticed.



Creating a positive, supportive environment complimented with praise can have a big impact on coaching ADHD children

COMMUNICATION IS VITAL

- Ensure to keep an open line of communication between parents and other coaches
- Discuss options with parents and agree about which strategies will work best
- Explain to parents the strategies you're using to support their child positively in the program